

# U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA

Lancaster Country Club

## Nelly Korda

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area for the 2024 U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally. We are joined by world No. 1 Nelly Korda. Nelly, it's your 10th U.S. Open. When you hear that, what does that mean to you?

NELLY KORDA: Crazy. I feel like this event, getting to play it as a 14-year-old back in the day, was where I realized that this was what I wanted to do for a living.

To get to come out here every year and compete at the golf courses for the highest prize money and against the best players in the world, there's nothing better than that.

THE MODERATOR: Knowing all that, knowing your game's in great shape coming into this big week, where's your mindset?

NELLY KORDA: I've definitely played some really solid golf. Had a week off last week. This golf course is a beast. Off the tee, if you don't hit it into the fairways, it sinks down into the rough. These greens are small and very, very undulated.

I didn't get to play in 2015, but it's a beast of a golf course.

THE MODERATOR: I know you got a first look at it yesterday. We keep hearing it's a true U.S. Open test. What does that mean?

NELLY KORDA: It's going to test every aspect of your game. It's going to test every aspect of just your golf game and even your mental game because it's a major championship.

You can get ahead of yourself, get lost in the moment. If you make a couple mistakes here and there sometimes it can get away from you, but it's going to test every aspect of your game out there this week.

**Q. You seem very conscious of I got to get away from it once in a while and recharge my batteries. Is that a fair statement?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I feel like that's just everyone in general. That's everyone who works your regular 9:00 to 5:00 job, just got to get away for the weekend.

**Q. Now you ruined the whole premise of my question.**

(Laughter).

Is it something that's come natural to you, or is it something that you've had to learn that, hey, this is time to get away?

NELLY KORDA: I think that in a sense it's something that I've had to also work on and something that has come natural to me.

I love to get away and spend a lot of time with my family. My sister came for the first two days when I was home, and getting to see Greyson, getting to see her was really nice to kind of recharge my batteries, and by Wednesday I was practicing, getting back into it.

So those are something that, as a kid, my parents really instilled that family values and hanging around our family and just disconnecting from the world has really been important to us.

**Q. Whenever you're playing well and swinging well like you have been this year, what's the key to sustaining that success?**

NELLY KORDA: I've had Jamie or Brett out here almost every single week. The only week that I haven't had someone out was during Cognizant, and I just didn't really hit it that well that week.

So making sure that my team is taking time for me as well and coming out and making sure that we're all dedicated to each other has kind of really been the thing that has changed this year, because every event that I've been to and I've played in, I've had a coach there.

**Q. Nelly, certainly you called this course a beast. Tell us why you say that, and are there certain holes that have made an impression on you?**



NELLY KORDA: I've only played nine holes. I'll get to play the front nine today. I wanted to play early in the morning the back nine because golf courses play different in the morning versus in the afternoon. Sometimes they get baked out a little faster, and the rough just plays a little different when it's not dewy and wet in the morning.

It just tests every aspect of your game. It's tight off the tee. Visually it looks so much shorter than it is. There's bunkers that visually you see that you think you're going to carry that you end up maybe ten yards short of.

Visually the golf course is tough as well as, if you're in the rough and you miss the fairways, the greens are very small and very slopey, and the rough is thick around the greens too.

I think they've cut the grass around the greens so that, with the false fronts, it comes all the way down to the back where it's a little thicker. So it's just going to test every part of your game.

**Q. What have you noticed about -- obviously you just said you only played the back nine, but there's a lot of uphill approach shots here. In fact, it's more than half of the uphill approach shots on the golf course. Do you think that gives you a unique advantage considering how high you hit the golf ball? What are the challenges that come with a lot of uphill approach shots?**

NELLY KORDA: One thing I noticed yesterday is how long of clubs I had into the holes too. As a longer player on this Tour, I would say I tend to take advantage of the par-5s, but I think all the par-5s are going to be three-shot holes this week.

It's just going to be tough. No matter if you hit it higher or if you're longer, I feel like the key out here this week is just hitting it straight. It doesn't matter if you're short or long.

**Q. Then if there's one hole on the back nine that you thought was most interesting, what was it? Then if you've looked at some of the holes on the front nine, what are you most looking forward to or interested to play?**

NELLY KORDA: I didn't get to see the front nine. I would say what I found the most interesting about the back nine is every hole is very different. Every hole has a different, unique look to it.

The par-5s stood out. The par-3 over the water, that's such a -- from the tee box you can't see how sloped of a

green that is, but then once you get onto that green you're like, oh, my gosh, you're coming in with a 6-iron.

If you're long, in a sense, you're kind of screwed. If you're short, you're screwed too.

So making sure you're just hitting the greens out here this week, because they're so small and so undulated, is going to be key.

**Q. How has your swing evolved so you can get to this point where in the highest level situations you can repeat it over and over again to win 6 of 7. Kind of as a follow-up, Jamie's kind of input and role in your swing as well.**

NELLY KORDA: I think the U.S. Women's Open Instagram posted a swing of mine from 2016, I think, and I was watching it -- and I knew my swing was that bad. That just shows how much there's always hope really for anyone out there, because I worked really, really hard on my swing.

I'm very grateful for David Whelan, who actually, I would say, is the person that completely turned my golf game around, and then Jamie for dedicating his time to me this year, being out here almost every week with Brett and making sure that nothing kind of falls out of place.

For us, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday are very, very important to make sure that my swing is in the right plane, in the right spots.

Then also on my weeks off there's a lot of face time sessions and a lot of swing videos and a lot of time spent with my tripod.

**Q. We've talked about your bubble ever since all of this began for you. Taking a week off, how do you reset and get in that bubble with such a big test ahead and with all the noise around this week obviously?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I have to say it's my team around me that gets me in my bubble. We all just know that we're out here doing what we love. We all have the same goals in mind, and we're trying to accomplish one thing, and that's to hopefully lift the trophy by the end of the week.

**Q. In previous seasons, how many weeks did you have a coach out with you? Did you make this plan at the start of the year that he would be out this often, or has that kind of evolved?**

NELLY KORDA: I rarely had a coach out here with me last year and the years before, and I love the fact that I have one out here now, because before, if I wasn't hitting it well

-- it's different to have someone out here versus face timing them and trying to figure it out on your own.

Actually having that face-to-face conversation and them putting you in that position and kind of feeling it, because feel versus real is very, very different.

What I think I'm doing is usually kind of the opposite, so having someone out here has really, really helped me. It was something that Jamie, Brett, and I and my whole team discussed last year that I really, really needed them to come out to more events.

**Q. Lexi Thompson announced today that she's retiring. Can you just -- first your reaction to that. Then second, what has she meant to the Tour in your eyes?**

NELLY KORDA: I honestly heard probably 15 minutes ago that she's retiring. She's had such an amazing career, I think. I've gotten to be on the team with her a couple times representing our country.

I think she does an amazing job for the Tour. She spends so much time going to each Pro-Am party. She really dedicated her time to growing the game. It's sad to see that she's obviously leaving and not going to be out here with us anymore, but she's had an amazing career, and I wish her the best in this new chapter of her life.

**Q. Nelly, I know you've spoken about this a little bit, but I'm curious, what was the coolest part about attending Met Gala?**

NELLY KORDA: I think the people watching for me. It was the ultimate people watching fest. Just standing in line with all these celebrities that you listen to, you watch on TV. I mean, Ed Sheeran walked past me.

For me, it was more shocking how tall I was compared to everyone.

(Laughter).

I was in heels, though, too. They were all saying it was really funny. We were like in a tent, and there was no air conditioning and it was really hot and everyone was like sweating. And I was like, oh, the air's fine up here, guys.

(Laughter).

It was really cool. It was my first time in the Met Museum too, and it was really neat. I definitely would love to go back one day and actually experience the entire experience.

But it was my first time ever walking the red carpet, and I think it's just going to be downhill from here, yeah.

**Q. You spoke a few weeks ago about TV partners in women's golf becoming a little bit more involved. Obviously there's a ton of attention towards this event in particular. I'm wondering what is the responsibility now for the players for this week to like deliver for the TV partners? Do you see there as being one?**

NELLY KORDA: I think our responsibility is to go out and play golf, to hopefully put on a show for everyone, and to go out there and perform our best golf. Hopefully that bring in the audience.

I know there's expectations from players, and I think that our number one priority should be to go out there, enjoy our time on the golf course, and grow the game playing good golf.

**Q. Your last win at Mizuho, you said you felt like you won even with your C or D game. We talked about the importance of having coaches there, but what was the disconnect, do you think, that week?**

NELLY KORDA: It's funny, golf is just such a hard game. Like the first two days felt good with my swing, and then you don't even know what happens. You feel like maybe a little disconnect from your swing or just your putting or your feel in a sense. It just felt completely different on the weekend.

My game, just the way I felt hitting shots and the way I executed my putts as well. I think that's what makes this game so great, is just you can be on top of the world the first two days, and then you wake up and you're like, what am I doing right now? Why am I hitting it sideways? And you have no idea what's going on.

I think that's what I noticed was super helpful of having a coach out here with me because, instead of not really -- having a question mark in the back of my head, I could actually go to someone and have a conversation with them about like what they see and what I should do and make a game plan.

**Q. So then coming into this week, what did you address, and what's the feel that you have right now with your swing?**

NELLY KORDA: There's a couple things that I do in my golf swing. I start to over rotate my hands a little too much. Playing in wind and playing with a lot of layers on like I have this year, I tend to do that a little bit more and more.

So making sure that I'm hitting my positions is really, really key for me because, if I start to over rotate on the way back, it's hard for me to get back into that position on the way down.

It may look on the same plane, but even if you're like half a degree off, your face is half a degree open, that thing's going to go sideways. So making sure I'm in my positions and I'm feeling good has been the key to the past two weeks.

**Q. Can you just think back on 2013 and what was it about that experience that inspired you so much to want to make this your life?**

NELLY KORDA: I would say obviously, gosh, playing against the best players in the world. I got to play practice rounds with Michelle Wie, Na Yeon Choi; got to hit balls next to Lydia, got to hit balls next to Inbee Park, and getting to do this with my sister. I mean, that was, for me, the best of all.

Before that, I don't know, my sister's first U.S. Open, I think, was 2008, I'm guessing, and I went to each and every one of those. I was like the biggest cheerleader. She snuck me into the locker room a couple of times and it was just like the coolest experience. Getting to do it myself was so fun.

I remember on Sunday -- I made the cut just on the number, and I remember on Sunday I hit a driver, and it was like a hole where, if you make an eagle, there was a donation of a certain amount to a certain charity.

I hit it to like probably 10 feet, and I sunk the putt, and I got interviewed after. My quote was, you've got to risk it for the biscuit. That's one of the main things I remember from my U.S. Open.

**Q. My name is Annabel, and I'm 13 and I'm from Lancaster. What's a piece of advice you would give to your 13-year-old self?**

NELLY KORDA: A piece of advice that I would give to my 13-year-old self, I would say, be true to yourself. There's going to be expectations from the people around you, and the best thing you can ever do is stay true to yourself, stay your course.

It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. You'll see other people succeeding at an earlier age, and all you have to do is just believe in yourself.

**Q. Speaking of expectations, it kind of rings a bell.**

**What kind of expectations on you do you sense? Do some of them annoy you?**

NELLY KORDA: No, I don't think some of them annoy me. I think, obviously, with the position I'm in, there are going to be expectations. I do not want to lose who I am. I'm going to always stay true to who I am, because at the end of the day, when I go to sleep, I need to be proud of who I am.

In a sense, no, I don't think I have any expectations. I just try to be very, very pure and very, very honest with everyone around me, and I hope that they see that I am proud of the person that I am at the end of the day, and that is how I hope that I grow the game.

**Q. I get a sense your own expectations aren't necessarily results oriented; or are they?**

NELLY KORDA: Obviously I go into every week wanting to win, but there is a sense that sometimes that's not realistic. For me, I need to give 100 percent of myself every single day to, not just my golf, my family, my workouts, life outside of golf. For me, that's the number one thing for me.

**Q. If you can try and zoom out for a minute, there's so much attention on the growth spurt really of women's sports, soccer, basketball. Do you get a sense golf is getting enough -- are they drafting? Are they getting enough attention considering its history, the amount of prize money that's gone up, all that stuff? Is anything holding it back? Can you put your finger on what it might be?**

NELLY KORDA: I don't know that I could really put my finger on what it could be. I think what we want is an increase every single year from viewership, from sponsors, and from people around us interested in the game of golf. Not just women's golf, but obviously in general the game of golf.

I don't really have an answer for you there, but I do know that it has been growing every single year, and I think that's what we should focus on, the positivity of that.

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