

Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Boca Rio Golf Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome at Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio media center. We are joined by world No. 1 and the defending Gainbridge LPGA champion, Nelly Korda. Nelly, thanks for stopping by.

NELLY KORDA: No problem. Happy to be here.

Q. Different course.

NELLY KORDA: Yep.

Q. But you're the defending champ. What's it like to come to a different venue but still be the that everyone is chasing this week?

NELLY KORDA: I've actually never defended at the same golf course I think, so...

Q. Oh. That's fun.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, so, fun fact. Yeah, played the front nine yesterday. Played here two years ago so I kind of know the golf course a little.

I think the forecast for this week is not supposed to be great, so see how it goes.

Q. How much did last week prepare you for the weather, the unseasonably cold weather in Florida?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, the first two days were really nice, and then obviously the weekend got a little chilly. Whipped out the big jacket.

Yeah, it was nice. It's like a hard golf course to kind of start the year off, but it was a lot of fun, especially the kind of event. It was kind of easier take into the first event of the year.

It was a lot of fun. I had some good moments and I had some iffy moments, too. In all, I hope I can ride the good into this event.

Q. You mentioned never defending at the same golf course; that will happen later this year. But what have those experiences been like in the past to show up at different venue but still try to draw those good vibes that you had the year before?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I don't really -- I guess I don't really know because I've always defended at different golf course. I guess in the sense the expectations are a little lower just because you were defending at different golf course, but I'm just going to embrace it and see where it takes me.

Q. Do you embrace the status of being the No. 1 player? Obviously it's where you want to be. Is there a certain pressure to it? How do you approach that status?

NELLY KORDA: I don't really try to think about it too much. I've said it a couple times, but I always say that good golf kind of solves everything. You just try to focus on the ball and the golf course, and hopefully you can get somewhere with that.

But I try not to focus on being the No. 1 player in the world because that's -- as bad as it sounds, it's a temporary thing, right? What you're trying to focus on is being present out there, having fun, and enjoying the round.

Q. What is the relationship you and your sister have during a round? Like obviously if you're not paired together you're probably checking each other's scores. Do you recap at the end of the day? How are you sisters outside of the round you're playing?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, when I'm on the golf course, that's the reason why I check the scoreboard so much, is to see where Jess is at.

And in regards to if we talk about our round after, sometimes. Most of the time we don't. We just try to take our mind off it and kind of enjoy our dinner together. We are like automatic dinner buddies. Every night we have dinner together and we talk about anything but golf usually.



Q. Have you talked about Madelene yet? I know that she hasn't won since she was here, but a lot of people have some great things to say about her game.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. She said she's awestruck for the most part being still a rookie in her head. Do you see her maturing?

NELLY KORDA: So I actually played my Symetra Tour year with her, so I've been kind of been on tour with her for now six years.

So when we were on Symetra Tour she was just dominating out there. She played really well. She hits it far, she hits it high, and she putts it well. I think she's a really solid player.

But, yeah, I think the golf course is playing a little different than it was two years ago, but you never know. I mean, I think she's an amazing player and she has a bright future ahead, too.

Q. You got your year started last week at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions. Obviously the celebrities and former athletes, big part of the event.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. Any advice you received from anybody or anything you learned from anybody in particular last week?

NELLY KORDA: I actually got a really nice message from Josh Donaldson. I'm just going to keep that to myself. He was one of the people that reached out to me.

But I've played this event since it started, so it's been really cool to see how much like the friendship has grown with the people that I've seen every year.

It's been a lot of fun. I really, really enjoy that event. It's always a goal get back to that event.

Q. You mentioned the course is playing a little different. From some of the players and caddies, what I heard about this course was that it's a bomber's course.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. If it is playing different, does that not suit bombers like yourself or what's different about it?

NELLY KORDA: All depends on the wind and the forecast we're going to have. I think there is an advantage to hitting it longer out here, but I think the greens are a little bit slower, and I think they're trying to keep them slower just because the wind forecast is supposed to be really high Friday afternoon and Saturday.

And I think the fairways are a little bit fluffier than they were last time, so I think they're just trying to play towards the weather aspect of it.

But I do see a big advantage to hitting it longer.

Q. Hi, Nelly. Wanted to ask you about your schedule and how you go about setting that given your status as World No. 1. Obviously every tournament would love to have you.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. How do you go about setting your own priorities versus wanting to support the tour and every event?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it is a no-brainer starting in Florida three weeks. I can drive everywhere. That's really nice. I played at the PNC event in December so I didn't really have an off-season.

So to be fresh going into the rest of the year, there are so many events -- summers usually are the biggest part of the year with so many majors. I decided to take it off, to take six weeks, and start back up on the west coast.

The main focus always for the year is to stay healthy and fresh. I usually play around 22 events a year, and that just to me works. I don't try to go over four events in a row. I try to take max three, maybe sometimes four, and then take a week off just so I'm fresh.

When you travel so much and you play so much your body changes and leads to injuries, too, so staying fresh throughout the year is the main goal.

Q. I'm in Las Vegas and I wanted to ask, last year you skipped the match play for the inaugural event. Wondering if there a reason for that, and do you have any plans to play to this year?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I usually -- the past two years I've kind of skipped the event before the U.S. Open. I've (indiscernible) MC Hammer twice, so this year I'm planning to play the Vegas event just to see if my luck changes allege.

So I am planing to play the Vegas event.

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Q. What did you hear from your peers about the Vegas event?

NELLY KORDA: They just said the golf course was amazing. It was really pure and great condition. I think that will be a good lead-up into the Open as well, playing a tough golf course.

Q. You mentioned earlier your time on the Road to the LPGA, which was officially launched today as the Epson Tour, Epson taking over sponsorship rights. With their partnership comes an investment not only in the players but in their future with no purse under \$200,000, a player ambassador program giving ten players \$10,000, the graduates, to launch their LPGA Tour career, and a lowering of the entry fees. When you hear all that and you see a global brand putting not only their money where their mouth is but walking the walk and catering to the development of women's golf and having been out there, what does it mean to you?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, gosh, it's crazy to think that six years ago I was on Symetra Tour. I wouldn't have traded it for the world. And, yes, there are some difficulties that come with playing on the Symetra Tour. Obviously purse and entry fees being really high. For them to make that difference is really, really big.

I think the game of golf and women's golf is moving in the right direction. For those companies to step up, and as you said, show up for us I think is a really big steppingstone going into the future.

Q. Have you noticed in your time out here maybe the talent level, is it different now when players come from the Epson Tour versus six, seven, eight, nine years ago?

NELLY KORDA: I would say yes just because I think I learned so much being on the Epson Tour. I think you kind of learn the ways of tour life. You kind of learn time management. The LPGA, I feel like some people may put a lot of pressure on themselves when they're a rookie and they're so new and they don't know what to expect.

When you go through that tour you stay in the States and you travel. You can drive to events, too. I think it's a really good steppingstone going into the LPGA Tour, and I learned so much by playing.

THE MODERATOR: Just being back at Boca Rio and the club they seemed to really welcome the tour with open arms in 2020. I imagine that only increases this year.

What is it about the membership and the fans and just the event as a whole from walking inside the ropes and looking outside the ropes that week and what you expect this week?

NELLY KORDA: Gosh, that was two years ago. I barely remember last year. I do remember how welcoming everyone was here and I'm super excited to see where this week goes.

Yeah, just remember how welcoming and how nice everybody was here.

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