

# Honda Classic

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

## Sungjae Im

### Press Conference



MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome Sungjae Im to the interview room here at the 2021 Honda Classic and we'd like to welcome everyone on this call.

We'll get started and I'll say, Sungjae, you won here obviously last year; you come back to defend. The following week you finished third at the Arnold Palmer Invitational and then COVID hit and the world shut down at THE PLAYERS. I guess the question would be how thankful are you to be able to have kept playing the later part of the year and to be back here defending this title?

SUNGJAE IM: Last year around this time I won here, played well at Arnold Palmer the following week, finished third, and then COVID hit. During the off time and coming back for the resumption, to my standard I think I played mediocre, but my condition is slowly coming back up and I'm finding my game, and it's great to be back here at Honda Classic as a defending champion. I hope I play well this week.

MARK WILLIAMS: With this season starting, you've played 16 events and made 15 cuts. That's really consistent play, but there have been tournaments where you've had lots of low rounds but thrown in a high round. Is the consistency something you've been working on or searching for, or is there another reason for that?

SUNGJAE IM: Yes, I played 16 events this season, made 15 cuts, as you told me, so I would say I've played really consistently overall. But you're right, I had a few rounds here and there where I had some hiccups. Following up with a good round is always tough, but I think for the rest of the season I want to stay composed and maybe play a little comfortably mentally so that I can finish strong every week.

**Q. Do you feel any differently this week as the defending champion as opposed to any other week, and what does it mean to you as far as timing, what you have to do off the course as the defending champion? Does that make it any different this week?**

SUNGJAE IM: As far as preparation, nothing has

changed. Of course I'm defending champion this year, but my preparation is going to be the same. My goal this week obviously, I want to defend my title. I want to play consistently all four rounds so I can finish strong. That's my goal.

**Q. Two weeks ago the Arnold Palmer golf course wasn't exactly easy. Last week's golf course wasn't exactly easy. This golf course is a beast. Is it fun when you know how tough the golf courses are? Is it if you have to play golf on the PGA TOUR when the courses are so tough?**

SUNGJAE IM: I personally like the challenges on the PGA TOUR, especially for the Florida Swing. The greens are firm. There's a lot of water. I know all the players will be struggling, including myself, but I try to have fun playing through the challenges. I tend to play well overall when the courses are more challenging. So yes.

**Q. What is the biggest memory that you have from winning the Honda last year? And what would you say was the biggest change to have happened in your golf game and in your life after winning your first PGA TOUR event?**

SUNGJAE IM: One thing I remember from last year after winning the tournament is I went back to my hotel room and I just really couldn't not believe what just happened. So that memory in itself is the best memorable moment from last year. And as far as the coming into this week, again, I just want to stay consistent with my game and hopefully I can play well and defend the title.

**Q. Last week at THE PLAYERS you were right in contention after two days but you didn't have a good day on the third round. What can you learn from those experiences moving forward in your career?**

SUNGJAE IM: Round 3 of last week at THE PLAYERS was definitely kind of a hiccup for me after playing so well the first two days. I think looking back, I was kind of overly aggressive with myself and trying to attack too much when I should have stayed composed. So from that experience moving forward, I want to just focus on my game every



round, every shot, and try to stay composed, not be too aggressive when I don't have to. So hopefully I can do that.

**Q. You talked about this course being difficult, so first question is what makes this course so difficult? And then also some believe this may be the most difficult course in this country when you talk about non-majors. Do you agree with that?**

SUNGJAE IM: I absolutely agree with all the people saying this is one of the toughest courses. It tends to get really windy here, and even without winds the greens are always firm, and off the tee box there's so much water everywhere that it just gives a lot of pressure before you hit every shot. Yeah, talking about this course, it's very difficult, yes.

**Q. When is your next week off?**

SUNGJAE IM: I'm going to play this week and the WGC Match Play next week and then planning on taking the week off prior to the Masters.

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