

Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational

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Midland Country Club

Danielle Kang

Lydia Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Rolling with Danielle Kang and Lydia Ko at the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational. Thanks for joining us today, guys.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you.

Q. So how did this team come about?

DANIELLE KANG: Just wanted to play together for a long time.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, we talked about it. We had like a couple opportunities like with Inbee's event and just things along the way. You know, and then we never got it to work, so, yeah, I'm super excited for this.

Q. Is this the first time you're playing together?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, we've had quite a few opportunities but never really happened, so we just had it in mind that we are going to play last year together, and just kept it going. Really wanted to do it.

Q. So what is about this team event and your games that you believe will sync up well together to shoot super low?

LYDIA KO: Obviously Danielle's been playing so good, so I'm going to ride off the ace in the group. No, I think especially in like alternate shots it's really important to be comfortable with each other. And best ball, I think it can change a little bit.

But especially when you're playing alternate shots, an important thing is to not feel sorry for each other, so hopefully I won't feel too, too sorry or too bad.

DANIELLE KANG: I don't think we will.

LYDIA KO: And we'll just have a good time. I obviously have known her for such a long time that I think just have we'll fun. That chemistry is such an important thing in team play, so hopefully we will play that as the 15th club in the bag.

Q. I'm sure you get it all the time, Danielle, but with your Solheim Cup experience, do you have any advice going into an event like this?

DANIELLE KANG: For?

Q. For Lydia or just that you rely on?

DANIELLE KANG: Honestly, Lydia and I have played team events other than Solheim and we've been partnered with different personalities of people and played alternate shots and best ball on our own.

Like she said, we've known each other for a long time. She's like my little sister. We just want to have fun and play golf. Her game is so good. At the end of the day I don't want to just disappoint her or let her down or same thing, vice versa. So we're going to play our hearts out.

With that being said, we can honestly talk about who has the strengths of what parts of the game and talking about that and we can talk openly and that's what helps. I think with that said, it'll be a really fun week.

Q. When you say you've known each other for a really long time, do you remember this first interaction?

DANIELLE KANG: We were 13, 14.

LYDIA KO: I met her the first time 2011 U.S. Women's Am, which was the back-to-back, second one she had won. That was my first U.S. Women's Am, and obviously heard a lot about her. I played World Ams and our paths kind of didn't clash, but I'd heard about her and I was like, Oh, I really want to meet her. From there I was lucky enough she took me under her wing.

Yeah, she's I think a great role model and really looks after like her family and friends. So, yeah, I think I --



DANIELLE KANG: Thank you. You say the sweetest things. I love her. I love her.

LYDIA KO: No, it's the truth. I think everybody that knows her well will be able to say the same thing. Yeah, so what, that's like ten years, and it's just gone by so quick. We've had our dinners or like movie nights where we talk about golf and nongolf things.

You know, I think it's great that while we're out here playing and working, you still have like a sister that you can rely on and will be there to support each other no matter what.

Q. Do you remember the first interaction you had with Lydia?

DANIELLE KANG: Yes. She's so cute. She's still cute now. Just like she said, she said so many nice things. I don't take compliments very well. She's amazing, phenom, right, an incredible golfer. The journey she's had so far, we've all gone through it with her and it's incredible to see how far she's come.

Even though win in Hawaii was just so crushing and I loved it, with all that said, like having -- knowing in a team game, knowing that your partner has your back, and I know she has my back on and off the golf course, so that's something that I never have to doubt with each other.

That will just be something that we can rely on.

Q. She laughingly, but I'm sure she was serious, called you the ace of the group.

DANIELLE KANG: No.

Q. What is she to you of the group?

DANIELLE KANG: No, she's the glue right now. She's the glue. I mean, we both are playing solid and it's a golf game. I know what her game is like; she knows what my game is like. I always said we have to kind of sacrifice who is going to hit the wedges, long irons, and things like that.

I know that her wedges -- I always say her golf ball is putting on makeup as it's going to the hole. Like putting on foundation as it floats next it to cup.

(Laughing.) Lydia is gonna hit the wedges. So it's a lot of positives things and we're going to have a lot of fun.

Q. You all talk about having a lot of fun and having a lot of fun on tour. Just what is your favorite part about playing in a team event similar to this?

DANIELLE KANG: What's the fun part about playing a team event?

Q. Yeah.

DANIELLE KANG: I personally love team events. Honestly, having a sister next to me, best friends, sisters, or anybody I can rely on. You got to win together, and it's so much more fun to win together and play together. Losing together, making mistakes together, whatever it may be, you don't feel so you alone.

The person, they go through exactly what you're going through. Golf is a pretty lonely sport, right? You have your caddie and your team, but at the end of the day when you win you win alone.

But that's why I just absolutely love team games. Just want her to know I have her back and we can just rely on each other and go out there and do the best we can. That's all you can ask for.

Q. I also am working on a story about host families, staying with local folks, if you will. Obviously a common practice on tour. Is that something you still do at this point or something you used to do? Are staying with a host family this week, that kind of thing? Is that in the past?

LYDIA KO: I travel a lot with my mom, with my family, so I tend to just find more like a nearby hotel or an airbnb. Obviously I think it's great. I know so many of the players meet a host family and they go back every year, especially at events that the LPGA has gone there for a really long time.

So they become really like a family and one of the reasons why you want to go back to that area. I think Danielle has a great host family in Arkansas.

DANIELLE KANG: Arkansas, yeah.

LYDIA KO: So I think it extends to just being more like, oh, you're just staying there with them for a week. I think it becomes an annual tradition, and I think you have that connection. So I think it's great. Also means that the local people are super excited to see the LPGA come to their area, which is really nice for us to come to a place where they're super welcoming and excited as much as we are.

Q. I don't I know your team name or your walk-up song. Do you care to share those and how you figured it out?

DANIELLE KANG: Don't they find out when we tee off?



Q. I don't know.

DANIELLE KANG: Do we tell them now?

Q. Cydney and Jasmine told us. It's like an open thing.

LYDIA KO: But isn't their name the same as last year, well, two years ago?

Q. Yeah. They shared their walk-up song as well.

LYDIA KO: Oh, okay.

DANIELLE KANG: Do we share it?

LYDIA KO: Maybe just the name.

DANIELLE KANG: Okay.

LYDIA KO: Because the song I think should be like what happens --

DANIELLE KANG: Exciting, yes.

LYDIA KO: -- on the Friday and Saturday, right?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. Our name is Sisters from Another Mister.

Q. And who came up with that?

DANIELLE KANG: I mean, we thought really hard for the name. It was difficult to come up with, but she's like family, so she thought of Ko-Kang, but then I said, You want me to go by myself?

LYDIA KO: No, I'm still there for you.

DANIELLE KANG: Like Ko-Kang. I said, I don't want to go by myself, so we changed that a little bit.

Q. And then when did you guys start strategizing the golf course, and especially alternate shot?

LYDIA KO: We played nine holes together yesterday, so that was probably when we -- with our caddies, Ollie and Derek. They helped us out and see, okay, if you tee off even numbers like who would have more putts or who would have more iron shots.

And, I mean, obviously Danielle's game is strong in all aspects, but I really think her ball striking, especially, when it comes to iron shots, is really one of the best.

So that was kind of one of the things that I think we needed to use to our advantage. We actually just decided.

DANIELLE KANG: As she's saying that I also said to her, You need to putt. Her putting and chipping, her short game around the green, that touch is immaculate. So I said whoever is going to handle the short game more, she feels more comfortable with that, and I told her I'll get it on the greens so she can make it from all around the green.

We're going with that kind of strategy. We're tried to figure that out. We were still strategizing until even walking up here.

Q. And then if I could ask one last question. Both of you are headed to Tokyo. How did you decide your schedules leading up to the Olympics?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, you know, Evian is a place where I have a lot of special memories, so that was one that I didn't want to miss. I'm just going to go back home to Orlando for a few days before Tokyo.

Obviously most ideal would've been going straight to Tokyo from France, but just with travel restrictions and everything going on it was a little bit easier for me to go back home and then go over.

But, yeah, I think all players have different plans. Some people are skipping this week; some are skipping next week. I think you just got to do what's best for you. Obviously it's a very big week. So, yeah, very exciting lead up for that.

DANIELLE KANG: For me, I had to think about my schedule in the course of three month action. With a lot of travel coming up and I was defending last week and I didn't want to miss playing a team event with Lydia, unfortunately for Evian I didn't make a decision lightly. There was the British Open, the Solheim Cup, and as much as important as Evian is my caddie couldn't caddie for me that week as well, so it was just -- I would have hire somebody new, fly all way there, fly back, fly to Tokyo.

It just got a bit too chaotic, and I think it was just the best thing to do for me to skip the week. It just happened to be Evian. Unfortunately that's the schedule that I'm playing.

With that said, I'm going to be rooting for everybody that goes there, and every time I think of Evian I think of Lydia, to be honest. You know, with the little baby Lydia with the water everything. I always have a special place of Evian with Lydia. I've correlated it. I said it's Evian Championship presented by Lydia.

So, yeah, I'll be her biggest cheerleader next week.

Q. With the Olympics coming up you mention at 2016 that your medal was one of the biggest accomplishments of your career. How do you feel about the accomplishment in regards to your whole career today looking back?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's definitely one of my most proud moments. Obviously medalling was one thing, but to be able to represent your country, you know, we represent our country on a daily basis, but on a stage like that, that doesn't happen very often, alongside the best golfers but also the best athletes around the world.

Yeah, one of the most memorable moments in my career, and I think the great thing about the Olympics is, yes, there is a gold medalist, silver medalist, and bronze medalist. I think just being at the Olympics itself, you're a champion just to be there and it really celebrates each and every athlete that's there.

A lot of times when we're playing we go, Oh, so and so came second to whoever, or you finished this far behind. I think just that's the great thing about the Olympics. You are medaled and just in that own I guess -- you don't feel like you're second behind someone. You're just a winner, no matter if you do medal or not. That's the great thing about it.

It might sometimes top me coming first, being second, which is pretty ironic, because you wouldn't really say that at any other event.

DANIELLE KANG: You're an Olympian for life. Yeah. I even said everyone should get a medal for going to the Olympics.

LYDIA KO: I think so.

DANIELLE KANG: It's hard work. Everyone that made it has worked really hard in their lives and gone through their own journeys to be there. It's something special.

Q. How did you feel golf has grown in New Zealand since your medal?

LYDIA KO: Hopefully a lot. To be honest, I haven't been able to go home much even since then. The last time I was back was in 2019, middle of the year. So I haven't really been able to go home much, which is kind of a shame because I would obviously love to go home, go back to the places I really grew up and kind of see how much golf has developed.

Over the quarantine, you know, a lot of -- some of the only places we could go to were golf courses, and I know through that time golf had become more popular, and I think before people would think golf is like a sport for old people. Now I think like everyone, even the younger generations are taking it, which is great. They're definitely some of the next generation that's going to be in this position down the line.

So, yeah, hopefully if I can inspire one more junior to take up the game and want to become the next LPGA player or PGA player, I think that's a job well done on my part.

Q. Have you heard from any juniors from New Zealand about wanting to be the next LPGA player or reach out to you for advice?

LYDIA KO: Not personally, but when I did have my -- when did I my scholarship with New Zealand Golf we were picking and giving scholarships to players that definitely had the potential and wanted to become an LPGA player and come over here.

So there has been quite a few good players. Amelia Garvey is one who just played the U.S. Women's Open the last couple years, and she's had a super successful career coming out of USC as well.

Hopefully down the road and in the next few years I won't be the only New Zealand golfer out here. But, yeah, hoping to fly the New Zealand flag a little bit more broadly.

Q. You're not going to share the walk-up song. Can you give us at least a genre?

DANIELLE KANG: My answer is no. (Laughter.) I mean...

LYDIA KO: It's spicy.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah.

Q. Spicy? We'll take that. Thank you both. Good luck this week.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.

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