

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

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Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Danielle Kang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Okay, welcome again everyone to the virtual and physical media center here at that time Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions.

Here with our defending champion, Danielle Kang. I will kick it off and just what are your thoughts on being back here at Lake Nona and ready to defend your title?

DANIELLE KANG: I'm excited. I believe that this season -- I really haven't had an off-season, but it's really good to start in Florida. I wish it was a little bit further back a couple weeks so that we could of a little less gap of time, but I spent some name Jupiter last week with my friends and that was really good.

Trying to get acclimated to the weather. Vegas is really cold and it's warming up now, so it's good.

Q. When you won here last year, I don't think anybody could have anticipated the struggles you would have health-wise in the middle the year and then the comeback you would have. How much more meaningful is the win you had last year now given what happened to you after?

DANIELLE KANG: To be honest, my win last year has more meaningful because of the previous year. When they mixed up the tee times and tipped scales and changed tee times and it doesn't follow the format, I was really not happy about those things.

I felt that LPGA has a format. You have a rule. You stick with it. Last year they kept the amateur and then the professional things, and that's what made me feel like I wanted to win this event. I felt that I let it get slipped through my fingers, so that's why I was happy to win.

I wasn't thinking about that win making it meaningful for what happened after.

Q. So this is one of the probably best golf courses in



Orlando, arguably the best. Winning at a venue like this, what does that mean for you?

DANIELLE KANG: I believe that winning at good golf courses means you're a good player. Winning anywhere does. But it's extra meaningful for me because I'm very particular about golf courses.

Some courses I just don't play well at and I already know and I avoid them quite a bit, but Nona is not an easy golf course, not an easy track. You have to have your game tuned all around. Bunkers shots to chip shots, pitch shots, irons off the tee, and it's fun. It's fun to play. It's going to be tough. When you take your mind off it for one second the bogeys are just around the corner.

It makes me feel really good to be able to take a trophy home from caliber golf courses.

Q. Last year it was cold here. You're hitting fairway woods on holes you might be hitting mid and short irons. What kind of test was it mentally for you last year?

DANIELLE KANG: It was interesting. I was walking down the fairway, the back nine, and I was telling my caddie how I had a 5-wood, rescue, 5-wood, 5-wood finish, and it is a little bit wild. I was hitting my 5-wood really good that day so lucky enough I was fine.

But it was really cold. I was more proud of how I prepared to get into that tournament. I was prepared to be in the cold, to compete in the freezing weather, and I'm normally not good with those. My track record hasn't shown that.

But to win in the cold in those hoodies and jackets because I can't swing well, it made me feel good.

Q. You had practiced that at home, right?

DANIELLE KANG: I did.

Q. Was it similar this year coming in?

DANIELLE KANG: No, this year, Vegas is really cold right now, but I've been traveling a lot so I've been trying to get practice in as much as I can. I went to Korea a few times. I mean, Inbee Park was great enough to get me a practice



facility, so I was practicing in like a cage. But it was really nice to practice there because it was -- I felt like there was no wind, so it was different type of practice. Everything was always at centered and squared and it was nice.

I came back out to America and I was like, okay, there are hills now and wind and everything.

Q. How much are you working with Butch? I was going to ask you what's the best thing you've experienced working with him?

DANIELLE KANG: Can you say that question one more time?

Q. I was going to ask you about how much you're working with Butch, how often you see Butch, and what's the best part of being able to work like a guy whose brain in golf works the way it does?

DANIELLE KANG: Okay. I have the worst attention span. I'm like a squirrel. So all heard was Butch. I love that man. I didn't get to see him that often this off-season. I was traveling a lot. I went to Kenya, Miami, New York, Korea, Florida. It's been a lot of travel.

But good communication with him is key. He always knows where I play the best from. Whenever I work on something different or unique on I always check with him. I mean, two days ago I messaged him saying, so and so is my miss. What do you think would be causing it?

I'm not one of those players that needs a coach to be with me 24/7 and/or travel with me, so it works really well between Butch and I when I can just communicate as openly as possible.

THE MODERATOR: I saw you went on a really cool safari. We were all a little jealous of it. Can you tell us about that experience and how you enjoyed that during the off-season?

DANIELLE KANG: I loved it. It's been on my Bucket List all my life. I actually learned from the injury that I don't really need to play golf every single day. I surprised myself on how well I played when I came back. I wasn't expecting to be contending or finishing Top 10s. I thought I was just being a brat and wanted to compete just to see where I was.

That gave me confidence to be like, hey, I don't need to play golf every day. I was able to take a nine-day trip to Kenya and it was incredible. I really want to thank Julia Molinaro and her parties for setting all that up. If anybody needs a safari trip to Kenya, call Julia Molinaro.

Q. Is there a different approach, different mentality, different anything when you come back to a place where you've won before and you can repeat?

DANIELLE KANG: Yes and no. I guess you get a little bit of extra confidence because you see your face everywhere all of a sudden and everything is good memories.

So I think that does help, in golf especially. Sometimes when you know you can make a putt, but that extra confidence helps you make it. I think you do have an edge, but it's different conditions, different course, different year. You still have to play good golf.

But I feel really good about it and I'm excited. I'm playing with Lee Brice again the first day. We don't know how that happens, but it happens every year. Luck of the draw. I'm excited to see him.

Q. Thanks for doing this. I was a minute or so late and I don't know whether you addressed -- you mentioned the injury. First off, what was your favorite animal? I want to hear that, on the safari.

DANIELLE KANG: I love elephants. I experienced a family of elephants, four consecutively for about an hour.

So there was a watering hole -- sorry, I'm going to go into a detailed explanation here -- but watering hole a family of elephants, because they have to get out of way for? The next group and I just saw groups and groups of them and it was wonderful.

They never disappointed me. Any time I wanted to see an animal, boom, there was an elephant. Or giraffes are like dogs. They're everywhere.

I saw a lion hunt a zebra and eat it. That was fun. Was a little scary. I'm pretty sure I saw a lion that looked like Mufasa, and I said, can we please get out of here. I think he's going to jump on us. It was fun.

Q. No, that's awesome. Those lions, I think when they're charging they can run like 50 miles an hour. They are unbelievable creatures.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. We had a rhino charge at us, and that's a trauma for my mom right now.

Q. You mentioned the injury. Can you just share a couple of insights. You mentioned how it gave you an appreciation for things outside of golf, but just the experience, maybe a low point. You don't need to go through all of it. It's been written about a lot. Can you

just where you are now and where this has taken you?

DANIELLE KANG: Where I'm at is I just don't want to be known as a player that's injured or was injured, so I kind of want to move forward with it. I feel good. I've hit low points. I don't think we -- this isn't a therapy session so I'm not going to go right into that.

I feel good. I learned a lot of things. I think only people that struggle in whatever it is, it's all relative. You just got to find out why you're going through what you're going through.

All I can tell people is they can make it out and figure it out and use it to their advantage. For me, it led me to a Kenya trip. I got chased by a rhino. That was interesting. I'll tell you about that next time. My mom is still traumatized.

Yeah, I've got a bit of a different swing now. I don't know. Just a lot of things come together for a different way. I can't just keep trying to keep the old things, right? To improve is to change. Got to roll with the changes and the punches. That's what I do.

Q. With you being the defended champion, what do you think it's going to take to retain that title come this weekend?

DANIELLE KANG: Play really good golf. (Laughter.) Seriously. It's a tough golf course. I just got to play good golf.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

DANIELLE KANG: Thanks, guys.

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