

BMW Ladies Championship

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Busan, South Korea

LPGA International Busan

Jin Young Ko

Press Conference

Q. Jin Young, what does it mean to you to be back here at the BMW Ladies Championship?

JIN YOUNG KO: I'm really looking forward to this week, and it's really great to be back at the BMW Ladies Championship. Of course two years ago it was a different experience. We had fans come out, and this time around we won't have any fans here. So that is unfortunate.

But I think the players are now quite used to playing without the fans. And I think all the players, myself included, will just give it our best at this course.

Q. Taking you back a few weeks ago, you were able to earn your third victory of the season at the Cognizant Founders Cup. It's been a few weeks since then, but what did that win mean to you?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes, I think that that win was significant. I think going four weeks back, I had two wins, and I was runner-up in one. And in the event that you mentioned, before that event was held, there was another event, and there was a playoff, and I wasn't able to get in the playoff.

And so I think overall the Cognizant event was really important because I was able to get over that disappointment prior and focus on the game at hand and really yield great results.

So I think I grew as a player. And so that win was significant in that way. And also it was quite meaningful because it -- that was my 10th Tour win.

Q. Your 10th win on the LPGA Tour. In the grand picture, it was the 199th win by a player from Korea on the LPGA Tour. A win by a Korean player this week in Busan would mean the 200th win by a Korean player. What do you think that means to the players here from Korea competing this week, and what would it mean to you to be able to win at the 200th win on the LPGA Tour?

JIN YOUNG KO: So going to that win two weeks ago,

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my win was the 199th win by a Korean player on the LPGA Tour. And I think it's kind of a fascinating coincidence that we are playing in an event in Korea when that event will determine whether we will see a 200th win by a Korean player on the LPGA Tour.

Obviously there are a lot of Korean players in the field, and I think I will be happy for anyone to gain that win. Of course I will try my best. And if I were to be that Korean player to record the 200th win, it will really be an honor and a joy.

All I can say is I'll do my best to continue that milestone, but I will equally happy for any Korean player to achieve that milestone.

Q. You seem to have a thing for breaking records on the LPGA Tour, whether it be the streak in 2019 or the current consecutive rounds in the 60s streak you've had at the moment. Did you think about that at all on that final day at Founders Cup? And how do you kind of get that out of your mind as you take on this new week, a new tournament, in a whole different country?

JIN YOUNG KO: I can't say honestly that was not on my mind at the Founders Cup. I was aware of that record, and it was on my mind. I think it served as great motivation for me on Sunday's final round.

Of course that's not my sole goal. When I go on course, I focus on myself. But I think that it helps you as a player to have some motivating factors.

Also, for me, I relaxed for a week, and during that week I really thought hard about what my priorities are and what my values are.

And so of course I will be happy to break a record and make a new record. I think it's really important for me to focus and concentrate on my game and also enjoy the game.

And I think that at the end of the day, the records will be determined by how I play on the course and what kind of attitude I have.

So the pressure is there, but I think that I can keep the pressure in check. And I also think that having that ambition, I guess, to break records and that desire is also what drives players in general to be better.



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Q. As we get ready for this week at the LPGA International Busan, 2019, you finished in the top 10 here. What do you like most about this course, and what do you think it does best to suit your game?

JIN YOUNG KO: So as we said, I finished in the top 10 in 2019. While the course setup has changed slightly, but, you know, I have really good memories of 2019.

And the hotel we're at is right in front of the ocean. I always find the ocean very comfortable. So it's quite refreshing. And we have a great view of the ocean, so I've just been reading and listening to music.

And I think the course here suits my game well.

Q. It's been a crazy season, some calling it a super season for the LPGA Tour. You have 10 top 10 finishes in 16 starts this year. How do you evaluate what you've been able to do this season?

JIN YOUNG KO: I think looking back on the season I would have to say there were some real dramatic up and downs. For instance, I think I started the season off finishing in the top 5, and then in an event following that, I did not make the cut for the first time in years.

And then I finished top 10 in a major, and then afterwards I came in 20, 30 place in some of the other events. And then I won another event, and then there was the Olympics, and then I took a short break. And then in the past four weeks I've won two tournaments.

So there have been some real up and downs. And I have to say we only have three events left, including this one, in the season, and it's quite unbelievable how time really flew this season.

Q. So it's been a couple of months since the Olympics. And if you win this event, you will garner your fourth season win, and it will be your 11th win on Tour. And I believe that it might be a personal goal of yours to win because if you win it's likely that you can reclaim your position as the top-ranking golfer on Tour. So I'm wondering how ambitious are you at that point?

JIN YOUNG KO: Of course it would be very nice to be the Korean player that garners the 200th win as a Korean player on the LPGA Tour. And it would be really the cherry on top if I can reclaim the position, the first-ranking position again.

That would be the perfect scenario. But as you know, golf never goes as you planned. And if it did, I might not be playing golf right now. I think with golf, because it never goes as you plan, you have to do what you can. And that's part of the appeal of golf as a sport.

I think that I came down on the ranking list because towards the middle of the season I wasn't doing as well as Nelly Korda. She was doing a great job.

I have to say, though, when I became the first-ranking player, besides the title itself, I was really able to see how I do as a player and what parts I needed to shore up in my game.

So I'm not really ambitious about reclaiming that position or title, rather I think I want to become wiser and I want to be able to find ways I can enjoy the game as a golfer. And if I can reclaim the title after I go through that process where I find how I can enjoy golf as a golf player, that won't be bad either.

Q. I have to say, we are getting to the homestretch of events here on the LPGA Tour. I believe we'll next see you at the CME Group Tour Championship, which you won last year. So how will you use an event like the BMW Ladies Championship to continue your momentum of this impressive season?

JIN YOUNG KO: I think that it's easy for people to think that events like the CME Group Tour champions might overshadow BMW Ladies Championship or other events because the purses are larger, and in my case I'm the defending champion.

But that's one of the misperceptions I think people have for golf players. Every event, every week is valuable. And you never know which event is going to push you in the right direction in terms of your career. You never know in which event you're going to make history.

So I think of course it would be nice to win later on the CME event as defending champion, but I think the focus now is to continue efforts to grow as a player and really make efforts to play good golf every week, in every event.

Q. My question for you is how basically do you manage your work-life balance? How do you balance your life as a professional golf player, and how do you balance your life just being yourself?

JIN YOUNG KO: I have to say achieving the so-called work-life balance is quite difficult. And I think this is especially so if you're a professional golfer and if you're part of a Tour like the LPGA. But I think for me I place a lot of priority on me as a human being rather than as a professional golf player.

I would have to say I give -- in terms of weight, I give priority about 70 percent to being me and 30 percent to being a professional golf player.

The mindset is you have to kind of look at golf as a hobby, and this is because it is your occupation and it is

for me a part of my life. So it's really difficult and hard not to care. So you have to consciously try to move away from that kind of mindset.

And I think when you become 50 and 60 years, golf was everything in your life, then your 50s and 60s you might look back and think you missed life.

And so I think also life as a golf player is important, but your life as an individual is also very important. And so you shouldn't really put off things that you want to do just because you become a professional golf player.

I mean, there are limitations. You might want to drink soda, but you can't have that much soda. But I think if you want to have a boyfriend, for example, that's something that you should do because later on in life you might regret that.

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