

Honda LPGA Thailand

Wednesday, 21 February 2024

Pattaya, Thailand

Siam Country Club Pattaya, Old Course

Lilia Vu

Ruoning Yin

Celine Boutier

Charley Hull

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: I'll kick things off with a few questions. I'm going to start off with one question for everyone on the dais and then open it up.

We'll start with the defending champion. Lilia, great to have you back here. What does it feel like coming back to the site of your first victory of 2023?

LILIA VU: Yeah, it was very nostalgic to be back here. Yeah, the course is looking beautiful. I came here on Saturday, kind of early, but overall it's really cool to experience this all over again.

THE MODERATOR: What's it like seeing your face, your name everywhere? I mean, when you're defending, it's your first of four title defenses this year.

LILIA VU: I don't know if I'll ever get used to it but definitely cool to see all the cool graphics they have from last year.

THE MODERATOR: Ronni, this is your first appearance here at the LPGA Honda Thailand. What have you been most looking forward to at this event?

RUONING YIN: I played two practice round yesterday and then Monday. I think this course is made very well. I think for me, just if I can just swing well and just hit my ball to where I want to land, I think I'll shoot a good score.

THE MODERATOR: I know you took a little bit of time off after the couple starts on the LPGA. Went back home for a little bit on when you're able to go back home and reset. What does that do for you heading into the Asian Swing?

RUONING YIN: I didn't touch my club for two weeks. Just enjoyed home, enjoyed the Chinese New Year with my family. I think that's good for me, and just makes me fresh for the Asian Swing.

THE MODERATOR: Celine, in the last two years, you have recorded Top 4 finishes here at the Honda LPGA Thailand. What is it about this area, this course, this event, that really suits your game at the beginning of the season?

CELINE BOUTIER: I'm not sure. I definitely feel like my game has been better and better each year after I have come, had and definitely had some good finish in the last two years, so good memories coming back.

Yeah, looking forward to being here again this week.

THE MODERATOR: For you Charley, coming off a T3 finish last week on the LET; then a top 10 finish on the LPGA Tour at the beginning of the year. How comfortable do you feel in your game, and have you felt that you've been able to kind of carry over the momentum you had from last season?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, (indiscernible) in the off season, and I played golf with some friends at home, so I'm just out here playing golf with my golfing friends. So that's how I kind of see it. (Indiscernible.)

Q. Is that something you usually do during the off-season, play with friends? I know a lot of competitive golfers --

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, hundred percent.

THE MODERATOR: -- don't usually do that.

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, I do. I prefer hands down playing golf with my friends at home than I do on tour. Like just have a laugh with my friends, so it's not really work to me, it's just going out there, having fun.

THE MODERATOR: I'll open it up.

Q. Ruoning, can I day take you back to 2018. I think you played in the Queen Sirikit Cup for China. Was that your first trip to Thailand? Do you remember much about the tournament, other players?

RUONING YIN: I think that was my second time coming to Thailand. I came to Thailand when I was probably ten with my mom for just a vacation; 2018 was my second

time coming to Thailand.

And I definitely love to play the Queen's Cup. I couldn't really remember about the details, but I definitely enjoyed it.

Q. Charley, you just played in the Wyndham in Saudi. How does that prepare you for playing in Asia? You've played this course a few times. How does it compare with America?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, Saudi was a lot drier, like a dry heat, where over here it's very humid. There are some places in America that are quite humid, so the golf courses are kind of, but this golf course kind of stops in the morning and get quite a bit of dew on the greens, and I find the ball doesn't go as far as in the afternoon.

Overall (indiscernible) and I enjoy the golf course.

Q. For Lilia, you've talked a lot about concentrating on making small improvements each day. I know you took a little mini break after DriveOn. After DriveOn, what have you been concentrating on and working on recently on those small improvements?

LILIA VU: For me during the off-season I think I got a little rusty with ball striking, so the past three weeks have been just trying to hit the ball more solid and compressing the ball a little more. That's a little more on the technical side.

But that's what I've been doing the past three weeks. Feel a lot better about it.

Q. Is that practicing at home or when you get back out here that's the focus?

LILIA VU: Kind of both. For me what's most productive is when I'm at home playing golf. Practicing for a couple hours on end doesn't do much for me. I'm much better on the course so that's what I've been focusing on.

Q. What did you take away from the first two events of the LPGA Tour season?

LILIA VU: This year?

Q. Yes.

LILIA VU: It was a good reflection to see what I have improved and what I've kind of neglected in my own game. I think that was a bit of a wakeup call for me, but definitely needed to happen.

Q. Ronni, for you, coming into this Asia Swing, you're coming back to this Asia Swing, to Thailand and Singapore and Blue Bay as a major champion, as an LPGA Tour winner. Does it feel different

entering this season than entering last season?

RUONING YIN: I kind of consider this is my first full season because I didn't play the Asian Swing last year. I kind of, you know, just tried to know the course and for the first time.

It's a little bit different play as a major champion and doing the press conference. I think it just -- it's just kind of motivation for me to play better.

Q. Celine, for you, what have the last couple weeks been like following the Drive On Championship? What have you been focusing on in your performance knowing you're coming back to a place you had good results at before?

CELINE BOUTIER: For me it was focusing on the long game. Definitely was a good week for me. Definitely try to assess what I need to focus more on. I feel like my short game was pretty solid that week but I just wasn't able to (indiscernible), so I definitely focused a bit more on the long game the last few weeks.

Q. Question for Lilia. You had an incredible season last year. Thailand is kind of where it all started with your first win. How much does Thailand kind of hold a special place in your heart in your career?

LILIA VU: Yeah, I mean, it's so special, right? My first win, it all started here. I remember how much fun I had last year just off the golf course, even just running across the street to go eat with my parents and friends.

I just had a good time, so I think that's why I played so well last year. Looking forward to doing that again this year.

Q. You have five majors on the LPGA Tour; none of them are in Asia. What are your views about adding another major here in Asia?

THE MODERATOR: To who?

Q. All of them, please.

LILIA VU: I think we have five already. It would be kind of cool to add one. I don't know if that would make it too busy around the season. I think we kind of all plan our schedule around those five events and try to manage our time and peak at the right time.

If that happens that's great, too, right? We're growing the game and trying to get as many big tournaments as we can out here.

CELINE BOUTIER: I definitely think that golf in Asia is growing year after year and there is so much interest and so many fans, so I feel like it would definitely be amazing

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

to have a major.

At the same time, I feel like five majors is already a lot. I feel like we're very lucky to have five. The men have four. Again, if there is an opportunity to have another one in Asia I feel like it would make sense. I also really like the schedule how it is now.

We'll see how the future goes.

RUONING YIN: Agree. I feel like five majors is a lot, especially this year, Olympic year. Makes kind of six majors. I definitely would love to see to have another major in Asia for sure.

Q. China?

RUONING YIN: I would love to.

Q. Bouncing off that answer, Ronni, Lilia, you come into this week as not only the top player in the world, but the top player in the Olympic Golf Ranking. This Asia Swing of events is three in a row and then we get right back at it domestically. What does it mean to start off the Olympic year rolling well?

LILIA VU: I feel like it's very beneficial for us to start in Asia with kind of invitationals, no cut. That gives us a lot of confidence to see where our game is at and just reflect and kind of play our game, hopefully play well and not think about it too much.

I think if we kind of stay in our own rhythm of just playing one tournament at a time, kind of just solves itself.

Q. Just the last one for Celine. I have to ask you about Malaysia last year. Can you just tell us about the playoff a little bit and your mindset. It's going on and on. How long you thought it would continue.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it was definitely one-of-a-kind experience. I feel like I wasn't really sure where I was standing after I finished. I was a couple groups ahead of the last group, so I was still waiting.

And then Atthaya made the birdie in the last to go in the playoff, so it was definitely nerve-wracking. Then the weather delay kind of happened, so I wasn't sure we were going to go back out at all because the afternoon and evening was just storms.

Thankfully we have a window of time we were able to get in. Yeah, I was just trying to focus on making a birdie on 18, which was the par-5, because I knew she was a good golfer and all that.

Yeah, just kept dragging hole after hole. After the third hole I kind of lost count. Also because it kept being the same two holes, so I didn't even know how many holes

I've been.

It was really a fun experience. I had a few opportunities the first few holes and didn't make it. She had a few opportunities, and then I ended up making the final putt and definitely relief and very grateful that we were able to finish that day.

Yeah, it was definitely a marathon.

Q. Lilia, when you think about this tournament as a whole, you talked about how much it means to you after the win last year. When you think about the final day specifically, what do you remember most? What were the emotions that you had? What did it feel like to get that first win under your belt?

LILIA VU: I think the thing that stood out to me the most last year was the crowd, just seeing how many people came out to kind of support us and watch us. I think that actually helped me on the final day. I think it pushed me to be more focused on playing one shot at a time.

I remember how intense the feeling was being under pressure almost, just going out there and having nothing to lose and trying to make as many birdies as I could. That's something that I remember most about the final day.

Q. Ronni, I know it's your first time here at this event. Have you been able to take any in of the kind of extra off-the-course food? Been able to try any local cuisine? Gone out anywhere with anyone that has helped you try the local cuisine?

RUONING YIN: I went with Pajaree on Monday. She took us to a Thai restaurant that was amazing. I told her that's the best Thai food I've ever had, so thank you to Pajaree.

Q. (Regarding dessert.)

RUONING YIN: Mango sticky rice, my favorite.

Q. Celine, you have been here the most, and so when I ask, is from the first time that you came here to even preparing for this week, what has it been like to see the growth of an event like this in Thailand, and what does that mean to you?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I feel like the tournament has been growing year after year and the amount the people that show up year after year is just growing. It's just unbelievable to see the interest. I think the fans here are also really nice. They're very positive and very cheerful so it's always a good experience.

Personally this tournament means a lot. My parents have come here. We used to come every summer when

I was younger. Definitely means a lot. I hope to do well again this year.

THE MODERATOR: Are your parents here this week?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: A reunion of sorts.

Thank you guys so much. Have a wonderful rest of your day. Good luck the rest of the week.

CELINE BOUTIER: Thank you.

LILIA VU: Thank you.

RUONING YIN: Thank you.

CHARLEY HULL: Thank you.

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