

U.S. Women's Open

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Erin Hills, Wisconsin, USA

Erin Hills GC

Yani Tseng

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming Yani Tseng. It is your first U.S. Women's Open since 2016. How does it feel to be back in the field.

YANI TSENG: It's crazy. Just incredible. Feel grateful, very grateful to be back. It's so different. And nine years ago I came back here, I feel like I'm like a little kid. To see all the great hospitality, the friends, it's just a lot of things that's not familiar anymore.

Nine years can change a lot, and I just feel very grateful to play the course like this and to see all new presses, too, it's crazy.

I just enjoy every step that I'm coming back. I'm just very happy that I didn't give up. That way I'll never know this beautiful things will happened to me again.

Q. We were just up here with a teenager who qualified. You also got through qualifying, a former World No. 1. What was that 36-hole qualifier like?

YANI TSENG: Wow, 36 holes for 36 year old woman, so it's not easy. And I actually made it through the playoff, so I played 37 holes, and my legs were shaking on the last already.

I tried to get my fitness well. I tried to get everything prepared like when I was young. I know the recovery is very different, but I still enjoy -- I love and enjoy this game. I love the challenge of every bit out there.

Q. Yani, you asked for a local caddie this week. Why did you want a local caddie and how has Dave helped you as you prepare for the Open?

YANI TSENG: I watched a little bit of video on YouTube before I come here to see what happened on the 2017 U.S. Open, and I feel like I love this course. This is like a little bit of a links course for me and I won twice the British Open.

So once I got here I just feel that I love the atmosphere, I

love the challenge of the golf course, and I feel like I need a local caddie to really knowledge me how to play on this golf course.

I feel it's very fair. Some of the holes is long but has bigger greens and some have holes that's shorter but have really tough green, like No. 9. I feel this caddie really helps me to read the greens out here. We've been practicing a lot for the last few days, and I think he's been really helpful and he's great.

But there's a lot of holes I think that's pretty tricky. Just kind of you want to trick yourself into going for the pin, but I just want to stay patient and stay focused out here.

Q. You mentioned you're happy you didn't give up. Obviously you were at the top of the game and then the struggles. Why didn't you quit?

YANI TSENG: I don't know, I asked myself a lot of times, too, because I think it's very easy to quit. But I think every time I practice, every little step, little progress, gave me hope. I think that hope is kind of what carries me to be where I am now.

Every time -- I fell down so many times. I stood back up and I kept moving forward.

I know I'm not like 20s, but I know Juli Inkster won her first U.S. Open when she was 39, so I'm not far away. I wanted to give myself this opportunity, an opportunity to win a spot back here. To give the professional or amateurs this opportunity to play the USGA tournament, that's always been my dream when I was 13, and to come back here is so different than playing my first U.S. Open and the last U.S. Open and now.

I just feel like the feeling and everything, I feel like this is the happiest ever.

Q. Can you walk us through the decision to putt left-handed?

YANI TSENG: Yes. I changed lefty, as well, like a half month ago. I've been fighting with the yips actually for



three or four years, and I changed so many little things and just never happened.

Since then I went two hip surgeries, and I thought after hip surgery it might be gone, but I didn't do the brain surgery so the yips not gone. I just did the hip surgery. I said, okay, the yips is not gone but at least I'm healthy, I need to deal with this.

So I found a new coach. The coach is like, why don't you switch to lefty. So I'm like, no, that's too risk, I don't know what's going to happen. But after a couple months, I played like really good golf but I still putt shit, and I'm like, I'm done with this.

I told my coach, I'm going to change. I need to give myself a chance to come back out here again. So I changed right away. And I was nervous; I don't know what's going to happen at the first tournament. I don't know if I'm still going to feel the fear or anything.

But once I played my first tournament, my first hole like a three-footer, I'm like, okay, this is a challenge now. But I'm still up there. I'm like, wow, this feels good. My brain is actually not that smart. Once I changed to lefty, everything changed.

Now I stand over the ball and I'm not afraid of any short putts. The first tournament I switched to lefty I didn't miss anything inside five-footer, which is very good. I know the speed was a little bit harder but I just need to keep practicing with the speed. But the short putt, I'm not afraid anymore. I can see my line, I can putt well, and I feel like this really gives me hope to playing good golf again.

Q. The putt in the playoff at the qualifier was about five feet --

YANI TSENG: I know, it is.

Q. -- down the slope with the sunseting. What's going through your head given all you've been through, needing to make that to avoid going on with everybody else?

YANI TSENG: You know, I'm not scared. I'm not scared of the five-footers anymore. All five players play on the LPGA, and I'm like, I win the most out here, so I'm not afraid. I can be better. I can win this thing.

I feel pretty relaxed out there. Even just make it to the playoff I was happy. I was like, okay, if I don't make a spot, maybe the first alternate will try to work that way, too. But I just tried to focus on every shot and enjoy the moment out there. To be this close, I'm already very happy, so to make

it to the U.S. Open, I have tears in my -- like after 18 holes.

Q. Given all you've been through and what it took to get here, what are the expectations this week for you?

YANI TSENG: Actually I don't feel any expectations. I feel very happy this week. Once I got here, I told my parents, mom, it feels good, it feels so good. Like the hospitality and we have gym, we have recovery, professional. We got everything. It was so different than nine years ago; we have nothing. Now it's like -- like I said, I feel like a kid. This is so new to me. So I was very happy.

Playing a course like this and enjoying all the hospitality here and the great practice facilities, I just love it. I feel like my expectation is just see how much I can enjoy out there. I don't want to be stress. And I didn't win the U.S. one before, but I win tournament before, I never think -- I know everybody want to try to win this week, but I really just want to be here and enjoy every moment I can.

Q. A lot of players have talked about it being a long walk out there on this course. How does this course compare to other places that you've played?

YANI TSENG: Actually I played 18 on Sunday, and I feel good. I tried to eat well and tried to get some stuff coming in, and I don't feel like -- I think I'm just really focused on my breath and focused on my steps, trying to not get too fast when I'm walking and try to do a little bit slower pace.

It's going to be a long day out there with the wind, with these kind of conditions. So trying to be patient and trying to get not too stressed out out there. You don't have to be aggressive.

And I have a local caddie. He tells me so much story on this golf course. I'll probably tell him to prepare some jokes, too.

Q. Yesterday Lydia Ko said she's rooting for you if she can't win. What does that mean to you to have the players out there maybe rooting for you, as well?

YANI TSENG: Yeah, it feels great. We played nine holes practice round together, and we've been friends for so long. Like I said, I don't have many friends out here now, and Lydia is one of them.

Like I said, if I'm not win, I'm happy to see her win. She kind of gave me a lot of motivation that I want to be out here again. I want to play with all the best players out here. With Lydia, with some other great players, I'm still learning from them, still learning from the younger players.

To have Lydia beside me, I feel very grateful, and I just want -- for what she done last year it's incredible and really growing up in the game of golf. I think that's what we want to do right now.

Q. Before you came in here there were two young amateurs, and one of them said that you're the GOAT --

YANI TSENG: Oh, thank you. How old are they? Do they even know me?

Q. When you hear something like that from a younger generation, how does that make you feel?

YANI TSENG: Wow. I actually heard that last week, too, from one of the players. I feel like it's a very big honor to hear from them, especially how young they are, and I was surprised they still know me.

To be standing up here, I want to tell them -- give them the hope, too. The old ladies still can do it. I didn't give up even after nine years. They can do the same thing as me. Like enjoy it out here, enjoy on Tour and do the best they can, and they're going to find out a lot of beautiful things will come.

Q. Are you able to narrow down and pinpoint the lowest point for you on the journey?

YANI TSENG: There are so many low points. It has been quite a journey. But I think this journey, like standing here is not just about a tournament. It's a journey, it's a growth, it's a gratitude. It's everything that I have coming from not just nine years. My last win was 2012, I think. It's quite a long time ago.

But like I say, I love this game. I don't know where that passion comes from, but every time I fell down, I feel like, I need to get back up, I need to do this. I don't know who I'm proving to, but maybe I want to prove it to myself, too. I want to see what I can do.

I want to bring out the best version of myself, and I didn't know if that's winning another tournament or that's be like top 10 for another tournament. I don't know what outcome will come, but I feel like once I can bring out the best version of myself, then I feel -- like I feel that will be very good.

Q. The person that you cite as putting the putting switch into your brain, is that Brady?

YANI TSENG: Yes, Brady Burke.

Q. At one point you called him crazy?

YANI TSENG: Yeah. I'm crazy, too, so we're a good match.

Q. To bounce off that, we see how grateful you are to be here right now. During those times, what was the feeling? Was it sadness? Was it anger? What was the main thing?

YANI TSENG: It was a lot of crying. It's a really long story. I've been through hip surgery, and before hip surgery I had my injury for like four or five years, and I always thought it was my mental problem. Until I got my mental fixed, I always know there was a physical problem. It was like mental, physical, mental, physical, always that.

Then I think a lot of people actually asked me if I want to retire because they see how hard I'm working but the result is not paying off.

But now I can totally tell the result is paying off. I just want to tell the people that are supporting me that don't worry, I'm strong and I want to be here. I'm happy even if I don't have success.

But I feel like I've done so much in the past, and now I want to give the young people as a role model, you know, to never give up and just enjoy the game you love, and good things will happen.

Q. What stories has your caddie told you about this place, and what advice has he given you about how to handle Erin Hills?

YANI TSENG: Yeah, he told me a lot of places don't go. I'm like, don't tell me negatives. He's like, I'm not telling you negatives. He's like, if you went there you might go in the water. I'm like, no, I don't want to go there. I want to hit left. I want to be here.

But the great story on No. 9 he told me it used to be 19 holes, so like that's why they make it so hard because they want a little bit of a gamble after 18 holes. And the clubhouse was supposed to going to be there, like all those stories. He was showing a lot of green reading with other players and he was asking me, is that okay if I share. I was like, yes, please share everything with everybody.

So he's great, and I feel like he's really given me great knowledge out here, and he's very -- kind of giving me positive, good vibes, always have good vibes, so I think that will help me this week a lot.

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