

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Sammamish, Washington, USA

Sahalee Country Club

Yuka Saso

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Yuka Saso at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. We just had a couple announcements here today. I'm sure you may have heard already. KPMG Women's PGA Championship purse is moving up to 10.4 million and we are getting the KPMG CHAMPCAST presented by T-Mobile. I know you heard about those exciting things.

Just tell me your thoughts on those big announcements here.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, on prize money I think it's -- I think KPMG has been increasing the prize money every year, and it's exciting news for every one of us.

KPMG has done so much thing for all of us already, so, yeah, I think not just that, they are doing the stats for us and they are starting this week the CHAMPCAST.

You know, those little stuff, it helps us in a lot of the ways. So I'm just very thankful for KPMG and PGA for what they been doing for this championship.

Q. As our most recent major champion, and I know you've played good at the KPMG Championship before, just tell us how excited you are to follow up your major victory at the next major of the year?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, very excited with all the news, prize increase and CHAMPCAST and my recent win, and playing at Sahalee where there is a lot of good memories as well. I didn't come here in 2016, but I was watching on TV.

Yeah, the golf course is in good shape and I'm very -- it's very difficult, and I'm really looking forward to it.

Q. After you won the U.S. Open in 2021, I think your life changed a lot. You became a Tour member. It was a big win for you. How did it sort of compare having

won this year? Did you feel like that was another big change or big moment for you?

YUKA SASO: I can't really compare my 2021 and this year because it's both special. In both ways I think it would change my life, but I haven't felt like my life has changed after my win a few weeks ago. Maybe I would in a few months. Right now my focus is just playing every week and playing my best and hopefully make the cut again this week and be in contention for the weekend.

So, yeah, I think those two wins, especially so hard to win here on LPGA Tour for me, took me three years, and to be able to do that I think it was very special.

Q. Since your win at Lancaster, how have you been able to reset and refocus to get ready for this major?

YUKA SASO: I played ShopRite right after Lancaster; unfortunately I missed the cut. But after that, I had a week off back in home and didn't do anything much. Just rested and gave myself a lot of recover, and came here early and played few holes and trying to get ready for this event.

But the weather was something that I was not expecting, so it's a bit cold and rainy on the past few days. Just trying to stay warm and stay injury-free.

Q. I know you obviously like a difficult golf course. You've proven that and proven that and proven that. It's going to be a tough test out there this week. What are you looking for from this golf course and what do you like about this golf course? What is it about hard golf courses that brings out the best in you?

YUKA SASO: It's very narrow here compared to other golf courses that we play in. It's going to be very, very difficult. Have to hit it straight and stay out of the trees. I think it makes us focus more. It makes me focus more when it's difficult, obviously, and I think that helps a little bit.

But I don't know why I play a bit better on difficult golf courses than others. I'm not sure why. I haven't figured that out yet, but I think also on this golf course the greens are very slopey and I think it's going to be difficult.



I don't know. I haven't figured anything out yet. I have one more day, so...

Q. I hope you figured out where to hit driver.

YUKA SASO: Yep.

Q. I know you are a player that likes to rip driver. Where are you looking to hit driver? Are there holes you will have to dial back to keep the ball in the fairway?

YUKA SASO: Probably hit drivers most of the holes, unless they move the tee up or the wind changes or anything like that.

But, yeah, hitting driver obviously the target gets narrower. But I think I have to hit driver, especially KPMG is one the championships that is very long. I don't want to have like 5-iron or hybrid second shot.

So just trying to be more consistent with driver. I still have one more day to get ready, so trying to dial that in so I can have driver off the tee and give myself shorter clubs off second shots.

Q. You said you watched this event in 2016. Do you remember anything or any of the shots or any of the golf course from watching it all the way back then?

YUKA SASO: I only remember Brooke's last hole, second shot. It was par-4 then, right? Yeah.

Q. The Olympic qualification period is wrapping up. You played your way in. How excited are you to have that opportunity represent Japan in Paris this time around?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I wasn't expecting anything. I knew the rankings were pretty close. I said this in earlier tournaments, that I focus on every tournament. That's the priority.

Luckily I was able to win a championship and give myself a chance, so I'm very happy that I was able to do that. I'm very excited to go to Paris and spend the week there with my dad and hopefully my mom as well. So, yeah, just really looking forward to that week.

Q. Yuka, so now that you are kind of an expert on one of the majors, no, like you embrace the conditions and everything that goes around the U.S. Open. What would it take for you to be an expert at the KPMG Women's PGA, and what is unique about this PGA

Championship?

YUKA SASO: I think PGA Championships are very long compared to any other major championships. I think that's what makes it difficult. Especially in this wet condition.

And also especially on this golf course it's very narrow, so you have to be aggressive but also conservative. You have to hit it straight but also long.

So I haven't -- I don't know if that's the play here. I'm not sure. I haven't -- I know I played more than 18 holes already but I think I needed more -- I need to see the golf course more to figure that out.

So, yeah, I think major championship mainly just to be patient and enjoy playing golf and have fun.

Q. And of those things, what things come naturally to you and what things do you think you have to put more work on?

YUKA SASO: On this golf course?

Q. On conditions and that...

YUKA SASO: Naturally I would just hit driver off the tee, but like I said earlier, depends on if they move the tees or not.

We will have to think about maybe hitting it shorter. But hitting it shorter maybe I will have to have a longer shot going into the greens.

So, yeah, those little things I think I will have to think more. It's not really natural for me.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

