

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Wednesday, June 19, 2024
Sammamish, Washington, USA
Sahalee Country Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, good afternoon. Pleased to welcome in Lydia Ko. Lydia, you can't tell the story of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship at Sahalee without the playoff in 2016. Kind of take us back to this tournament and what you remember most fondly about it.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think that was the only year I really been in contention at this event. I'm pretty sure after that week ended, I knew I played a lot of good golf. Disappointed with maybe the way it finished, but at the same time Brooke hit an unbelievable shot in the playoff, so she was the deserving winner.

It's 2016, so that's like ten, nine years since we were here last. Time flies. You know, a lot of things have happened since then.

Great to be back at a golf course where I played at. I don't remember all of the holes to be honest, but I remember some of the shots that I hit, like on 17 and on 9, et cetera.

So I'm excited. And we've had beautiful weather today. It's forecasted to be that way the next few days - knock on wood - so I think it's going to be a great week.

Yeah, just great to be back at a golf course where I have a lot of good memories.

Q. It's Seattle. You never know when it could start raining.

LYDIA KO: I know. Let's not jinx anything. Today has been beautiful. I know we could get rain and kind of a gray day and then a day like this, so I think even to just get one day like this you get to enjoy the scenery and the trees and just being in this part of the country.

It's almost like an oasis of its own here. I've enjoyed it. It's been really peaceful.



Q. Very tight off the tees, all the fairways. What's going to be the plan of attack this week? Will you try and draw on 2016 as you can along?

LYDIA KO: I hit it like a good ten-plus yards further off the tee, and it's the point where I'm not sure if that's a good or bad thing.

But I'm pretty sure the golf course is probably a little longer than when we were here last, and the 18th is now a par-5 as well. So it's like you're drawing on the good shots, but you know I'm probably not like going to play the golf course exactly the way I did then.

Just seems way too communicated to try and copy something. But overall, I feel like I've had a good few days to be able to practice and get a good feel of the golf course.

Even though it may be super tight and I like heard it's like Sa-Hallway down here, but a golf ball does fit on the fairway so that's always good to know.

If it's tricky for me it's tricky for anyone. I don't think this course in particular is good for a draw or a fader. No matter which direction you hit it, you just have to play with the shot shape you have.

I feel like the person that has a lot of patience and is very consistent, especially off the tee, is going to do very well this week.

Q. Sa-Hallway is the best thing I've heard all week. For you, everything has changed, but everything in a lot of ways is the same. You're still at the top of the game and one of the people we watch every week out here. For you, if you could look back over the last nine years, how do you evaluate your changes as a player and how you've grown as a person?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, a lot of things have happened, to be honest. When it was my 10th year on tour and now my 11th, I was like, wow, I played professional golf for 11, 10 years.

You kind of don't know where it's gone by. I was trying to count how many U.S. Women's Open I played and I saw how many Lexi has played. Oh, my goodness. We've been out here for a long time.

Sometimes my body feels that time that I've been on tour. I think you kind of take every tournament and every day as is, and by that time you're already at CME and you're excited for some time off and then the Hilton Grand Vacations is back around the corner.

I think I've grown a lot. I think -- I'm pretty sure there are things I was probably better at when I was a teenager, and now I have a bit more experience, so I think how I handle some situations is probably a little bit better.

I hope it's better.

But it's kind of like a double-edged sword where the more time you play, the more I guess positions you experience, and that could either be good or bad when you're in are similar circumstance in the future.

When you have more of those repetitions under your belt, you realize that golf is very important to me and to all of us, but at the same time there is so much more outside of that.

I feel like I'm still on my journey to realize that and embrace that, and especially now because I know I'm more in my second chapter of my career that I just want to enjoy it and -- but while I'm playing try and compete at the highest level I can.

Q. For you, obviously a major champion. This golf course obviously reads like a major championship venue. What does it take to have success when it's this hard or this difficult or, in this case, visually intimidating?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I mean, you stand on No. 10 especially and like No. 1, and you stand there and it's intimidating, like you said. You go, how does the ball fit when it's like moving at 90- to 100-and-something miles an hour.

But it's -- no, that would be club head speed. 100-something miles an hour. I think at the same time, I think the person that's going to have a lot of patience, and you know that on a golf course like this somebody that plays really good golf over the stretch of four days is going to be the winner.

And I'm sure that is the case at any event, but this type of golf course you know that that person just played unbelievably. It's not really the style that somebody would all of a sudden run away with the championship I would

guess.

Yeah, you need to be on, especially with the long game. The greens are quite small I think for some of the other maybe major championships we play. Long game is going to be ultra important.

I feel like coming into this week, a lot more confident in that aspect than maybe at the U.S. Women's Open. So it's a bit of the a relief, but you know that -- I'm pretty sure my golf ball is going to hit at least one tree or a leaf or part of a tree.

If it does, I'm going to pray that the golf gods will kick it out onto the fairway for me. Sometimes luck kind of follows when it's going to be your week. For sure the person that wins and is hoisting the trophy at the end of the week played very flawless and consistent golf.

Q. So with all your experience in majors, what makes the PGA unique and what parts of the PGA and that uniqueness do you enjoy and what part's a challenge for you?

LYDIA KO: Ever since the KPMG and the PGA of Americakind of on-boarded this event after it was our LPGA Championship, we have been able to go to some of these championship golf courses that maybe the ladies have not played in previous years. Including Hazeltine, Congressional, Baltusrol, and all that.

I thought growing up those were courses I would never be able to play in competition. For them to have put this much effort in taking us to those championship golf courses and for there to be -- for all the winners in the past have gone hey, the women deserve to be here; we can conquer this golf course.

It's been an unbelievable experience to go all around the country and play these amazing golf courses. They have definitely kicked my butt I would say. You kind of need your A-game in all sorts of your -- all around the game. It's not like, oh, you can drive it well, but if your irons aren't that good it's okay.

The KPMG Women's PGA Championship, it's at all of these high-level golf courses that you can't -- like obviously one area could be a little bit better, but all round it needs to be really good for you to contend and be the winner at the end of the week.

There is a distinct look and feel when you turn up here with a lot of blue signage and everything. I would personally love to be able to win this one, especially this one being one that I haven't won before.

Just having played all these golf courses, I know that if I win, it's kind of a double pat on the back because I must have played really, really well.

Q. You mentioned 18 being a par-5 now. How different does that hole play as a 5 instead of a 4? There used to be a big tree in front of 11, too, that is gone now. How different do those couple holes play?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think like 11, Brooke holed that crazy long putt for eagle, and my caddie, Paul, and I were joking that you could drop like 100 balls and not get it within five feet. For her to have holed that, wow.

Obviously not really great for me at that point in time, but it was just super impressive even me looking back. I think there were -- like that tree was kind of one of the ones where you were on the fairway and the tree was still penalizing you. So for that to be gone is definitely one less tree to worry about.

18, I personally love par-5 finishing holes. Can be very exciting. Somebody can make an eagle. I don't know what they're planning to do with moving the tees, et cetera, but I think that just creates a lot of excitement and there tends to be a lot of people normally around the 18th with the hospitality and everything.

So it's great that I think as a fan perspective to see a lot of birdies as well. Yeah, I think 18 could be very big determining factor especially with it being a par-3 and par-5 finish.

Yeah, so I personally like the changes.

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