

Maybank Championship

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club

Atthaya Thitikul

Ida Ayu Melati

Dottie Ardina

Amanda Tan

NG Jing Xuen

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Okay, welcome everybody to the media center here for our final press conference of the week before play kicks off tomorrow.

I'm joined by a lovely group of players here. Each of these players comes from a country that is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN.

First we have Atthaya Thitikul from Thailand.

Ida Ayu Melati or Mela of Indonesia.

Amanda Tan of Singapore there at the end.

Jing Xuen of Malaysia.

And Dottie Ardina of the Philippines.

Maybank has long been committed to empowering communities throughout ASEAN, and especially when it comes to elevating golf and sport throughout the region, so we're happy to welcome this great group to the Maybank Championship to showcase their talent.

Starting there at the end with Amanda, you just finished your first season on the Epson Tour. I'm wondering if you could tell us what you learned about yourself in your first year as a pro on the Epson Tour?

AMANDA TAN: I think it's been great playing on the Epson Tour, just being able to travel around the U.S. and learning to do all of that, it's been great, and the challenges that I face on Epson, just the mental stuff about golf and all that, I think has been really good for me and I really learned a lot.



Q. Dottie, I know you had some recent good results out on tour. Top 10 finish in Arkansas; top 30 the week after. Just wondering how these recent good results have been helping with your confidence, and if you could tell us about the state of your game right now.

DOTTIE ARDINA: I think I gained a lot of confidence this past month, because it's been an up and down year for me and I had a rough start. I think the last four weeks has been pretty good and boost my confidence coming up to this week.

Q. Mela, you have had a successful season on the Thai Tour. Hoping you could tell us how excited you are to test your game on the LPGA Tour.

IDA AYU MELATI: I had my first year as a pro, a Thailand pro, so this is first LPGA event, so I'm really grateful for the opportunity. I'm really going to enjoy this week and hopefully see some good performance later in the week.

So, yeah.

Q. JX, you've played this golf course before. How happy are you to be representing your home country this week and playing at home?

NG JING XUEN: First of all, I would like to thank our sport ministry, Hannah Yeoh and Kelly Tan for bringing back the LPGA event after such a long time.

I would like to thank LPGA and Maybank for giving me this precious opportunity to compete in such a prestigious event. Being able to compete with world class professionals, learn from them and enjoy, and also enjoy the LPGA's environment, like the set up course is actually quite challenge thing week I would say.

Yeah, let's see how it goes.

Q. Last question from me for Atthaya. I was reading some stats from you today that you have the best cumulative score to par in Asian events over the last two years. You play really well in Asia apparently.



How do you do that? How much do you like playing in this Asian Swing of events?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: I mean, it's really, I mean amazing coming back to Asia. Had some good food in each country that we been, and then it's feel like -- I think it's feel like home always being in Asia, especially Malaysia, Singapore. It's similar to Thailand. I mean, the weather-wise, the food-wise, and the people, they're all cheering you up. We had good vibes.

Q. I would like to ask this question for JX. I know that it's your first time playing LPGA Tour event as an amateur, and then you had a good year with your SEA Games gold medal. How do you feel? How confident are you going into the week. How has your prep been and also if there is any goals that you would like it achieve this week?

NG JING XUEN: I would say, I mean, for the next few days the environment is going to be very different, because this is a very big event, LPGA. But I would like to treat it as every event, like it's the same. That's my mindset. That will be my goal.

Yeah, I've seen a lot of pros here practicing. I've learned a lot from them. I would definitely love to have another chance to play in this big tournament. Yeah, I think I'm pretty much ready because I have a very good caddie. He always jokes a lot and he makes me happy, because for me it's important to be in a good mood, and I can perform quite well, yeah.

Q. Like to ask the young lady from Thailand to share with us, because you are sitting with some proteges there. I know you're young also. Not more than 20 I think. But anyway, just like to congratulate you on what you achieved so far, multiple win on the LPGA Tour. You're now world No. 1 as well, which is really good. Maybe you can share with us your own experiences like to actually get there. Those four young ladies on your left, that's what they will be trying to aspire to. Am I correct?

GROUP: (Nods.)

Q. So maybe you can share with us something on that. Thank you.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Well, so I don't know, I mean, like from amateur to professional-wise, I can see -- you can see the different between her and me right now. I mean, like the attitude, the vibes, the mood now, she has so many like, you know, confidence, power, not thinking about much.

But once why she became a pro I think it's more affect. I mean, like around you, surrounding you it's more affect about your games, all the thing around yourself.

And then also you had to travel a lot more than when -- I think when you are amateur you only play like two month and then two or three tournaments maximum. When you turn pro then you had like three weeks in a row, which is like hard to manage.

And then you need to know your body well, your schedule well. Sometimes somebody like to play just two weeks and rest; somebody like to play three; somebody like to play one and rest.

I think it's a huge different between amateur and pro, but what I going to tell is keep that attitude and then keep the mood, keep, you know, who you are. Don't let anything change who you are.

Then just be yourself and don't let other people or other one thinking about you or something like that destroy who you are no matter what.

I think that's the most important part. You know yourself well enough to do all the stuff. Yeah, I think enjoy and then golf is just golf. Balance.

Q. Thank you. That's a very nice answer. So just one other thing for yourself again. Now Thailand ladies golf is quite strong. Actually, some people are saying that it might even begin to challenge the South Koreans, although I think it will take some time. But Thailand ladies golf is really strong now. So you tell us, how did it get there? What made it become so strong? And actually it's getting stronger. Then the other ladies on your left, one by one tell us did you guys all play the practice round? I'm not sure. Have you played the practice round?

GROUP: (Nodding.)

Q. How do you find the golf course?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: For me, I would say we had so many top players from Thailand that inspiring me. I mean, myself, I do have Ariya, Moriya, Pornanong, you know, a lot of -- Patty also inspiring me to become a good golfer for ourselves and also for the country.

I'm not going to say we have to beat any country, but I will say I love to see not just Thailand, but all Asia get to the top of the leaderboard of the LPGA Tour. I think it's a huge part, and I would be happy if I see any Asian player get to

the top of the leaderboard, which mean all Asian, we're strong, we're together.

Our countries, I think everyone love coming to Asia, especially me. I love playing in Asia. I think we are like a neighbor and we're trying to catch on top of the LPGA Tour, which is like not just Thailand, but I think all Asian would love to do that.

NG JING XUEN: So talking about the course?

Q. Yes. (Indiscernible.)

NG JING XUEN: I would think like -- actually, most of the holes they put it quite back at the men's tees, like the black tees, and I think it really tests your management, course management, like your decision making.

If you are wise enough and your irons are well and putting is well, I think, yeah, your 're going to do good on this course I would say.

And it's raining outside again, so it's going to be quite tough to play. I mean, it's all right. It's not that bad. Yeah, I would say just course management and decision making plays a really important role this week.

IDA AYU MELATI: So this is actually my first time playing at this course. One thing I notice is I really -- one important thing is to put my ball in the fairway, because the rough is sticky. It gets sticky. Like if you get too much off then it's tough for you. You almost want to layup first and then go for the green.

So, yeah, that's number one.

Number two, maybe the greens are quite grainy also, so, yeah, we'll see how it goes. And like she said, course management is super important on this course. Yeah, we'll see how it is throughout the week.

DOTTIE ARDINA: I think it will be a challenge, especially with the weather, the raining, and the condition of the course will be probably different in the next few days.

I think tee shot is a very important part this week. Like they said, course management. I've never played this side of the course; I played the other side long time ago, but I would say they're very opposite.

I'm up for the challenge, so looking forward to it.

AMANDA TAN: I think likewise like Dottie, I played the other course but never played this one. Again, I think it's very different, two very different course. Yeah, I think this

week is going to be a challenge, like what they say. Got to be smart about it. Got to know what you want to do and just commit to it.

So, yeah, it's going to be challenging, but I think pretty exciting.

Q. So how do you guys handle the pressure during the tournaments? Also, what are your strategies to stay focused, especially with the unpredictable weather right now? For all you guys. And also being more towards home ground, right? You guys are all from ASEAN area so you have the strong support of the locals.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, to handle the pressure, I think it's just a really normal situation that all the players going to be feel or have to face of it.

And to be honest, it's depend on the people. For me, maybe like trying to focus on the present. Don't really be angry on the past that you miss and don't think or worry about the future. It's not coming yet for me.

And then, yeah, trying to be at the present, trying to keep and think shot by shot on the course, and then don't really put pressure on yourself too much. Don't put the on yourself more.

What's the question again, the second?

Yeah, like they said, it's going to be a wet week, and also I think it's going to -- one thing it's good in Asia Shay, in Singapore and Malaysia and Thailand, is when it's raining it's always strong raining so we have to stop. It's suspended anyway and that's a good thing in Asia. In America we have to play during the rain, right? (Laughter.)

But it's going to be wet and then the course going to be I think softer, which make us play a little longer as well. So let's see how it's going. I don't like playing the rain as well, but some other people like it.

NG JING XUEN: For me, yeah, just like what Atthaya said: Focus on the present, shot by shot. Your routine, when you're up to the ball, check the yardage and discuss with your caddie I think shot by shot, slowly.

My method of golf is just like how you forget the past and focus on now and don't worry about the future. Yeah, just like Atthaya said. I really think that that's the most important thing. Forget all the pressure. Whatever you do, the pressure is still there. You just got to change your mindset to, yeah, I play with the pressure.

IDA AYU MELATI: So about the pressure, I would be lying if I say I'm not nervous. So, yes, I'm nervous, but in a way I do care about this competition and I am really looking forward for this week. Just play hole by hole and see how it goes.

About the weather, can't do anything about it. If it's raining, let me stay in the clubhouse I guess.

Yeah, the course going to play longer, but it goes to everyone, so, yeah.

DOTTIE ARDINA: I think the pressure will always be there for everybody, but I think it depends how you handle yourself out there. I think the most important thing is it rains, it doesn't rain, just have fun and enjoy yourself and enjoy the Mother Nature.

AMANDA TAN: I think I'm just going to try and enjoy myself out there, enjoy this experience again. For me, being able to play in an LPGA event, I'm just thankful for the opportunity, and so, yeah, just going to take in whatever happens this week and just make the most out of it.

Q. Just one more. Last one. You played with the Queen this morning. Don't tell us what the queen scored. We don't want to know. Just tell us how it was. Thank you.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, it's been a pleasure and an honor to play with the Queen. And also good news that she's like following me play and then also like request me to play with her, which is like honor.

Yeah, she was really nice and then pretty humble Queen and also like funny as well. So was just good being with her, and I think you guys got a really good queen.

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