

# Sentry Tournament of Champions

Tuesday, January 3, 2023  
Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA  
Plantation Course at Kapalua

## Tom Kim

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Tom Kim to the interview room here at the Sentry Tournament of Champions. Can we just get some thoughts on being on Maui and getting your first start here.

TOM KIM: I mean, it's a great place to start, obviously, in Maui. It's my first time in Hawaii. The course looks in great shape. You've got amazing sites here.

So to be in a field where not many people can get in, it's awesome to be here and I can't wait to have this week started.

THE MODERATOR: With that, you, in addition to your two wins, you had a third place finish at Genesis Scottish Open, seven top 25s, just a really great season in general. Would you mind just recapping that for us before we open it up to questions.

TOM KIM: Yeah, it's been a crazy 2022, and things happened so fast where I think this past off-season I was able to kind of reflect on what it was like, and it's amazing. I've had two wins and it's really got me to feel a little bit more like I got to work harder and hopefully 2023 will be a better year than 2022.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

#### **Q. How have you readjusted your expectations or your goals after last year?**

TOM KIM: I think now I feel a little bit more comfortable than I did before on the PGA TOUR. So I think, yes, obviously winning big events is great, but like I just got to keep, I think I felt like, we've had this talk with the whole team. It's just keeping that same mindset as I've had my whole life and just kind of keep getting better every day.

All those big events you win, it's just kind of ticking off the boxes, but the biggest thing for me is just to be mentally better and be physically stronger and just get better at



every aspect of the game every day, I feel like the goals just kind of happen.

**Q. With your success, I'm sure the last couple months have been a whirlwind as far as, I mean, you got a new sponsor, a clothing sponsor, and your appeal in multiple countries, has it been a crazy last couple months? And now that there was a pause in the golf and you have to sort after address -- because you are running a business.**

TOM KIM: No, it's not that bad. I'm not that big of a star yet, so it hasn't been that crazy. But I spent time back home a little bit. I've definitely had a few more people recognize me on the streets, which is, I think it's great. I don't get to be back home as much, so whenever I go back home and see that, it feels great. It kind of motivates me to come back to the U.S. and play better. It's been pretty fun for me.

**Q. Tiger's won the Masters five times. I think you've been alive for two of 'em. When you guys got together in the Bahamas, when you see him, does he look old or do you feel young?**

TOM KIM: Oh, I don't know. I haven't thought about that. But like when I did feel, it was like, man, Tiger's, like, man, he's pretty cool (laughing). I've seen him a few times, but to be able to kind of just have a conversation with him was pretty amazing. You look at him, and just the amount of things he has accomplished in his career was really cool to see.

But yeah, I haven't thought about that yet.

**Q. A couple other things along those lines, other people that you would have looked up to as a kid. Do you remember the first time you actually came face-to-face with them and was that weird?**

TOM KIM: Could you say that again?

**Q. Other players that you might have looked up to, given your age, do you remember the first time you actually came face-to-face with them on the range, in**



**dining, or whatever, and was that weird to you?**

TOM KIM: Yeah, so I met Tiger for the first time -- well, I mean, I seen him in person, I think I was like five or six. It was in Australia. He came for the Australian -- one of the tournaments, and he was walking to the bathroom, and I was like, I had my TW cap on and it was so big because I had a small head at that time and it didn't fit. But he was walking literally 3 feet in front of me and I shouted, Go, Tiger and tipped the cap and went in the bathroom, and literally thousands of people started running to the bathroom waiting for him to come out. But that was my first interaction with him.

**Q. Were you one of those who waited for him?**

TOM KIM: I did not. I did not. I wanted to give him his privacy.

But I think the first time I got to see all these players properly was at the PGA Championship in 2020 at Harding Park. That was my first official PGA TOUR/major championship. So I think that like the time then and now is a little different. I feel a lot more comfortable around these guys. I've obviously played with a lot more of 'em. So it's kind of cool for me to be able to do that.

**Q. One last one. When you go back to last year, your first one was the Singapore International?**

TOM KIM: Yes.

**Q. I always remember you being at the table at the Saudi International when they were announcing the infusion into the Asian Tour and Greg was there and LIV was coming and you were right there in the middle of it being touted as another example of a great young player coming through, etcetera. Did you ever get approached by LIV? Was that ever a temptation for you?**

TOM KIM: I mean, I think I was there because I had just won the Order of Merit on the Asian Tour. But my goal has always been to play on the PGA TOUR. My goal has never been faded and I have never thought about anything else. It's still going to be that way because I've, I played golf because I wanted to play on the PGA TOUR and nowhere else.

The whole team has talked about it, but like we're just going to be, we're just going to stay where we are. I want to play against where all the best players want to be. I feel like a lot of -- well, if you see Tiger's career, Jack Nicklaus's career, all these guys, they have come from the PGA TOUR and it has a legacy. So hoping to do the same and

kind of stay here for as long as I can.

**Q. How long were you home for and what was the wildest reaction that someone had to seeing you?**

TOM KIM: Sorry?

**Q. How long were you home for? What was the most wild reaction that you had somebody seeing you?**

TOM KIM: I was home for maybe around four weeks. It wasn't long. I haven't had any crazy reactions, but I did have -- I was out with my friends and before if I would go to the golf course and wear my golf clothes people would recognize me. But if I would be just in average just normal attire not a lot of people recognize me.

But I felt like every night I went out I at least had a few people kind of come up to me and ask for a picture. So just things like that where I'm with my friends and we're having a chat and someone comes up to me, you know, they're like, Well, okay. Like I guess you've changed, Tom. But I tell them, nothing has changed in my life, really. But nothing crazy. Nothing crazy.

**Q. Have you had a chance to play Augusta National yet?**

TOM KIM: I have not. I have not. I'm excited for that one.

**Q. What's your plans in the lead up?**

TOM KIM: Hopefully I'll be able to go there before the Masters. I'm trying to fit in some times. But I'm just, I feel like I need to go there and let it out of my system before I go to the tournament.

**Q. What's the first Masters you remember watching?**

TOM KIM: It was one in like in the 2000s that Tiger won. I remember he won two of 'em before 2005. Was it '02? It was '02. I think I have the DVD set of 2005, 2008 U.S. Open, I think it was the 2002 Masters and there was one more. I think it was the 2000 or the 2001? 2001 was it? So I think that was the first time I ever saw -- that's how I know a lot of the holes because of watching those. So, yeah, that's how it kind of happened.

**Q. What PGA TOUR event that you haven't played are you most looking forward to?**

TOM KIM: Waste Management this year I think it's going to be cool. Because I heard the Super Bowl is in town that week. So I think that's going to be pretty cool to experience.

L.A. I think is going to be a cool one to, if I can go and play because I was there, right before COVID hit, I was outside the ropes and watching all these guys play. And L.A.'s, I feel like the crowd's going to be pretty fun. I like it when there's a lot of people and when the crowd gets loud. So I enjoy that atmosphere. So kind of looking forward to those ones going forward.

**Q. Was that in 2020?**

TOM KIM: That was in 2020. Correct.

**Q. What were you doing there?**

TOM KIM: So I was in, I was doing a winter camp in San Diego. I came down to L.A. to just to watch some golf and just meet some people.

**Q. Did you have to pay for your ticket?**

TOM KIM: I did not. Yeah, someone had tickets for me.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about your excitement about just being here on Maui and your experience since you landed. Is there anything that you're looking forward to see outside of the golf course?**

TOM KIM: So I don't have my parents with me. I don't have much family here. So it's kind of, I kind of feel bad that I'm kind of seeing this alone.

So I'm going to wait until my next trip and I can bring some family and friends. So I told myself my first trip I want to kind of focus on my golf and maybe next time kind of enjoy a little bit more with family and friends.

But I've been going out and having some great food and like I still, like the sun sets and sunrise are just, it's great, it's beautiful. So I've just been enjoying that, but just been trying to stay focused on my golf.

**Q. How did you wind up -- how did you choose Dallas and how did you hook up with Cam?**

TOM KIM: I've had a few friends recommend me to Dallas because it's central. There's a lot of good golf courses.

I remember I was at the CJ Cup, I was playing with Scottie the first round I think. We were a twosome on the back nine because Harris English withdrew. And he was just telling me about how amazing the golf courses were and he particularly said one golf course that he practices at.

And I was like -- and I thought it was cool and I had it in my

head. I asked a few people and they're all like, Yeah, this is amazing. You should try to come over here.

I went to Dallas for the first time to the Byron Nelson and I absolutely enjoyed my week there. And I kind of thought, man, this could be a good place to kind of practice and kind of live. Obviously there's a big Asian community there as well. Which is kind of nice, I don't feel so far away from home.

Cam, I just, you know, I just kind of, where I practice, that's where he teaches. I just needed some checkups and I went to him and I thought he was a good matchup for me. He's definitely helped me a lot of just preparing my game and stuff.

So it just kind of happened naturally and it's just kind of, it's where I live, so it's easy for me to go and see him.

**Q. Does Jordan still like you?**

TOM KIM: Does Jordan still like me? I hope so. I think we're playing together on Thursday, so hopefully he talks to me when we play. (Laughing.)

THE MODERATOR: Tom, thanks for the time.

TOM KIM: Thank you. Appreciate it, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports