

Kia Classic

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Carlsbad, California, USA

Park Hyatt Aviara Golf Club

Eun-Hee Ji

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to Aviara in the virtual media center at the Kia Classic.

Now we are joined by the 2018 Kia Classic champion and current Rolex Rankings No. 68, Eun Hee Ji. Thanks so much for joining us so much for joining us today, Eun Hee.

EUN-HEE JI: Thank you.

Q. Well, the LPGA finally returns to Aviara Golf Club for the Kia Classic this week after the event was postponed last year because of the pandemic. What's the feeling to be back here competing in Carlsbad once again?

EUN-HEE JI: I mean, I really, really happy to be back here. You know, I won this tournament 2018, and when I come here I always have good memories, you know, happy things about it.

So I really, really happy about this.

Q. Besides obviously holding that trophy in 2018, do you have another memory that has stuck with you over the years?

EUN-HEE JI: Oh, yes. I have hole-in-one.

Q. Oh. That'll do it.

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah, at that tournament. And then I got tour card on one tournament, so I still have it. So it's really good memory always.

Q. For sure. In this event in particular you've had some great results, including the win and three additional top 25 finishes. What is about this course that makes it stand out from others?

EUN-HEE JI: Actually this course is I feel really hard for me, so maybe I focus more and I try to do -- I practice hard and practice putting more.

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So maybe that's why I play better when I come here. (Laughter.)

Q. Uh-huh. It requires all your attention.

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah, more -- yes, yes, yes.

Q. Absolutely. And then what is the just overall excitement just to have Kia back after a year away, just to have them back hosting the tournament as host and sponsor?

EUN-HEE JI: Especially have to good read putting. Yeah, because greens are pretty quite bake and there is a lot slopes on the green, so I have to really focus on reading the green and good paced.

So, yeah, I always focus on the putting green. Yeah.

Q. Putting is key this week?

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah.

Q. You're off to a steady start this year making the cut in both of your first couple events. Where do you feel that your game is right now?

EUN-HEE JI: I mean, I'm still working on my swing. It's about 60% to 70% to what I wants to do. Still working on, but like always it's on and off. Like if I feel good I always look forward more, but sometimes I feel really bad it just goes down a little bit more.

You know, like just work on hard.

Q. Just working on it?

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah.

Q. Getting into mid-season form sooner than later.

EUN-HEE JI: Yes.

Q. With the two weeks off since the last event, the Drive On Championship at Golden Ocala, what did you do during the time off to get prepared for the west coast swing?



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EUN-HEE JI: I rest more. (Laughter.) Relax in my home, and before I came here go golf course and working hard on my swing and putting, especially on putting. I wasn't feel good on that last two tournament, so I putting -- working on putting more, yeah.

Q. You mentioned working on putting and how important putting is out here.

EUN-HEE JI: Yes.

Q. So I think that maybe...

EUN-HEE JI: That maybe work. (Laughter.)

Q. You're now an LPGA veteran. You've competed on tour since 2007 and been a professional since 2004. Have you ever seen this much depth on the LPGA Tour this, this many great players competing week in and week out as there is right now in your career?

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah, it is getting better every year I think, so all the young players are coming out every year and, you know, like all the players perform is better.

You know, it's best golf tour I think in this world.

Q. Yeah. Does it make some of the finishes when you can finish top 10 or when you can step into the winner's circle, does it make it that much more gratifying knowing how many more great players there are out here?

EUN-HEE JI: Oh, yeah, definitely. Yes.

Q. And then this week the Aon Risk Reward Challenge is a year-long series pitting the greatest risk reward holes at each PGA and LPGA event, and Aon provides matching million dollar prizes to both the male and the female that comes out on top at the end of the year. Week the par-4, 16 is the Aon Risk Reward Challenge hole. What strategy will you use to play that hole?

EUN-HEE JI: That hole?

Q. Yeah.

EUN-HEE JI: 16? Let me think.

Q. It's got the water on the left, drivable par-4.

EUN-HEE JI: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. If they move tee forward it's very challenge hole. So we can reachable to the green, so I -- you know, like it's par-4 but I can reachable, but I try to make on the green. But if not, you

know, I can try to make birdie from where at, so...

I don't know, I always -- I like the challenge, so always challenging on that hole.

Q. Jennifer Chang mentioned today that in her practice rounds she played the forward tee and she knocked it on the green on her drive. Is that something that you would go for with the water on the left?

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah, I just play the back nine today. Yeah, I hit driver and made it on the green.

Q. Nice.

EUN-HEE JI: Yeah. So maybe like that.

Q. That would be pretty awesome.

EUN-HEE JI: Keep doing it.

Q. Yes. Last one I have for you. You have a major championship on your resume, the 2009 U.S. Women's Open. First major of the golf season right around the corner next week in Rancho Mirage for the ANA Inspiration. With that, how eager are you to find your way back into the winners' circle at a major championship?

EUN-HEE JI: Everybody like want that, win the major. Even like it's not major we really want to won the tournament, right?

So especially major. I really like to have one more, have trophy. If not, just try hard. I always trying hard.

Q. Is there something about the majors that brings out the best in your game?

EUN-HEE JI: Oh, yes. On major I -- actually I practice a little more and I practice on the course more. (Laughter.)

That's why I just -- that means I really like to have won on the major, right? So just working hard.

Q. Absolutely. Thank you for your time and best of luck this week.

EUN-HEE JI: Thank you so much.

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