

JTBC Classic presented by Barbasol

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Carlsbad, California, USA

Aviara Golf Club

Leona Maguire

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome into the media center here at the JTBC Classic Presented by Barbasol. We're here with Leona Maguire, first-time winner couple events ago.

How is your game? We last say you in Thailand; had a top 15 finish; played pretty solid.

How you feeling ahead of this week?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, went home for a few days, saw my coach. Jet lag was pretty tough after a few weeks in Asia, but thought my game was in pretty good shape there.

Played nicely. Didn't maybe putt as well as would've liked, but, yeah, nice to be back Stateside again. Had my first look at the golf course today. Played 18 holes today.

Yeah, looking forward to the week.

THE MODERATOR: Back on the LPGA DriveOn at Crown Colony got your first win, first win for Ireland on the LPGA Tour. Have you got a chance to go back home since then?

LEONA MAGUIRE: I went home before Singapore and Thailand, yeah.

Q. Did we get the gold convertible again? Like what's that -- what was that reaction like?

LEONA MAGUIRE: No, not quite. We didn't do the whole parade through the town. I was nearly back for St. Patrick's Day. I feel like we would've done it. I was just a few weeks too early.

No, everyone was really excited. It was a big deal. It was along time coming I think. Wasn't long ago we didn't have a player on the LPGA, let alone a winner, and hopefully it's inspired a young generation of Irish players.

Yeah, still a lot of golf to be played this year. It's nice to get a win early in the season and to come out strong after what



I thought was a really good rookie two years, I guess.

So, yeah, it was great to get to see everybody, get to celebrate with everybody, and ready to go again.

THE MODERATOR: What did that win mean to you personally and what do you think it meant to Ireland?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think it's you just been a long journey I guess. You never know if you're fully doing the right thing or if it's ever going to fully happen.

There is a lot of great golfers on the LPGA. Felt like I played some really great golf in 2021 and got beaten by Lydia in Hawaii who just played some incredible golf, and Nelly at Meijer.

You kind of wonder what have to do. I shot 61 at Evian; that wasn't good enough. You just never know when it's going to be your week, and you have to be incredibly patient.

I suppose those weeks where it all sort of falls into place and everything goes right makes you -- you need to appreciate those moments when they happen. I think golf is a fickle game and it's easy to get down on yourself, so you enjoy those moments when they happen.

Q. Here at Aviara Golf Club, have you got chance to see the course? If you have, what are your thoughts?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I played here last year. Got my first look -- bags went missing yesterday, so got my first look today. Played 18 today. Got a little match and Stef Meadow and Madelene Sagstrom, so that was fun.

Yeah, it's a good golf course. You have to pick your shots, keep it on the fairways, hit into the right spots on the greens. The greens aren't incredibly fast, but they're sneaky fast above the pins.

I think staying in the right spot is going to be key this week. Never been a big fan of poa greens, so that's going to be a challenge for me this week to sort of be patient and trusting my lines.



So that's going to be the big thing this week.

Q. Does being a winner change how you feel when you come out to the next tournament? Do you carry any more confidence, or is it just reset, start of a new week?

LEONA MAGUIRE: No, I think with golf you have to have a pretty shot of memory. I don't think -- the golf world doesn't care if I won or not.

Yeah, it definitely gives you confidence knowing that you can compete, that you're good enough to win. I think for me the biggest switch was after Solheim. I don't feel like this win has added that much more. I felt like I earned a lot of my respect of my peers after Solheim.

Yeah, it's always nice people coming up, congratulating you, but just as much it's me congratulating Nanna this week after her win in Thailand as opposed to -- people forget of what happened a few weeks ago.

Yeah, you're just trying to get another one I guess and keep going.

Q. What's that feeling like that you got from Solheim? Is it that you belong, that you're good enough to be out here? Like what is the validation you feel like that gave you?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think it was -- I mean, obviously we had a very strong team being there as a rookie. I think the confidence that Beany had in me that week to put me out in all five matches, that was something I wasn't expecting, to be able to hole the putts when I did, hit the shots when I did, and that felt like a win that week, even though it technically wasn't.

So that definitely gave me a lot of confidence, just knowing you can pull off the shots when you need to, that sort of what you're doing, you're on the right track.

So definitely relied on a few of those sort of memories and experiences going forward in the majors and events after that.

Q. Do you feel like you're playing the best golf of your life right now?

LEONA MAGUIRE: That's a good question. I don't know. I definitely felt like I was very comfortable with my game in Florida. Was the best I have ever played? I probably played some better golf last year at points.

Just it all clicked together, and it's one of those things you just never know when it's going to be your week. Just need to hole a few putts at the right time, and felt like I did that in Florida. It was a very sort of clinical performance.

I mean, if anything I felt like I played better in Thailand. It was weird. Tee-to-green I played better in Thailand; I just didn't putt as well as I did in Florida, and that's golf.

Q. What did you work on with your coach?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Just fine tuning a few things. After all the travel and stuff the body gets a bit tired, slip into a few bad habits and stuff. We checked a few things with my putting to make sure it was ready to go for this west coast swing.

I putted well in China, but not as well as I would've liked, so I think that's the big thing. My irons have been solid all year, so just keeping them where they are and just trying to hole a few more putts.

Q. What were some the bad habits?

LEONA MAGUIRE: I mean, my alignment gets a little off, get a little left, drop a little bit inside, and my posture just gets a bit tired.

Nothing major. Just kind of keeping on the straight and narrow.

Q. I can imagine a win was on your list of goals for the year. What other goals do you have for the rest of this season?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, try to be in contention as much as possible. You get a taste and you want to be back there, so just giving myself as many opportunities as possible.

And that was the thing even with the win. If I hadn't won in Florida that week I was proud of keep putting myself in contention, keep knocking on the door, keep giving myself chances, and the win doesn't change that.

The mentality is still the same for the rest of the year. We've got this week and the major coming up next week, so try to be in contention in as many majors as possible.

The big goal last year was to try and qualify for the majors, get back into U.S. Open. Haven't been there for two years, so be nice to go back to North Carolina again.

Yeah, just trying to play as well as I can every week.

Q. Last year you changed your shafts going into last season. Any changes to your bag this year so far?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Nope. No, it's all the same. Yeah, if it ain't broke I'm not going to fix it.

Q. Just looking ahead, obviously the year's first major is next week. Are you a player that typically plays the week before a major?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I like to play. I've kind of figured out that multiple weeks off are not that good for me. I enjoy practicing but I enjoy competing more and it keeps my game sharp, so, yeah, I'm not planning on skipping any events this side of U.S. Open.

We'll see as the year progresses, but, no, I like to play my way into form. Yeah, no, plan on playing ahead of all the majors this year.

Q. How do you pace yourself with that goal in mind, to play every event before the U.S. Women's Open?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think it's making use of the off weeks as well to rest, recharge, doing what needs to be done and not overdoing things.

Sometimes you can be too eager to try and fix every thing and try to be ultra prepared. Sometimes you have to sort of trust that the work that you have done in the off-season is enough.

Going to make a trip back to Duke and North Carolina ahead of the U.S. Open so that the week of U.S. Open I can take it a little bit easier.

It's nice now I guess not being a rookie anymore coming back to golf courses where this week I know what the golf course looks like. You're not figuring out as much. You can get into it pretty quickly.

Chevron now, I guess Palm Springs I've been to a few times so I know what to expect. You can kind of prepare a few weeks in advance so then the week of the event take it a little bit easier.

Q. What's it like having a course with such different greens one week and then going to -- obviously having the knowledge of both courses probably helps -- but what's that like to try to get yourself prepared to putt on poa and go to Mission Hills?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, I think couple weeks out here you're kind of dipping in and out of both, and then as it gets to the week of the tournament you're just

focusing on the week at hand.

This week is all about this week, trying to play as well as I can this week, and when Sunday night comes we'll switch our attention to Chevron. Right now 100% of the focus has to be on this week and whatever it takes to putt well and score well around here.

THE MODERATOR: Sounds like a great strategy. Good luck this week.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Thank you.

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