

# AIG Women's Open

Mixed Zone

Sunday, 25 August 2024

**I K Kim**



## Q. Why today?

I K KIM: I've been waiting for this moment when would that day would come, and it came today.

## Q. Your reason, you kept it to yourself?

I K KIM: Not really. I just knew when is the time that I would feel it, and I've been thinking it for the last two years, and where would be the better place to play my last 18 holes.

And this is my 18 years, and I feel like all the holes add up to 18 and everything keep coming 18, and I was like, it must be it.

## Q. Did you take a moment on the Swilcan Bridge?

I K KIM: I felt a little shy. It because it's such a place where all these legends have walked, passed by. Yeah, I didn't really take a moment. I just quickly walked past.

## Q. What do you feel this championship means to you?

I K KIM: I feel this championship has been most challenging to be honest because it's something, I've never played links course. Actually 2007 was my first Open here and I wish I can say that I have improved but the score-wise, it went up a little bit.

It has been truly life-changing. I've learned so much of ups and downs and accept some tough challenges and then there's some good days, as well.

And also the relationship that I have had with R&A have been incredible. They have always been looking after all of us, and they have been quite a mentor for me. So it's been all good.

## Q. You've played in all three Women's Opens here at St Andrews.

I K KIM: Yes.

## Q. Despite your finish, is this one your favourite?

I K KIM: Do you mean Old Course?

## Q. Out of the three times you've played the Old Course in the Women's Open, is this time your favourite one of the three?

I K KIM: I have to say that it's growing on me from the very beginning, yeah.

## Q. When did you start thinking about it?

I K KIM: I realised at Muirfield, it's something, I said to Martin Slumbers that I would not retire until I played at Muirfield. Before I always read about it from Jack Nicklaus book and many great players have talked about Muirfield, and I wanted to continue until I played Muirfield. And when I did I felt so satisfied, and in the same time, I wasn't sure what I want to do with my life. So I just continued until the clue.

## Q. Did you tell Martin today?

I K KIM: I didn't tell him because I was first off. I didn't want to bring the news so early. I have mentioned this is my 18th year, and that's always I wanted to play 18 years on the LPGA Tour, and I have accomplished that.

## Q. What is it about 18?

I K KIM: It's just something about nine, nine, 18 and just feels right and I'm 36, actually, and I started golf when I was nine. Just something, golf number.

## Q. What did he say when you told him?

I K KIM: He said, you caught me surprise. I think it was surprised for him. I was quite emotional when he announced his retirement. I was still in denial, I told him.

He's been very kind and generous to me since the first time that I played with him after I won the Kingsbarns and I meant him at St. Annes, and I didn't know who he was. I just played the Pro-Am. He was such a great player, and it was really a very easy Pro-Am. I found out who he was later.



He's been so great for the women's golf, and he really cares for girls' game. I think what he did for the men's water for the blue water and no plastic for everyone, I think that really inspired me that he cares.

So that's been why I feel like he's been such a great role model and great leader for the R&A.

**Q. Who did you tell?**

I K KIM: I wish I was able to tell everyone. I was only able to call a few of my coach, Greg, at TPI, my short game coach and my parents and best friend. That was about it last night because it was too late and everybody was everywhere. I think I'll have more time to catch up after today.

**Q. Was he surprised when you called him last night, too?**

I K KIM: They really tried to talk me out of it. Even Alastair at the starting this morning, he's like, "why? You have to come back?" It's so nice when you hear that from the people you love.

And I talked to Yani after, and she cried for on and on and I cried with her. Just you never know when it's going to end. Not just golf and relationship and things. We're not here forever. I feel like golf is teaching me that a little bit sooner.

**Q. My last question. How do you feel right now?**

I K KIM: Well, thanks for taking this time because you all have been so grateful to me, and I feel like my career cannot be without all of you. I think you always have gave me something to think about, and before I came here, I didn't speak any English. You'll remember, I had zero English. Now I can speak English and play golf.

And I just want to say thank you to everyone. My career has been a lot of up and down but you guys made it all beautiful. Appreciate it. Thank you.

**Q. What will you do next?**

I K KIM: I have many interests luckily. I don't know. I'll have to ask people.

**Q. Did you know -- were you still making the decision as of last night or did you know?**

I K KIM: I think it was a lot of clues. I think over the years, I think every time I come here -- maybe just the wind. It's so windy. It just blows you off and makes you feel something

that, you know, out of your body experience, I think that's what it was like. I felt like it goes, you're done. You know, you tried enough (laughing).

**Q. What are you most proud of?**

I K KIM: I'm most proud of the hard work that I've put into. I wasn't most talented or most gifted but I loved the game. I was willing to travel anywhere to play golf and learn the game, and I wanted to thank all the girls here. I've learned so much from them. So it's just, I think their relationship (tearing up).

Thank you so much. Thank you all.

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