

Kingsmill Championship

Presented by JTBC

Wednesday May 18, 2016

Lexi Thompson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome in Rolex Rankings No. 3, Lexi Thompson, into the interview room. Welcome back to Kingsmill. We haven't seen you in a couple weeks, but you were busy. You were playing golf, but you were over in Japan.

LEXI THOMPSON: Yep.

THE MODERATOR: You were on the JLPGA. Tell us how that came about, and I think you had a pretty good result, as well, so tell us about that and what was going on there.

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, it was pretty amazing. I played in the Salonpas Cup for the JLPGA the weekend of Alabama, and it was an amazing experience. The people there are unbelievable, so polite, and the crowds were huge. But the golf course was in great shape for us, and I had a good week, surprisingly, with the jet lag that I had and everything. But overall it was just an honor to be there and get the invite to that tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Have you ever done the one week over, play, win, one week back? What was that like?

LEXI THOMPSON: No, usually when I go out of the country, I usually stay for two weeks at least. But that was my second time to Japan, and I enjoyed it once again.

THE MODERATOR: Coming into Kingsmill here, everyone has been talking about the course, and I think the field strength always talks to how nice of a venue, how nice of an event this is. Talk about this event a little bit in your eyes and what you are excited about coming into this week.

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, it really is. It's one of our best stops on Tour, just the resort here, the golf course is always in perfect shape for us. The rain made it a little wet out there, but yeah, it's in great shape for us. But the community gets behind the event, and I think that's what we love about it. That's why they always get the strongest field here because everybody looks forward to playing this golf course and just being here this week.

THE MODERATOR: Yesterday there were some LPGA commercial shoots. Seems like every week you are balancing media, sponsors. You kind of embrace that role of how to time-manage those things, but how much do you enjoy doing stuff in regards to promoting your Tour, promoting yourself? You've pretty much figured it out and you seem like you're enjoying it.

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I do really enjoy it. That's part of being a professional athlete, trying to figure out what image you want to perceive to people and to fans, and I enjoy doing interviews, reaching out to my fans, sending out a message. It's always been fun doing the commercials, like the workout commercials and just the joking-around commercials, as well. It's a good time for me, but it's all in time management during a tournament week.

Q. It's been very competitive this year, a lot of international winners like always. Do you feel any extra pressure to kind of raise the flag for the United States?

LEXI THOMPSON: I don't really feel any extra pressure. I mean, if I thought about that, I probably wouldn't be playing too well. I'm just trying to focus on my own game. It's a very global tour, so it doesn't really matter where you come from, it's about the talent that you bring to the table. I just try to do my best every time I tee it up.

Q. Could you talk about that talent and the competitive level of the Tour right now?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, it's pretty unbelievable, and it's getting younger and younger. I thought I was the young one out here, now I'm a veteran it seems like, so it's pretty crazy. But it's great to see how much the Tour has grown even since I turned professional. We've gained more tournaments, more sponsors, more TV time, and just the talent out here is unbelievable.

Q. (Question regarding experience in Japan.)

LEXI THOMPSON: Besides golf? Well, unfortunately I didn't get to sightsee too much, but just being there in general, embracing all the fans there, I mean, after the rounds when I wasn't golfing, just taking pictures, signing autographs. Everybody was so polite to me, and just welcoming. That's what I enjoyed the most. Every time I go over to Japan, it's a great experience for me.

Q. Do you have a favorite food there?

LEXI THOMPSON: Favorite food? Tempura is good, and the sushi is amazing there. But basically everything I tried was good.

Q. You played very well here -- well, you've played very well everywhere pretty much, but is this course pretty well suited for you?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I think this golf course sets up well for my game. I get to hit a lot of drivers. If not a driver, it's a 3-wood. It's a tough golf course. The rough is up thick so you've got to keep it in the fairway. But it's just overall a great layout, challenging but still, there's some birdie holes out there. It all depends on how windy it gets or how fast the greens get out there.

THE MODERATOR: What was working best for you in your win two weeks ago? What was the key to your game that you hoped would kind of come over hopefully to this week?

LEXI THOMPSON: Probably my putting. I putted unbelievable. You know, we changed a few things, still working with the Cure putter, and putting is all about confidence, and once I rolled a few in the first day, I felt really good about it, and it just kind of went for the next four days. Definitely was the cause for my win.

THE MODERATOR: You said changes. Anything major?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, nothing too major, just little setup issues that I was dealing with in the practice round and the pro-am, and changed it up that once afternoon, and it helped.

Q. You saw how wet it was out there this morning. It may not get much drier this weekend. Does that change the way you approach any course? Does it change your game at all knowing that it might lengthen it up for everybody? Does it give you an advantage at all?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, it might give me a little bit of an advantage just being a little bit longer off the tee, but same strategy, hitting a lot of drivers. The practice rounds yesterday -- well, not so much yesterday but the day before on Monday, the greens were very firm and the greens were fast, so this rain actually helped them out a little bit. They were kind of doable, but it's only about four or five paces of roll-out into the greens when you hit shots into them, so it's a little bit more fair, but it might dry out the next couple days. I don't think we're supposed to get much rain.

Q. Conventional wisdom says the longer you are off the tee, the more difficult it is to be accurate off

the tee. The last two years you've been far more accurate off the tee than you were perhaps in 2014, at least if you look at the percentages. How did you accomplish it, and was that an aim of yours, to say I need to be a little more precise off the tee box?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, that definitely was a big goal of mine. I think it was overall just trying to get my swing in more control, not so fast and loose at the top. Just been working on a little bit shorter and more compact swing at the top, and more of just trusting my shots. I feel like I was steering the ball around the golf course, so yeah, just trying to pick my targets and committing to the shot I want to hit.

Q. You talked so much about the success that younger players have had, particularly this year. Why do you think that is?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I think it's just girls starting at a younger age and just having the experience playing in tournaments at such a young age and practicing and getting the coaching that they need. It definitely helps, and I think all the great girls golf programs that the LPGA has and that they have around the world is just growing the game of golf in a huge way, and I think that's why we're seeing younger and younger girls out here.

THE MODERATOR: This is the first week of an 11-week stretch. I know people are dreading that, but it's a very exciting time in the season. You're playing well. You feel good about your game. You seem happy. You seem relaxed. How excited are you for this summer stretch where there's so many big time events coming up?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I'm very excited. This is a big time for the LPGA, especially this year for golf, having golf back in the Olympics. But yeah, this stretch coming up is pretty intense, but a lot of great events and amazing golf courses that we're going to be able to play and team events, as well. So yeah, I'm very looking forward to this next stretch.

Q. Can you remember what it was like when you first came out here as an amateur and competed against a field like this and teed it up, and just kind of what the thought process was and what kind of nerves went through you, things like that?

LEXI THOMPSON: I was definitely a little nervous, just because I didn't know anybody out here. I didn't really know the golf courses, either. It was tough for me, but I mean, I absolutely loved the experience. I always played against the older girls growing up, so I was kind of used to that, but I had my dad on the bag, so it made it a little easier for me.

But I enjoyed it. I loved it, and that's why I'm out here today.

Q. (No microphone.)

LEXI THOMPSON: It means the world to me to represent my country. Any time there's a team event on our schedule, that's my No. 1 goal. There's nothing like waking up, putting your country's colors on and going and representing. But yeah, like I said, any time, like International Crown coming up and the Olympics, those were my two goals coming into this year, to be on those teams.

THE MODERATOR: Well, thank you for coming in, and good luck this week.