

# Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship

Press Conference

Wednesday, 8 March 2023

## Avani Prashanth Tiffany Ting-Hsuan Huang Kan Bunnabodee Aloysa Atienza



OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Good afternoon and welcome to the Singapore Island Country Club for the 2023 Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship. We're joined this afternoon by some of our young stars this week and I'm delighted to introduce you to Avani Prashanth of India; defending champion, Ting-Hsuan Huang of Chinese Taipei; Kan Bunnabodee of Thailand; and Aloysa Atienza of Singapore, our host nation this week.

Girls, you've now played two practice rounds, so you're fully prepared for the WAAP this week. Can you give us your thoughts on the course, and we'll start with you Avani.

AVANI PRASHANTH: It's a very, very nice course. I love the greens. I love the layout. So it's going to be a fun week and I think the main test is the walk because it's going to be a lot of pushing the trolley uphill and downhill. So if I manage that, I think I've got the course. I've done a pretty good plan of the course and, yeah, I'm excited for the week.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: The course is beautiful and it's very hilly and the greens are very difficult as well. Yeah, you have to hit a shot in the right position. And, yeah, looking forward to these four rounds.

KAN BUNNABODEE: Yes. I also agree with both of them that the golf course is pretty hilly, and I feel like the green would be like the most like interesting part to like play with this week.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: I think the three girls have covered it. The course is really hilly. I mean, on normal days the members over here just take buggies. So I think walking the course will be quite a challenge, so I'll probably just

want to keep hydrated as much as I can. Hopefully the weather is good and like what everyone else said, the greens here are pretty much the defense of the golf course, so hitting it in the right spots is going to be essential and probably the best putter this week is going to win the event.

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Excellent. Do we have questions from the floor?

**Q. We heard from some of the other girls about they met some monkeys on the course. Did you guys have any monkey experiences today?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: Yeah, lots in the carts. They were all over. Dad had to keep chasing after the carts to get them to go. But it's an interesting thing to see for the first time to see so many monkeys.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: It's my first time seeing lots of monkeys on the golf course. And these two rounds my food and my drinks got stolen. They stole my food and drinks. That's very cool, but it was very naughty as well.

**Q. What hole?**

TING-HSUAN HUANG: The 16th. 16th. Yeah. No, 7. 7.

KAN BUNNABODEE: Well, I feel like personally my home course back in Thailand has a lot of monkeys too, so I feel like have I some experience with monkey, but still I got my food stolen yesterday as well.

And I feel like one of my teammates, like the Thai girl, her dad pretend to hold like the club as like a gun to shoot them away, so they ran away as well. So that's really funny, yeah.

**Q. What is your home course?**

KAN BUNNABODEE: Bang Pa-In Golf Club. Yeah.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: I think for me, I mean, this is not my home course, but monkeys quite common in a couple of courses in Singapore. But I think that the monkeys here are kind of like special. They're like a bit more aggressive than those that you find in like Malaysia and stuff like that.



These monkeys are quite smart.

You try to like put your drinks inside the cooler and strap it up and they still know how to open it. So these monkeys are quite intelligent. So, yeah.

**Q. One question for each of the girls. Avani, how are you feeling going into a tournament, especially after such a brilliant performance at Queen Sirikit Cup? From that high, how have you maintained that kind of confidence? And also, tell us about your exams that you had which delayed your arrival here.**

AVANI PRASHANTH: I had a pretty good week at the Queen Sirikit Cup, but regardless of whether I have a good round or a bad round, I sit and analyze it. So Dad and I did that together.

So, yeah, then if there was an area for me to improve on, which I think there was, worked on it, and I'm looking forward to keep the same game plan that I did last week, which is not to take any risks and play my usual aggressive game but play it smart.

And, yeah, I did have board exams and studying the whole year -- not studying the whole year is not a good idea. I should have done something in between. But yeah, I mean, right after I finish this, I have a couple more to write.

**Q. Can I just ask you also, what did you think you did very well in Philippines and you think that that can help you over here as well?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: So definitely my driving distance was a big gain there because I am pretty long off the tee. So I had a lot more options. Manila was quite tight, so if you were missing it left, right, you're either in the bunker or you're in hazards.

So I didn't have to pull out my driver everywhere, which saved me shots because I didn't have to like go after a lot of holes. I could hit my hybrid and I would be in that good spot and that good distance that I like. I think that's what made a big difference. And then I was putting really well as well. I think those two things coming together was like a game changer.

**Q. Tiffany (Huang), can I ask you, you are the defending champion, you have got all these amazing prizes that any girl can dream of. How are you motivating yourself now this week when you have all under your belt already? All the spots you have already got, how are you motivating yourself this week?**

TIFFANY TING-HSUAN HUANG: This week I just enjoy the tournament and playing with a lot of players and just having fun this week.

**Q. Kan, did you miss the tournament last year? You didn't play in Thailand in your home country. How much did you miss being part of it?**

KAN BUNNABODEE: Well, I did not play last year because I was injured. So coming back this year and to be able to play again, like this week, really mean a lot to me because the WAAP always had like a soft spot in my heart with playing with a lot of great players and also like good hosting events and also like the opportunity if anyone can win can like really go beyond like to pro events. So I really missed to be here and happy to be back, yeah.

**Q. Aloysa, being the from the home country, the host country, have you been able to practice here much before the tournament? And what kind of local knowledge have you been able to gain about this golf course and this venue?**

ALOYSA ATIENZA: I actually got to practice the golf course a couple of times and a bit more just last week. I think it just allows me to get like a more solid game plan going into this week during the tournament, and it's better for me because I'm able to commit more. So all I have to do is just focus on the process and just swing my best swing each swing and, yeah, hopefully the results happen on its own.

**Q. Aloysa, firstly, is it a really big advantage for you playing at home to be familiar with the conditions? I know this is not your home course. And secondly, you made the cut last year in the same tournament, so what are your goals for this year?**

ALOYSA ATIENZA: Of course playing like my home country is always a huge advantage, just getting extra practice rounds and getting to know the greens, especially since this week the greens are a bit tricky and what I feel is like the most, the defense of the golf course. So definitely getting like extra rounds and in my home course is a huge advantage.

And making the cut last year definitely made me really happy because I kind of like missed it the first time I played in Abu Dhabi. This year, of course, making the cut would be great, but hopefully I can be the one lifting the trophy. But I do not want to put any like pressure on myself and just hopefully just enjoy this week and my playing partners, yeah.

**Q. Avani, you're coming into this week with mixed**

**feelings. Last year at this same tournament you missed the cut and I saw how disappointed you were. And this tournament when you're coming in the last start you had you actually won by 10 shots. So describe the contrasting feelings.**

AVANI PRASHANTH: So the WAAP is a bookmark event in my calendar every year. And I think obviously I was very disappointed when I played last year, but I felt sick on the first day of the event, so I had no chance of competing because I wasn't at my best.

And then coming in from last week puts me in a very positive mindset and that's what I'm planning on carrying on into the week.

**Q. If you were a fly on the wall, what would you tell Avani to do and what would you tell Avani to avoid this week?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: Well, I think I would tell myself to really plan properly and not to like take on holes, even though they might look easy. And what I would tell myself not to do is to get frustrated if I'm not making putts. That's something I wouldn't want to do because I would mess up my game.

**Q. Can I ask each of you, you talked a little bit about the caddying and not having caddies this week. How big a challenge is that for each of you? When did you last either carry your own bags or pull trollies? And do you usually use a caddie to help you read the greens as well as distance?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: It's definitely going to be more of a challenge here because of the slopes and the amount of the walk. But the last time I think I caddied myself was in Australia two months ago.

But, no, I mean, the caddie's normally just there to push and pull my bag. I don't really take help from them. I plan everything on my own. So that way I'm not missing out on anything, but definitely the effort's a lot more.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: I think it's a challenge for us to pushing the cart this week because the slope is very hilly, yeah. And I think that I just have to stay hydrated and keep patient. Yeah, that's it.

KAN BUNNABODEE: I would say that I've been pushing my cart through all my college career and now I'm a senior, so I feel like I have a bit of an experience of how to do that.

But, yeah, the golf course is pretty hilly, so I would say that it might be a bit challenging, but I feel like I have the

experience before, so I should be able to manage it.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: I think for myself I'm pretty used to like carrying my own bag or pushing my own cart because in Singapore we don't have really like caddies, in the first place.

And just like Avani, I think we played the same tournament in Australia. We had to pull our own carts because I didn't have a caddie either. But I don't really rely on caddies to like read my greens or anything. If anything, if I had my coach on the bag, it's usually just like decision-making and stuff like that. But I'm quite confident and I'm really used to like caddying on my own, yeah. And if anything, it's just like overcoming the hills and stuff like that.

**Q. If I have to ask each of you which one of the holes of the 18 holes over here is probably the toughest and you will be very wary of and which of the 18 holes is the one where you would expect to make a birdie, which one would you guys nominate and why?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: I think the 14th and 15th holes are definitely the toughest ones for me because they're playing pretty long. 14 is a 421 yard par-4 playing in the wind. So, I mean it's not really long if it doesn't play into it, but with the wind, I'm playing left-to-right and the amount of bunkers it's definitely playing tough.

And then 15 is pretty narrow off the tee. It's playing right-to-left wind with a bunker on the left, so all the danger is going towards the left.

And the easiest hole, in my opinion, would be the 17th, which is a drivable par-4. So I hit the green today and that's the plan for the whole week as well.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: I would say first hole the driving is a little bit narrow, but not too bad.

KAN BUNNABODEE: I would say that for me 14 is a pretty long hole, so that would be like one of the challenging holes. And also personally I feel like hole 10 is pretty narrow as well from the tee off. But I feel like the par-5 is pretty like not -- for me, not very reachable, but I feel like it's pretty makeable to make birdie.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

KAN BUNNABODEE: Yeah. Most of them, yeah. I don't really have the hole in my mind right now, so, but, sorry.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: For me, I feel like 10, 14 and 15 are like the tougher holes on the course because they're a bit tighter off the tees. The fairways may seem big, but like

15, like half of the fairway feeds to the right and if you go on right side of the fairway it just kinds of like blocks out the green and you have to like go around the trees. And if you go left, there's like a bunker over there and you don't want to like lay back because it will be a longer hole and stuff like that. So those three holes I find tough off the tee.

With regards to like the easiest hole, I don't have any hole in particular, but there's definitely a couple of like scorable holes because I have like wedge in hand, and I just feel like as long as I have a wedge in hand it's like a birdie hole for many of the players out here.

**Q. So hearing you guys talk about difficult holes and easy holes, can each of you probably say what part of your game will be very important to shoot low this week?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: Placement off the tee is very important this week. You can't be missing the fairway because it doesn't put you in a good spot. And with the greens being hard hitting out of the rough is not going to help you.

Definitely putting because that will be a game changer. If you're putting well, then all the greens are hard to read, so definitely your putter is going to have to be hot all week.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: Playing this course you have to hit it, first you have to hit on the fairway, and your iron shot has to put it on the right spot and have a good chance to make a birdie. So maybe iron shot is the most important this week.

KAN BUNNABODEE: Well, I would say that, yeah, it's going to be nice to put the ball in the fairway and also put it in the right spot, but I feel like putting is also important because like if you put it in the wrong like spot, you still have to be able to like put it close to the hole to make par from there.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: Same as Kan. I think the approaches are, for me, the most important. When I first played the golf course blind without a yardage book, it was hard to know where the pin is, and missing it on the wrong spots of the green can, you can easily make 3-putts or 4-putts or like putt it off the green.

So I think that just hitting it in the right tiers, right areas, right misses will really give you a lot more chances of making birdies and saving pars on tough holes.

**Q. Anyone can answer. You girls are all give or take a couple of years older or younger than each other. You've already been playing with each other as**

**friends, as rivals, as compatriots. How do you see yourself go in this long journey in golf from amateur to professional? And what kind of relationships and friendships have you forged over the past few years?**

AVANI PRASHANTH: I think obviously the players that are playing the WAAP right now are the future of women's golf from Asia for sure. So I've made quite a few friends here and I've kept a lot of them. I know a couple people since I was maybe 7, 8 years old and they're playing this event as well.

So I think keeping friends like that is a good advantage of playing tournaments like this. And, yeah, I look forward to making many more this week.

TING-HSUAN HUANG: I like to make friends as well. And yeah, I knew a lot of friends from other countries, so, yeah, I think I can make a lot of friends this week.

KAN BUNNABODEE: I feel like when I go out and play, I just like to make like new friends, or even though like I know that person, I feel like I just want to continue the relationship with them. So playing golf with new friends or a friend and then just play together, like from now on until like professional career would be like really important to me. So, yeah.

ALOYSA ATIENZA: I think making friends during this kind of tournaments is very important. Like I didn't start golf competitively too early, so WAAP in Abu Dhabi was probably my first one where I started making friends. For me, when I play my best golf is when I chat with my playing partners. So hopefully I do that more often, even though I was a bit shy previously. And I'm starting to make more friends and just meet the same people and more new people over like a couple of like major tournaments.

Just like two weeks ago we had Queen Sirikit Cup and I played with Tiffany (Huang) the first time and now we're like friends and we're always saying hi to each other and I hope that like social circle just becomes bigger because golf can get lonely sometimes.

And, yeah, as you travel all over the world if you play golf professionally in the future it will be good to have friends around with you.

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Kan, while we're on friends, how much inspiration do you take when you see what fellow Thai players, like Atthaya and more recently, Sim, who was only playing in this championship in the past two years, what she did in your hometown on the LPGA recently?

KAN BUNNABODEE: Okay. So we'll start with Atthaya. I

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

was her roommate when she won like the first WAAP in Singapore. So I was really like proud of her, and then we just like have really fun time in the room together.

So same with Nattha, like, we all like was on like the national team together, so like we play, we practice, and then we like compete for like to get to play in all this stuff.

I feel like seeing them now like being on LPGA just like really motivates me and like really proud of them. So I just some day I just wish that I would join them soon.

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Just the last question. Tiffany (Huang), this year is going to be a really special year for you. You get the chance to play in three major championships. What are you most excited for this year? What is making you really excited?

TING-HSUAN HUANG: I'm excited to playing three majors and Augusta National as well. So, yeah, I always excited and I was focused on my swing and my game, yeah. My mental, my mindset, yeah. Just working on this I think I'm looking forward to these three majors, yeah.

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Well ladies, thank you very much for joining us today. We wish you the best of luck in the championship.

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