

Kingsmill Championship

Presented by JTBC

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Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Very excited to welcome the world No. 1 golfer, Lydia Ko, into the Kingsmill media center.

Lydia, start by letting us now how you're doing and how you're feeling this week.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I spent my off-season -- off-season -- off week in Orlando last week. Definitely nice to have some time off to relax and do some practice coming in for this big stretch, even though I have a few weeks off after this one.

Definitely nice to be back here. Course is in amazing condition. Probably the best condition I've seen this course.

So I think this is going to be a great week. It's forecasted for some amazing weather, too. Hopefully be able to showcase some amazing golf with that.

THE MODERATOR: Three starts at Kingsmill; never finished outside of the top 20. What do you like about this course and Williamsburg?

LYDIA KO: This course has a great blend of holes: Some longer holes, some shorter ones where you can play aggressive, and a par-5 that could possibly be -- you can get home for two.

So I think it's a great stretch of holes. They're not easy and anything can happen. Demanding on how they might play the tee on the 18th, that could play a huge factor into the results.

I think this just has a great blend of holes. The course is in normally really good condition. I think that's why a lot of top players are here. That's why it's been a really top field majority of the years here.

THE MODERATOR: Five Top 10s this season. What's the key for you to get back into the winner's circle?

LYDIA KO: I've had -- the weeks that I've had Top 10s I've really hit the ball really well. I was struggling on the greens.

But then in Hawaii I was able to get a few putts to go in on the weekend. I think that was a huge difference

me getting the best results I had since my last win at the Marathon Classic.

Hopefully I will be able to get a few more things to clinic. At the end of the day, I don't feel like it's way off. It's just a few putts that are sliding by, for them to drop and a few more fairways hit. It's very small, but at the end of week they end up being a big difference between a top 10 finish or being in contention or being outside of the top 10.

THE MODERATOR: You've been atop the Rolex rankings for 82 consecutive weeks. How much do you pay attention to that, and are you aware of how close the race is getting to No. 1?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I don't really look at the rankings myself. I don't go in my spare time and look, Hey, what position am I in? I kind of know these things through media and when people tell me, Hey it's getting close. It could change this week.

It's been a huge honor to be in this position. It's always been a dream of mine to be the No. 1 ranked player. For it to have happened so early and for it to have happened, it's something I'm very fortunate about.

I know that the girls are playing amazing golf and there is an incredible amount of talent on this tour in the women's game in general. I know I need to work hard and I need to put that performance to try and maintain it.

I just got to focus on the round, the shot in front of me, and not get too carried away about the results and the rankings. Just got to focus on me.

I think that's the important thing going forward.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Do you at any time feel that you're the victim of other's expectations simply because the standard you have set is so high? You've won so frequently that when you go through a stretch like this people are going, Oh, my gosh. What's wrong with Lydia Ko?

LYDIA KO: I wouldn't call myself a victim. I had my first win at 15 at the Canadian Open. Really going into that



week, as an amateur you're trying to make the cut and trying to make the most of that week and gain the experience of being able to play alongside the world's best female golfers.

It was such a surprise for me to win that week. Obviously a lot of things have happened for me so fast that, you know, some things you can only dream of. Because that kind of happened, I think expectation definitely comes with it, with the pressure.

At the end of the day, I can really focus on the present and not worry about what might happen in the future and what has already happened in the past.

No matter what ranking you're in or how well you're playing, it's really important to just stay in the moment and not get too carried away about everything that's going on.

Q. You just turned 20. Cristie Kerr was in here earlier. She'll turn 40 later this year and she is still out here.

LYDIA KO: Don't tell her that I am -- she's twice my age.

Q. Can you imagine yourself still out here playing in 20 years?

LYDIA KO: I kind of made a huge statement saying that I'm going to retire when I'm 30. That means I would have lied to everyone. Maybe like on pins and needles a little bit there.

No, I mean, this is my fourth year on tour and it's gone by super fast. I can remember my rookie year as if it was yesterday.

I've changed and I feel like my game has changed. No glasses anymore compared to four years ago. A lot of things have changed.

My goal is to retire at 30, so that's another ten years from now. Anything can really happen. I'm sure in a years' time I'll be a little bit different from what I am now.

I think just being able to spend a lot of time here with the girls, especially within the game of golf where it's, like you said, there are girls that are in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and even Juli Inkster in her 50s. That's the amazing thing about the game, is that it's not only for one generation. There are a lot of generations.

I don't know how much I'm going to change in ten years' time or five years' time, but I'm really looking forward to spending that time here, out here on the tour with the girls.

Q. When you guys came here last year, in the first ten weeks there had been three golfers who had won at least twice. This year, ten winners, ten weeks. Surprised you at all?

LYDIA KO: No. I mean, it just shows the amount of talent on the tour. Just shows that week in, week out, you really never know who is going to win.

Obviously there are players like Ariya that has kind of put herself in contention a lot of the weeks. But it just shows that it's not really dominated by two, three players.

The whole tour, the amount of talent is huge. I think you can see that through obviously all the our winners this year, and when you see at the end the year the first time winners, eight, nine new winners, you go, Wow. It's not just about three players. Not just about the big three. It's about the whole tour.

I think that's great for the game. It's a lot of players from different countries: from the United States, Canada, Asia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand.

I think it's a great way for the game and it gets a lot people into the game too, and a lot of spectators to become fans of the became.

Q. You talked about changes when you were answering David's question. What's been the most important change in your game that has helped your success over the last couple years?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, obviously had a lot of changes going into this year. Changed caddies, coaches, everything apart from my name somebody especially.

These current changes or the changes that I had in the last few months, they weren't really planned to be at the same time. Those things kind of happen.

I think the biggest change for me outside of actually the instruction and everything wasn't in golf. The change of moving to the U.S.

I've lived like ten years in New Zealand and it's like a 12-hour flight from L.A. to go back home, and another 12 to go to Korea where I'm originally born.

So I think the actual moving to a different country, different state, I think was the biggest change. Luckily for me my whole family is with me. I don't feel homesick. I definitely do miss going back and seeing the beaches back at home and spending time with my friends.

Q. There are a lot of events on tour. Is there one thing about this event, beside the golf course, that

makes it stand out?

LYDIA KO: No, it's actually a really cool week for me. I've stayed on the resort here for the last few years, so it's really nice to be able to come out of your room and you've got your ninth fairway and can walk straight down to the putting green.

May seem like such small things about like accommodation and where you're saying, but at the end of the week it might be a huge difference. There might be a little delay and you're able to go home and rest a little bit and come back out.

The course is always set up really nice, so it's not really suited for a long hitter or a shorter hitter or a straighter hitter. It's for anyone and it can fit anyone's game.

So I think that's the big thing, is the course itself, and how the sponsors and the volunteers and everyone loves seeing us here. We love to come back to places where everyone is excited to see us.

I think that makes us more, I guess, come more often to these events.

Q. Speaking of this event and people's comfort level, there is some talk, concern about the future of this event here. What is your level of concern?

LYDIA KO: Hopefully there is no concern, because I think a lot of the players -- I've only been here I think this is my fourth year. I've come here pretty much every year I've been a member of the tour.

There are girls that have been here ever since the start. That's how much I think this tournament is popular. I saw 20 of the top 25 players are here this week. Just shows that the players are here and they love being here. I think all around this is such a great tournament, so hopefully we can continue this so even the generations after us are able to play in event.

Q. You mentioned the changes in instructors, caddie. Where do you think you are in that transition? Are you perfectly comfortable now with the new team? Still getting accustomed to one another?

LYDIA KO: I've really been liking the changes I've seen swing-wise. We haven't really been so technical with Gary, and I think that's a good thing. When you're on the road, you can't think about a billion things about the swing and where exactly to put my swing at.

We have been making it very simple. He's giving me a lot of drills so that I don't have to think about what position to be in. Just by doing the drills, it will help me to be in that position automatically, so that's been really good.

Some of the off weeks I've been able to spend some time with him. It's always nice to go back and refresh and get some stuff checked.

Caddie-wise, this is only my third week. Yeah, the first week unfortunately I had to withdraw, so I couldn't really play that week a lot.

With anybody, and, you know, even within friendships, it takes time to get to know someone. And especially here, I think even though I've known Pete for quite a while, I think he's still getting to know a little bit more about my game and I'm getting to know about his style.

I think in time it'll improve and improve, and hopefully we'll be able to continue this team for a while.

Q. A little bit off golf. One of our reporters is doing a report on Korea and the missiles. She was wondering why should people in the U.S. care what's going on over in Korea right now?

LYDIA KO: Politics? Missiles? To be honest, I don't really look at the news a lot. I have seen that on the news. I really don't know. Politics, I'm both hands up, feet up, everything up.

Q. NCAA Women's Golf Championships begin this week. I have on good faith you maybe spent some time in January with a Kiwi freshman at Pepperdine, Momoka Kobori. What was that experience like, and were you able to give her any advice maybe?

LYDIA KO: Well, you know, actually some of my teammates from New Zealand, they won the NCAAAs last year, Washington State. So I had two of my teammates there.

They just told me what an amazing experience it was. I don't have the background of that collegiate golf thing, so obviously I couldn't really give Momoka huge detail on, hey, what it's like to play in this team stuff.

But she's pretty talented and very intelligent to be able to be in Pepperdine at such a -- a year or so younger than what other people do. I really enjoyed spending time with Momoka and Alena in January back at home, in my Orlando home.

So it was nice just to be able to spend some time with them. We got to play around with Christina Kim and she was able to share her insights on what it's like being on tour.

Hopefully was a great experience for them. I had a lot of time spending a few days with them. Hopefully I'll be able to continue doing this Lydia Ko Scholarship so I

can bring a few more girls over and they can spend time with me and get to know what it's like over here.

Specially being from New Zealand, it's quite the trip to come over. It's definitely different from playing golf in New Zealand and playing golf in the States. I had a great time. I'm planning to do this so I can grow the game back at home too, back in New Zealand.

In the future hopefully I'll be able to play the International Crown with three other New Zealand teammates. That's a huge goal of mine. I'm going to do my best to grow the game and make an influence.

Hopefully Momoka will have a great career representing Pepperdine.

THE MODERATOR: Do you think you play a similar style coming from the same country? What do you see in her game that maybe reminds you of yourself?

LYDIA KO: I actually hadn't really played amateur golf alongside her. I had heard a little bit more of Alena before. When I got to see her, she was so solid all around. Such a great putter, too.

I think at first because she didn't know me very well she was a little bit nervous. But after that, day after, she was like a totally new person. I got to see what an incredible talent she had. It was a lot of fun to be able to play alongside them, practice.

They got to see me work out. It was actually my first day with my trainer that day. Kind of came on the wrong day. My trainer said, Oh, this is bad, this is bad, this is not so good.

I think she is just so solid, and it was the same for Alena. I could see they're definitely the up-and-coming stars that will represent New Zealand, and hopefully represent New Zealand on the LPGA after their collegiate golf.