

Founders Cup presented by U.S. Virgin Islands

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Bradenton Country Club

Minjee Lee

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone to the media center. Here with Minjee Lee, one of our past champions of the Founders Cup presented by U.S. Virgin Islands.

Minjee, great to see you here so early in the season. I know you didn't play this event last year, but you are a Founders Cup champion, so just excited to have you back.

Tell us about how you're feeling to be out here.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, offseason was quite short. Pretty quick turnaround. Only a couple weeks to practice and then play these first two events.

So I'm excited to be here. A lot of new faces, so it's just nice to see everyone, and, no, it's nice to be here, yeah.

Q. We talked with one the rookies, Cassie Porter, yesterday, an Aussie, like you. Know anything about her? What are some of the other new faces you've seen out here?

MINJEE LEE: Obviously all the rookies I don't know too well because this is my 11th year on Tour and feels like everybody is ten years younger than me.

Yeah, I've met Cassie before. Seen her at a lot of the Aussie events, and hopefully as the year goes along, I get to know her a little bit better, see her a little bit more, yeah.

Q. And I know you finished last week with a really good round to sort of jump start your season. How good are you feeling about your game coming into an event where you have been successful before?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, definitely a lot of confidence coming off the 10-under on Sunday. Didn't really expect too much obviously being the first tournament of the season, for me, and playing with the celebrities was a lot of fun. Just kind of a nice way to start the year.

Yeah, I mean, I haven't got too many expectations here as well. I just want to have a good week and just get everything a little more settled with the new putter and every thing.

So, yeah, looking forward to getting it started.

Q. Wanted to check in on your experience on Full Swing and what was that like filming?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I mean, there was a few times they came out, once to my place for a few interviews and I think they came out to Shadow Creek when we played the match play and my brother was following me around.

And also one other time at one of Min's events, so got a little bit of everything, and I feel like I'm probably going to be the first LPGA player to feature in the Full Swing, so hopefully it opens the doors to other LPGA players getting on a few of the episodes.

I think it'll be a lot of fun once it comes out.

Q. We know you have such a fun personality. Was there anything you think they captured you that your fans and other people may not know?

MINJEE LEE: I feel like maybe because it was more like behind the scenes and kind of like I guess not many people have seen me go to like Min Woo's tournaments and how I would react when he's playing or how he reacts when I'm playing. Maybe that would be a little bit of fun. Something different that not many people have seen before.

Q. I know long putter was a hot topic last week. It paid off. 62 on Sunday is nothing to scoff at. For you, what is it about that putter that looks so good when you're looking down at it over the ball?

MINJEE LEE: I think the putter itself doesn't look that different to me because I was kind of using a similar head shape, and with the new square-to-square Callaway brought out, it goes straight into the middle of the face, I guess the shaft, so it wasn't too different.



Just where more my hands are on the shaft and obviously it's a longer so you're a bit up taller so the way you look at the hole is a little bit different.

So I mean, it's just kind of a new adventure. I have never done it before. It's something that doesn't feel too unnatural to me. I feel like over time I'll get much more comfortable and probably much more confident with all the length of like putts.

Q. You just touched our on it a little bit. That grip adjustment, did it take you a little bit of time to get it nailed down, or like you said, something that felt super natural when you started to do it?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I felled around with a few different types of grips like with my right-hand, because you can pretty much do anything you want along you're anchoring the putter, right?

Yeah, I tried probably three different times, three different ones, until I was set on which kind of grip I, like which is the pencil grip. I felt most comfortable with that one.

Q. I know this is a little bit earlier than you typically have started your seasons in the past. Getting off to such a hot start last week, do you feel like it was the right decision to start earlier this season to get yourself into a groove before you head into Asia and before you head into the meat of the season in March?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I've not started this early in probably maybe like seven years or something like that. So, I felt like with the new putter it was a little early, like I didn't have that much time to get used to it; then I just came out to play earlier. I didn't really feel super unready or anything. Like I felt my swing was kind of in a pretty good space like after the first week and a half of training.

So it was just really getting settled with the putter and just feeling a little more comfortable with it. So I tried to play a little bit more in like the week leading up to heading over here. I was a little more in like the groove to go and play a tournament.

Q. You mentioned Cassie earlier. Duane Smith is caddieing for her this week, and they are now running the Golf Australia house in Orlando.

MINJEE LEE: Yep.

Q. How important is it to have that Golf Australia connection over here, and what has that done for your career?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, so it was a little bit -- the house came a little later so I was like already on Tour and then it got introduced.

But I was able to -- playing over here I was able to visit and there were times when there are like ten people staying at the house. I think it just feels like a sense of family. When you're over here the lifestyle is quite lonely. There are a lot of things behind the scenes that I guess people don't see.

I think just having that kind of support, Sarah and Duane have taken over the house now and Theo is there. I think it's just really cool that all the amateurs and the rookies or people have somewhere to go.

The first few years it was a very nomadic life for me living out a suitcase. It's nice to have a little bit of a base where people can go and relax and go practice, mingle with the other players and go to Disneyland, do something other than play golf and be on the grind all the time.

So I think it's just really important that they kind of have that kind of base and just feel like they've got someone to lean on and just, yeah, a group of people that they can get support from.

Q. Even before the house existed was Golf Australia really providing the support mechanism for all the players?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, they have the rookie program for like the players just turning professional, so we would get some financial support to be able to travel and to be able to support ourselves on the road.

In the beginning you're not always -- you don't always have that financial security at the start of your career, so I think that really helped for me. I know it helps a lot of the other rookies. Even as an amateur we had such a great program growing up I was able to go to a lot of other tournaments in other countries and just get that exposure and just get a little bit of different experiences, which are priceless now.

That's kind of what we do on Tour, so, yeah.

Q. I was hoping to get your initial reaction to the new slow play policy that was unveiled yesterday.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's great. I would probably say that something had to be done at some point. It's 2025 and we are just implementing a little bit harsher rules to start with, and it's going to be a great policy.

Then hopefully we can go from strength to strength and get a little bit more and more quicker.

Q. What would you say was the general reaction in the room to it?

MINJEE LEE: I think it was quite good. I mean, nobody really -- I mean, nobody really was opposed to it because obviously we get on TV and we have -- I mean, a lot of holes might be backed up and then TV goes a little off and play goes a little off and everybody is unhappy.

So, yeah, I didn't really think it was too negative at all.

Q. Just going back to the Founders Cup, you won this event but you also have participated in this event while we still had the Founders alive.

MINJEE LEE: Yes.

Q. Any moments or things that you think about when you return to an event like this that highlights our Founders that stick out to you the most?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I think what I remember when I won last time at the Founders Cup, it was Shirley was still there so she was driving around and just saying hello to everyone.

I got to play a pro-am with her like in Phoenix a while back and she was just so funny. She was just so fun.

I think just they have done so much for us and the Tour. To be where we are now, it wouldn't have started without them, so we're just all very grateful.

I think just seeing like before when a few of them were able to come to the tournament, they would be sitting just right where the 18th green was so it was always lovely to see their faces and give them a hug and just a hello at the end the round.

Yeah, I think that's what most memorable to me.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Minjee.

MINJEE LEE: Thanks.

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