

LPGA MEDIHEAL Championship

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Daly City, California, USA

Lake Merced Country Club

So Yeon Ryu

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone inside the virtual media center here at the LPGA MEDIHEAL Championship.

But without further ado, So Yeon, how are you doing on this fine San Francisco afternoon?

SO YEON RYU: Well, you know, like we were in San Francisco last week, too, and then like always, U.S. Women's Open is true challenging, really stressful week, but I had a lot of fun.

But, at the time at the same time I'm need to have a break yesterday, so I had a full day off. I went to San Francisco downtown to visit famous bakery. That was unbelievable having cheese croissant.

And I just slept a lot, eat a lot of good feed, and then I came out this golf course this morning and then play nine holes, some putting, some -- hit some ball, and then here I am now.

THE MODERATOR: Take me through your experience last week, the second major championship of the year and a major that's close to your heart. How do you walk away from last week.

SO YEON RYU: You know, like I really enjoy the golf course as well even though I didn't play amazing golf. I really enjoyed every single thing, and then all of the tournament I think just from the beginning to the end everything was so awesome, hospitality and everything, especially golf course was awesome.

I think just because people keep telling me really tough golf course, I think it's kind of like stuck in my mind too much and automatically nervous before I tee it off. So that's the only one thing I regret.

I did my best to bring up my A game even though I couldn't. And then like I think it was really windy last week and then I sort of lost my swing key, so I didn't really hit

well as he wanted to, so that's a bit of disappointment.

But I think I -- well, I started with a bogey, bogey, bogey on Sunday, which was -- I wasn't in a good place, but I finished strong, so I really want to telling myself, Even though that's not the result you were expecting, you fought all the way through and then that's all about it.

So I am really proud of myself, and hopefully I can find my swing key for this week.

THE MODERATOR: We were just walking over here and you said you played nine holes and you said, I know this course. What is it about coming back here that most excites you about praying at Lake Merced again?

SO YEON RYU: Well, like I think especially the last week because I feel -- I never play the golf course before so I felt like I really needed to know everything about the golf course.

But we actually been play like golf course few years, probably more than five years, so I know like what I can expect, where the hole location is going to be and what's the danger and where a good miss and a bad miss, so I can pick and choose what kind of practice I need to have.

But last week I didn't know what exact shot I need to prepare so I really had to do like everything what I have. But I think this week I just generally enjoy this golf course a lot. It's really beautiful golf course. And then I think maybe because of last week I feel like rough is bit shorter than usual, so that made me feel a little bit comfortable to smashing the driver, smashing the tee shot a little bit more with more confidence.

Then the think the golf course is in great shape. Greens rolling really pure as well. All I need to do is just keep believe what I can do and then just bring out my A game and then just playing with the freedom.

Q. In 11 appearances in the U.S. Women's Open you have never finished outside the top 25. What is about that championship that brings out the best in you?

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SO YEON RYU: I think also my mindset is little different. Like when you're on the golf course, when you make a bogey you're really disappointed. Of course like even when I make a bogey at the U.S. Women's Open of course I'm disappointing, but at the same time I know I still have a chance.

Like I said, on Sunday even though I start with the bogey, bogey, bogey, 3-over is actually not already looking great after three holes, but you still have a chance to get some birdies and still have a chance to climb a little bit because everybody struggle, too.

Then because it's challenging golf course I always feel like I need to learn something new, and then I always try to think about what this golf course really want me -- like how this golf course want me to play. I never really play against the golf course or like try to beat the golf course. I'm always trying to listen what golf course telling me to do.

Q. You've played on golf courses like last week where par is a good score and you've won on golf courses where I think you shot 62 or 61 in Arkansas.

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, I think 62.

Q. 62.

SO YEON RYU: Yeah.

Q. It was just a terrific round. So you've had to go low and had to play where par is a good score. What suits your game better?

SO YEON RYU: I honestly prefer to play challenging golf course instead of you have to make a birdie ever two holes. Because I think like when I'm playing the golf course bit easier than major golf course I feel like, Okay, you have to make a birdie all the time.

I think my mindset very easily disappointed with like missing the birdie putt or missing the really easy shot kind of stuff. But I think when I'm playing challenging golf course my mindset is more like relax, and then that's what I really want to be like at the easier golf course, too.

But I think just because of this mindset I think I prefer to play challenging golf course.

Q. This is a challenging golf course in that it is a ball-strikers' golf course. Old design, a lot of placement. What is it about a place like this that suits you?

SO YEON RYU: I think especially this week tee shot really important because obviously we have a lot of trees out there and then a lot of the trees coming into the fairway. So you have to know how to avoid the tree. You have to go around the tree.

And like once again, I'm always enjoy to like shaping a golf ball instead of hitting it straight. I honestly feel like I don't know how to hit it straight anymore because I -- since I really enjoy the shaping the golf ball I always hit it like draw or like fade. I never really try to hit it straight.

So that fact made me enjoy this golf course, and then I hope I'm going to enjoy it again this week, too.

Q. You were talking about going really low. You do have the course record here, is that not correct?

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, I was actually surprised was able to shot really low score here, because even though I love this golf course, I always consider this golf course as one of the toughest golf course we ever play. I mean, this golf course definitely have potential to host a major as well.

So I was actually in shock to me myself what I shot 63. I was like, Oh, my God, did I really shot 63? But I think when you're in your zone you don't even know how many birdies what you made. I think that's what I did.

Then after I finished the round everybody came to me, Oh, you just set the course record. Did I? What did I shoot? I didn't even know. I think that mindset is what I need to play this week. I just want to think about the present.

I feel like these days I'm kind of like worrying too much. What if I'm going to hit this putt, hit this fairway. I think like so much if is going on in my head.

So I really hope I can have the same attitude as when I shot 63 here.

Q. It's been more than two decades since Se Ri won the U.S. Open. We hear so much about how much inspirational she's been to all the other Korean players, and a little bit with Grace Park as well. Do you know them? Have you played golf with them? Do you have a relationship with them? Talk about their influence.

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, you know, like these days Se Ri is on TV a lot. She does a lot of reality show, so it's kind of weird to see her like without the golf club on TV.

Yeah, you know, definitely right. Like she definitely opened the door for a lot of Koreans, and then not just Se Ri. You

mentioned Grace Park, Hee Wan Han, like J.J, like so many Korean player has been on the tour and still we have a lot of Korean players on the tour.

I'm sure that made me feel much more comfortable to traveling all around the world, because at least you can speak to someone in your country's language and you can have someone to go to Korean restaurant together, too.

So that make huge different. Then I actually quite often met Grace Park and Hee Won Han when I'm in Korea, and they're always telling us the story about how they played like back in the day and then they're always telling us like when you're in the tour that's the best time of your life, so just please enjoy it and don't think about that life is really too tough, that that life is too tough.

Then like it's kind of like I know they're true, but when you're on the tour and you're like struggle or when you're suffer it's really hard to believe what they're saying. But I agree with them. I'm doing what I love and then I got a chance to travel all around the world and play beautiful golf courses, so I really feel blessed to have my job and I feel really blessed to having somebody like Grace our Hee Won to telling me to like what you have is amazing. Sometimes like easy to forget about what you have.

Q. Two quick questions: You look at the leaderboard at the U.S. Women's Open and Yuka wins at 19; Nasa is 22; <Megha Ganne was in contention at 17 all week. What does that say about the state of the tour, and why do you think these young players are able, equipped, to play so well and contend on this kind of stage?

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, like you mentioned, you can see a lot of the young players. I think like first of all when I was in Olympic Club last week it was just feel weird to talking about like my win at the Broadmoor has been 10 years. Just felt like, Oh, my God, I'm so old.

But I know I'm not too old, but every time when I'm seeing the girls like 18 years old, 19 years old, I'm like, Oh, my God, they're so great, such great golfer.

Then I also like have to talk about it with quite a lot of my friends, Inbee, Danielle, and then the thing I figured out is when I was young I didn't really know about any scientific thing behind the golf. Like I never really learned about like what's club head speed like, you have to shot -- I mean, you have to have more than, I don't know, like 98 per mile speed. I didn't really know anything about the science.

I just hit the ball and I see the shot. That's how I learned to play golf. I think the younger generation, they already know how to train better and swing better, and then they

also learn how to swing better to hit longer.

So I want to say if you think about someone born later than 1995, I feel like they have better golf swing than like my generation, and then they're definitely -- they're driving average is definitely longer than our -- like my generation's driving distance average.

I think it's not about the physical difference. I think that's how we grew up and how we learned to like swing the club. So like to be honest, I'm actually quite nervous when I'm playing with them because they're literally like 50 yards ahead of me.

But at the same time, golf is not just all about the distance. That's the part I really want to see like LPGA going to set up the golf course wisely. I just didn't want to see golf became everything is about the distance and putting. We just need to set up the golf course wisely to bring out all the charming things about golf.

Q. This course is one that's not all about driving, right?

SO YEON RYU: Yeah. I totally agree with that. I think that's why I love this golf course. It definitely requires all sort of shot, tee shot to the green, everything is very important. So I hope we can have more golf courses like this, and then I hope also people know like this is -- distance is not always about the golf.

Q. And one other question: You've obviously won majors, Lexi, all great players have won majors and also had chances that slipped away, like Sunday for Lexi. How do you bounce back from that? She's going to tee it up three, four days later. How difficult is it to bounce back from a big disappointment like that? And when that's happened to you, what have you done to get back on track quickly?

SO YEON RYU: For me the best way is not thinking about the golf and not even touch the golf club. Like you mentioned, she going to tee it off on Thursday here, so I'm sure it's going to be really tough, especially when you just slip at the U.S. Open Women's Open, not even regular tournament. Winning a U.S. Women's Open is very special. I'm sure Lexi knows that, too. I know it's going to make her even tougher.

But I think she's been professional golfer long enough time to how to figure it out. I also know like she's not just thinking about the U.S. Women's Open. She's thinking about any other golf tournament as same important as U.S. Women's Open.

So I'm sure she's going to put her best effort to playing really well this week. Because she's great enough player one day she might have chance to play -- I mean, to win the U.S. Women's Open again. Last week was not our last U.S. Women's Open. Like Lexi still have plenty of time to playing the U.S. Women's Open.

So we'll see. I'm sure like she had a lot of good people around here to cheer her up and then she'll be all right.

Q. You've talked about how into working out you've been. Seeing that extra distance from your competitors off the tee, is that working out trying to get more distance into your game in order to hang with how far they're hitting it now?

SO YEON RYU: I'm sure like it's just not -- it's not just about other players. Like just every year like if I'm look back, like 10 years ago, even 15 years ago, every time after I finish my season, like during the off seen I always think like, Okay, what's going to be the golfer next year.

I want to hit 10 yards, 15 yards further. So it's not just about the comparison. I think every golfer have desire to hit it longer, but at the same time, I mean, I could say this because Inbee is one of my best friend. To be honest, she's not long hitter. Maybe she's shorter than average but still No. 2 in the world and then she still won the tournament, so that prove that distance not everything.

Actually it's kind of good to have Inbee like keep playing well as not long hitter because you could learn like this is -- distance is not all about it. Let's focus on what I can do better instead of what I cannot really do it. What I mean is maybe I can hit five yards longer, but I know like I never going to hit long like Patty, like even after five years or 10 years. I know like no matter how much work out I'm going to do it I cannot hit like Lexi.

So I rather focus on what I can do better, like putting or iron shot, chipping. So every player have a different talent, and even though I'm always trying hard to do something better I cannot do, I just don't want to focus on one particular things.

Q. When you did your pre-tournament press here in 2019 you explained how much pressure having the financial support of your sponsors takes off your shoulders and let's you focus on golf. How does that help you on the course and how does that hurt some of your competitors who may not have the financial support you have from sponsors?

SO YEON RYU: Well, first of all, I would like to thank you to all the like sponsors who support all the LPGA players.

Also a lot of the people has been ask me, Why Korean players so good at golf and I think one of the most important reason behind is because we always having really good support from our home country.

Like most Korean player sponsored like financially support from them and then they don't really need to worry good the money. They could focus on just golf. I think just dealing with the golf is already tough, but if you have to think about the financial thing it's going to be tougher.

So but at the same time, because they're one of my biggest supporter I want to do everything what I could -- everything what I could do better for them, so that one definitely made me feel like, okay, I really want to playing really well this week.

But I also know it's not about like what I'm playing for. It's just more about how I'm going to play. So I'm not going to lie. I'm definitely going to have extra pressure, but I'm going to try to focus on what I can do instead of what I cannot handle.

THE MODERATOR: All right, I think that will do it for us here. Thank you guys for joining us.

SO YEON RYU: Thank you.

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