

Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship

Press Conference

Wednesday, 2 November 2022

Jiyoo Lim

Kirsten Rudgeley

Natthakritta

Vongtaveelap

Saki Baba



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll make a start. Welcome to our second press conference of this year's Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship. We're joined by four of the leading players in the field this afternoon.

To my immediate right, we have Jiyoo Lim from Korea, Kirsten Rudgeley from Australia, Natthakritta Vongtaveelap from Thailand, and then Saki Baba from Japan.

If I could begin with you, Kirsten, first of all. I gather you had a pretty good shot on the second hole today in practise. Would you like to tell us a bit about that, please.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: Yeah, it was pretty cool. To be honest, I didn't see it go in, so that was a good start. But it was a really good shot.

Yeah, it seemed to go in, which was nice. It would have been good if it was tomorrow, but that's okay.

THE MODERATOR: Do you think a hole-in-one is a good omen on the eve of the championship for you?

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: For sure. I do feel pretty good about myself. I'm ready to get going, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: Natthakritta, if I can turn to you. Obviously last year you played very well and finished tied second in the end. Does that give you confidence that you can go one better this year?

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: Yes. Last year I made some mistakes, and I learned from it. So this year I will do my best. I think I can do better than last year.

THE MODERATOR: Jiyoo Lim, Korea obviously is a very strong golfing country and you produce so many good players. How much would it mean to you to become the first Korean winner of this championship?

JIYOO LIM: My goal is to go to the LPGA, and I think it's a pretty nice warm-up to compete with many professional players around the world and elevate myself in this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Saki, obviously you had a great victory last year in the U.S. Women's Open Championship, the highest ranked player coming into this field. How much confidence does that give you for this week's championship?

SAKI BABA: I've done my best job in preparation towards this. I can't tell how much I'm confident, but I'll do my best.

Q. I'll start with Natthakritta. Last year you played so well. Sorry about the final round. It didn't go your way. This year do you feel there will be any kind of extra pressure on you because you are playing at home? Also I wanted to ask you about Atthaya, how much of a motivation she is. She just became the world No. 1.

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: For this tournament, I don't want to put myself under pressure because it is a big tournament. But I'll try my best. I think this tournament will be very beneficial to me in the future.

Q. And if I can ask Saki, the U.S. Amateur that you won was match play. Over here it's going to be stroke play all four rounds. Will it make a lot of difference in the way you play? I know you played very well at WAGC as well, but how are you going to make the change?

SAKI BABA: In match play obviously the results come out hole by hole, so I was able to stay aggressive every hole. So I used that feeling in stroke play after U.S. Women's Amateur, and I would like to use the same feeling, same aggressiveness in this tournament as well.

Q. To all of you, maybe Kirsten you can start, do you



all feel the course suits your games? Could each of you nominate the one most difficult hole that you think are out there?

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: For sure. I think it definitely suits my game. I think, if you hit the ball off the tee well, straight, keep it in play, and sink the putts, you should have a decent round.

I think 17 is probably a difficult hole. You've got to think the whole way through that hole, I guess, through the tee shot, to the second shot, to the putt really. So, yeah, I think 17.

JIYOO LIM: The course is well managed, and it is a beautiful course. So I had a lot of fun throughout. I had a lot of fun through the round. It is not as high and low as the mountain course in Korea, but it's not easy because there were many bunkers around the green and the green was tricky.

Hole 8 for par-5, yeah.

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: This course I played here many times last year so I know this course. The hole that I got bogey every time is hole No. 5.

SAKI BABA: Hole No. 17 is the most difficult for me. On the tee shot, right-hand side bunker, left side water. So if I hit in the bunker, it makes it difficult for me to get to the green.

And the green is wide on the side, so I need to really stay on the right side of the green. So that's really difficult, No. 17.

Q. Kirsten, I need to ask you, last week we had a fantastic winner from Australia, Harrison Crowe -- at the men's version of this tournament. I don't know if you followed the action over there. But when you have somebody like that just the week before, how motivating is it for you, or what are your thoughts as a team? Even if something like, oh, a player from Australia wins the major and the next week you're playing. What thoughts do you have going into the tournament?

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: For sure, it definitely gives you -- well, us Australians confidence seeing one of your teammates get a win in such a big event. I think we're all probably quite motivated from that win, I know I am for sure.

Yeah, looking forward to the week.

Q. And can I ask also a similar question to Saki. Three

of the Japan Golf Association players have been No. 1 in the last four years. They've been playing really well, winning three championships in a row in professional tournaments. Do you look at those guys and think this is something that's really motivating for you?

SAKI BABA: I know Mizuki Hashimoto won this last year and also Yuka Yasuda last, last time. I'm proud to be a teammate of Mizuki Hashimoto. She is also playing this week. So I want to play my best and be someone like them.

Q. Kirsten, you've competed in the AIG Women's Open last year at Carnoustie. The winner of this event obviously gets to play there next year. Knowing what it's like, is that a big motivator for you to try to win this week and get back there?

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: For sure. Getting to play any major as an amateur is pretty special. It's a completely different game when you get out to a major. Everything just seems bigger.

No, it would be good to get there if I can and see how the week goes.

Q. Is there anything that you learnt from that week that you've brought into your game and that might help you this week?

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: For sure. I was a bit -- I don't know. I was a bit nervous, to be fair, teeing off in a major event. I think I just need to stay relaxed and keep my head in it and be patient. It's not a race, it's a marathon.

Q. I have a question to Natthakritta and Jiyoo Lim. If you win this tournament, you can go to a major tournament. One is AIG Women's Open, and the other is Evian Championship. What major do you want to go?

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: In terms of the tournament, if she win this, the WAAP, she said, it's not like -- she needs to take care, she needs to more consider the condition of the course and how to practise to is to say a preference -- between this tournament she prefer the Evian in France.

JIYOO LIM: Just imagine to be a winner of the WAAP, it gives me a lot of special feelings. I always wanted to play the AIG Women's Open, and this is one of my dreams among the majors. Also, it's a different environment from Korea, which is a unique links course. So I wish I will experience that championship.

Q. My question is to Natthakritta and Kirsten. Natthakritta, how many times have you played on this golf course as preparation for this championship? And then for both of you, as to what is going to be required to win this championship this week.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: I played yesterday and today. So that's all the preparation I've had.

Q. That was for her.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: Oh, sorry.

Q. What is required to win this championship? You can answer that part.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: I guess patience. Keep your head in it. You've got to putt well on any tournament day. Yeah, I just think good ball striking and good putting will win the week.

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: For me, I have been play here like only two days preparing for this tournament. The last question, can you say it again?

Q. What do you need to do well on this golf course to win the championship?

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: So I need to be more confident at myself, my skill. I need my putting skills to be better than last year. That's it.

Q. What is it with the putts? The greens are really slopey or what?

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: It's really fast, and the lie is like -- you know, it's really hard to read it.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: Same sort of thing. If you're going to miss the green, you've got to miss it in the right spots. Otherwise, there's plenty of spots where you're not going to make up and down. So I think that's key as well.

Q. Can you all tell us, as you were growing up, who were your role models and golfing heroes? What were the reasons for that?

JIYOO LIM: From Korea is Hee-jeonhoo Lim, and from USA is Nelly Korda.

I have two role models, one a Korean player is Heyo-joo Kim. And when I was younger, junior squad, she was a part of the first national team squad. Her strength is always that she is very calm, no matter the situation. So that's the one thing I really admire about her.

And the other player is Nelly Korda. Every time I watch her on TV, she is so cool and aggressive. She has something that I don't. So that's the two role models I have.

KIRSTEN RUDGELEY: Probably my role model would be the Aussie Karrie Webb. She's a legend in golf really. Just what she gives back to Australian golf as well and us females, it's awesome to look up to that. So, yeah, that's my role model.

NATTHAKRITTA VONGTAVEELAP: For me, I don't have my own role model. I just like to be myself. But I love to watch the great professional players -- how they play? How do they work out? How do they think? How do they do in that situation? Yeah, that's for me.

SAKI BABA: Nelly Korda. I like Nelly Korda because she's simply cool. She's tall, like me, and her swing is very good. I was able to see her in the distance at the U.S. Women's Open, and I could tell that's her in the distance. That's why I like her so much.

Q. It's a pretty similar question, but obviously you played here yesterday and today. How was the golf course? What's your comment about conditions or greens or layout? What do you think compared to other golf courses you played? As an amateur, I played here a couple times, and I felt No. 6 is pretty difficult. It's pretty narrow and lots of water. What do you think about it? Is it difficult for you?

SAKI BABA: Long dialogue in short, generally, this golf course has sticky rough. So I especially have to be careful, if I hit into rough around the green, I have to be able to play that. So I will practise that after this.

Hole No. 6. If there is a downwind, I need to really find out what distance I should hit. I have to consider the wind strength. If I am laying up, I want to really avoid the bunker and go for the green on the third shot.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Great job from our translators. We'll close things there, but a big part of this championship is to give the girls experience of handling the media in a press conference environment, and they've all done fantastically well today. So please join in a round of applause. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports