

# U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Southern Pines, North Carolina, USA

Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club

## Jin Young Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by World No. 1 Jin Young Ko. Jin Young, what's your first impression of the golf course so far?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I played this golf course last Saturday, Sunday, and today. Will play it tomorrow, as well. I like the shot shapes, and I like to play -- greens are bigger, but landing area is small, so it feels smaller greens so I like that.

The course is tough, but it's fun to play.

THE MODERATOR: You took the week off last week. You've been here for a while already. What were you working on?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, my coach came here for five days, and I practiced with Coach every day, every single times. I practiced a lot last week and I found something in my swings, and it works, but we'll see.

### Q. What did you find?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I think I have a lot of problems in my swing, so I practiced a lot with my backswing still. It's pretty good so far, but I need to see.

### Q. Who is your coach, and how long have you been with him?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I met him three years ago with my same coach, but I break up with my old swing coach, and they worked together since maybe over three years.

And then right now my coach is came out with the academy, so he has opened a new academy, so I get in there. And we work together since just over a month, over two months maybe.

Yeah, but he knows my swing well, so it's easy to conversation with my swing for golf. It's good.

### Q. What is his name, the current one?

JIN YOUNG KO: Right now, new one? Min Goo Ta (phonetic).

### Q. And you've known him since three years ago, but this is your first time working exclusively with him?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

### Q. Your old coach was Si Woo Lee, correct?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yep.

### Q. How would you evaluate your season so far?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, yeah, I had one in Singapore, and I had couple chances to win, but I was close, but, yeah, my swing or game is fine so far, but I need to more wins over this year, so I want to. I'm working on with my caddie and with my team, so it's good.

### Q. You've the World No. 1 for most of the last three years. How would you compare how you're marketed in South Korea versus in the United States? Talk about the attention you get in South Korea versus here, things like that?

JIN YOUNG KO: I don't know, it's tough to say. I'm just trying to focus on my game better, and I know in this Tour we have a lot of good players, so I don't think I have only one rival, I have lots of rivals in this Tour.

I don't want to think about beat with America versus Korea or whatever, two countries. We are just human, so I don't want to fight with like person to person.

We love to play golf in this Tour, so if play better person, she will be World Ranking No. 1 or she will be win. Yeah, we're all trying to get better then better. I don't want to think like beat with America versus Korea. Can't.

### Q. It's more the media attention that you get here in the United States versus South Korea. How would you



## **compare those two?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, without America -- like in Thailand, Thai players, a lot of the top players in Thailand, so I don't want to think just like versus America and -- I know this Tour is from America, so they want to to hear from South Korea, South Korea players, do I want to beat like with America, something like that, but I don't want to say that because we are humans.

I don't want to fight on the perfect golf course and perfect tournament. I don't want to.

## **Q. Then World No. 1s have fared well here in the past. Do you see yourself as a contender or a favorite?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Oh, really? I didn't know. Yeah, I hope so, but I didn't know that. But my caddie, David Brooker, he works at this golf course when he was 2007 and Cristie won, and they played together, Lorena and Cristie, and I watched that on YouTube. It was fun, fun to watch.

He knows this golf course well, so he will help me a lot. So we'll see.

## **Q. What do you think you need to do to score well on this course?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Iron shots, because greens are -- looks bigger, but landing area is smaller, so we need to like dart irons.

## **Q. What memories do you have growing up watching this championship? And specifically, if any, the ones that have been here at Pine Needles?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I really want to play this golf course, Pine Needles. I heard about this golf course, that it's a tough one, but it's going to be fun, so I really wanted to be here, and I got here.

I've practiced a lot with this golf course last Saturday and Sunday, and I like it. We'll see.

## **Q. What memories do you have watching the Women's Open growing up?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I have memories, only one, 1998, Se Ri won. Second one is Birdie Kim. She made a birdie on the last hole in the bunker and she won. I have just two memories.

## **Q. What did you learn from watching the YouTube videos?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I saw just my David. Like I want to see the David. He has brown hair, now white. Yeah, he looks young. (Laughter.)

## **Q. The purse for this event has doubled since last year. How does that affect you as a player coming into this event knowing there's so much money on the line?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, it's great news for the LPGA Tour players. It sounds good.

I want to win. Like CME purse like almost the same, like biggest tournament, so I'm looking for it. It's going to be fun.

## **Q. You could win almost \$2 million on Sunday. Is there something that you would splurge on and buy if you were to win it? What would you buy first?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I would donation. Not all, but just in here. I want to help like child, like they want to be like LPGA players. I want to help them. If I win, I will do that.

## **Q. Michelle announced she's stepping away from the Tour this week. Do you have any memories of her from when you were growing up in the game, and how did you react when you found out she was leaving?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I don't have memories for Michelle, but I played with Michelle a few times when was she married, before, so we talked a lot in Korean. Yeah, I like her.

## **Q. Have you met Annika?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes, I did.

## **Q. What have your interactions with her been like?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Just to say hi and how are you. She always said you very well right now, so don't get the pressure or something, and just enjoy.

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