

# The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

## Min Woo Lee

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Min Woo Lee to the interview room here at The American Express. It's your first start of the season, your first start here at the AmEx, and your first start as a full member of the PGA TOUR. So, what's it like having all these firsts, but also what's your first impression of these three golf courses?

MIN WOO LEE: Amazing. The weather's unbelievable. It's my first time in America this time of the year, which is weird, I guess. I was in Vancouver last week and I saw snow for the first time, outside the car, so that was pretty cool. Normally, I'm in Australia or Dubai where it's 100 degrees, so it's quite nice to, I guess, see a white Christmas. No, I'm really excited. This week's going to be fun. I know it's, there's a lot of birdies and the scoring's really low, so it's, I guess it's a nice easer, in a way, but you still got to play really well, and hit your drives well and wedge it close. So, like Jon Rahm said, it's a putting contest and, yeah, if you get on the green, hopefully you hole some putts.

**Q. Curious about your practice leading into it. Have you managed to see all the golf courses or spend any time?**

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I drove around La Quinta, and I played 18 holes today at the Stadium Course. I played nine at the Nicklaus Course, and drove around the other one. So, yeah, courses are awesome, in good conditions, greens are unbelievable.

THE MODERATOR: Just before we take some questions, you won in Macau in October, won again in Australia, back home for you, later in the year, in December. You're on a pretty good role, you must be pretty excited about coming in here and starting a season fresh off two victories.

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, for sure. Similar, like, lots of birdies. Macau, I had 30-under, so it was a course where you could really get it, go for it. Yeah, hopefully it's quite similar. Yeah, again, I'm really excited to have my first year out here and especially live in America, which is awesome.



THE MODERATOR: Great. All right. We'll take some questions.

**Q. The idea that you may have to go 25- or 26-under here to be in the top 5, even, doesn't scare you at all?**

MIN WOO LEE: No, I'm playing good golf right now, and it is, I mean, I guess it's scary, if you said you've come fifth shooting 25-under, that's when you know that these guys are good, and you can go out there and shoot lights out. It's not scary, scary. No, it's not scary. It's going to be fun.

**Q. When you show up to a golf course you've never seen before, or three, is there a specific thing that you look at? Is it, where do I drive the ball first, what are the green complexes like?**

MIN WOO LEE: I guess the great thing is that the course isn't that tight. Pretty wide fairways, I feel like. You can, if you hit the fairway, you can really attack the greens and pins. But, yeah, it's just, yeah, I guess you got to go out there and not expect too much. Yes, you want to shoot 30-under, but, again, golf is golf, and you still got to hit, go towards your next ball and then hit that the best as you can.

**Q. You did play very well at the end of 2023. Does that carry over to a new year or do you just think this is the 13th month of 2023?**

MIN WOO LEE: We'll see. I'm relatively pretty good after a break. Usually, I'm fine with putting down the clubs for a little bit, and then coming back pretty fresh. So, it's not like a couple other guys, where they have to keep grinding and not take too much time off. So, I guess it's a plus for me a little bit. No, yeah, excited for the week and, yeah.

**Q. Hopefully, the weather's good.**

MIN WOO LEE: Hopefully, the weather holds.

**Q. Last year at THE PLAYERS was probably when the larger American golf audience kind of first was introduced to you. Since that moment how has life changed for you in terms of notoriety and just how things have progressed since then?**



MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, always talk about the PLAYERS and that final round. I think that's when I really got exposed to the American audience. It was amazing. Yeah, I'll always look back at it. Yes, I wish I could have played a little bit better, but also made the most of it. Looking back at photos, that was a really special time. There was hundreds of people on 17 and 18 watching me. Yeah, it was amazing. Social media's obviously blown up. Probably got, I don't know, 250,000 people on Instagram from that, since that time. I've been have a good media team, thanks to the PGA TOUR and Jake and Mohammed for cooking up some videos and making me look good. Yeah, that's been a very good bonus and a fun time for me. I've always kind of liked doing social media, so it's quite fun. Also, deals like Lululemon and stuff like that, all comes with it. Very exciting, very cool.

**Q. I was going to ask about Lululemon. Obviously, being the first male golfer, kind of being the face of the, at least their male golf division, how did that come about, is that kind of a brand you wanted to work with? Kind of take us through that.**

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, for sure. A lot of people, like I saw people wearing Lululemon, and it sort of caught on to me, six months to a year ago, that it started to be big in the golfing industry. Yeah, just playing with playing partners and friends, they're all wearing it and it kind of rose to my attention. And, yeah, my deal was ending end of last year, so my manager got talking to the guys at Lululemon and, yeah, I mean, it's exciting. It's one of the biggest companies in the world. I get to be some part of the designing process of it, which is incredible. I still think I'm a little kid from Perth, just playing golf. So, it's very cool to be there last week in Vancouver and talk with the designing team and everyone there, so, very cool.

**Q. Do you take style inspiration from your fellow Australian Adam Scott or anything?**

MIN WOO LEE: Oh, of course. Whatever he wears, it's, it would look good. He's a good-looking guy and he's, yeah, he's a good role model for golf, and for Australian golf, and I look up to him still, and it's cool to have him as a friend.

**Q. Do you think you'll do anything with Lydia? I know she's on the women's side of the Lululemon partnership.**

MIN WOO LEE: No, she's not with them. She's not with 'em, no.

**Q. One other one. Pebble, I believe that's where you made your pro debut or your PGA TOUR debut a**

**couple years back. Not currently in that event, but what this week, a good finish, could that mean, do you have your eye on hopefully making it back there again?**

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, unfortunately, I got my manager's wedding -- he's right behind you -- so I would have to do that. Hopefully, I play good enough that my ranking might be 31, so I don't feel too bad about it. But, yeah, I mean, hopefully, I can get into Riv, the next elevated event, and crush it there. But, you know, to start off the year, these two, Waste Management, and hopefully Riv, if I play well, it would be a good start to the year.

**Q. Is getting into those signature events a priority goal for you?**

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, for sure. Playing good golf, obviously, will be the priority, and that will be a bonus if I can get them. But I'm pretty happy and grateful that I'm already here and playing on the PGA TOUR in events like these. Yeah, it's nice to have a, I guess, TOUR card out here and, yeah, hopefully, I can get into some of those top elevated events and play with the best and, yeah, I'll strive towards that.

THE MODERATOR: Have you set up -- I'm imagining you spent a bit of time back in Australia after you own there, and spent some time over Christmas with the family. What was that like, what did you get up to, and, also, coming here this year as a full member, have you set up a base here or do you intend do that?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, when I was in Australia I had probably a month off, three weeks off. Did a bunch of camping, which was awesome, in Esperance with my good friend Zach and his family. Not a thing where I do a lot, but I've been, I've done it the last couple years, and it's amazing. Off the grid, no cell phones. Yeah, people that know me, I'm on my phone pretty much a lot, 24/7, so it's nice to chill out and relax and have some down time. But, yeah, it was good. Three weeks in Australia, good weather, it wasn't too hot, actually, so, yeah, couldn't have asked for more.

THE MODERATOR: What about as far as a base here in the United States?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I'm going to stay with a good friend, Kurt Kitayama, he lives in Vegas, so I'll stay there for the first little bit, until he kicks me out. So, hopefully, a little longer than I expect.

THE MODERATOR: When you go camping, what's your expertise? Are you best at starting fires or what do you



excel at?

MIN WOO LEE: No, I'm -- the boys get their hands dirty and I just, I just do the easy stuff. It's, you know, hands are precious, so I can't hurt 'em.

**Q. It was kind of back to the question I was asking about PLAYERS, and kind of your star rising. How has it been just managing, having to do things like this, having to do different -- a lot of people want your attention or want to be associated with you, how have you kind of managed that part, but also kind of staying true to making sure golf's a priority?**

MIN WOO LEE: I guess that's why we have a manager. He can do the dirty work for me, and say no to people that would want to talk to me. On the social media side, a lot of people still, like, message me. Sometimes I get back to them, sometimes I don't. But, yeah, I mean, I try to be as real as I can on social media, and try to have some fun. I'm pretty, yeah, I'm pretty real, and I don't shy away from -- I don't fake it, I guess. So, yeah, social media's cool, and everyone, I guess, if they do want a piece of me or they want to talk to me, manager goes through it normally.

THE MODERATOR: Final question. Are you ready to cook this week?

MIN WOO LEE: Yes, ready to cook. Hopefully. Hopefully, I'll be looking good as well, and if I don't play good, then at least I'll look good.

THE MODERATOR: Sounds good. Thanks.

MIN WOO LEE: Thanks, guys.

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