

Marathon Classic presented by Dana

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Toledo, Ohio, USA

Danielle Kang

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here with Danielle Kang, fresh off getting pictures taken. Second week in a row, and we're right here at the winner's interview.

Take us through that final 18 holes.

DANIELLE KANG: Definitely it was a lot of up and downs going on. I made some little mistakes here and there, but I definitely answered with some birdies, which was good, and kept me in my momentum.

The back nine I just -- I just had six holes to play and all of a sudden I was five shots back. That three-putt was a bit much, and I just said to my caddie that, Man, that's too costly.

He said, You got six holes left, five down. That put me in a little bit of a match play mentality, and hit some great shots coming in. Made some birdies and narrowed the lead to two.

I think that was crucial.

Q. When Ollie mentioned that to you, what did that do for you mentally?

DANIELLE KANG: I don't know why. I just responded with, I like that. It just gave me hope. Sometimes when you're that far behind you feel like have to do a lot to get to that end.

For some reason, when he said that it just kind of clicked with me where I went, Okay, it's not over until it's over. I just had to keep executing my shots. My brother told me today that you just got to keep hitting good shots no matter what, and it's not over until it's over.

So it was good.

Q. It really came down to that 18th hole. Describe what you were feeling that entire hole.

DANIELLE KANG: Well, it was a really good tee shot.

That was the first time I hit a 3-wood on that tee. It's been a tough tee shot for me. I been kind of left and right with the drivers.

But for my second shot I knew that I was one back, and all I did was just -- I was trying to kind of cut it in, but it's not really a pin that you can hold. So I kind of aimed it at the bunkers and just kind of hoped for a Hail Mary good lie.

But it was a bit rough watching how it ended for Lydia as well, to be honest. You know, just as a competitor and as a friend, you just want it to be a bit -- I don't know. That ending was -- I wished for more for her for that one. I just thought it was going to be a playoff.

It happens. It's golf. That right side is really, really tough. That green is sneaky firm. Even if you're on the left side it's so hard to make up and down. No guaranteed birdies there, either. There was a lot of emotions running through that.

Mostly, I just wanted to give myself a good birdie chance, and, yeah, just the fact that I had -- Ollie just told me to try and chip that one in. He says, You've done it a million times. Just see the line and just do it. I had a had really good chip. It wasn't an easy chip, to be honest, no matter how small it looked. I was good. I executed what I needed to and ended up winning.

Q. Ended up winning your second win in a row here in Toledo. Ohio has been good for you. What more can you state about how confident you are in your game at the moment?

DANIELLE KANG: I feel pretty good, yeah. I mean, I won two weeks in a row, so that's good. I'm really proud of all the work that I did during the off time, all the work that I did with Butch and all the workouts that I put in.

I really utilized that time, and I'm proud to come out during this quarantine and be able to execute my game the way I wanted to. That's what I'm most proud of.

And this week I kept myself in play. It was a really good first round. A little bit rough here and there, but, yeah, it was just a good final round. It was good four days of golf, and 72 holes is a long time, long rounds. So just got to keep playing until the end.



Q. What does it say with Scotland as we kind of jet off to Scotland in just a little bit, but also the first major championship just around the corner?

DANIELLE KANG: I'm really excited to go to Scotland actually. Links golf hasn't been my forte, but I've kind of proven that what I worked on with different parts of my game -- Inverness and Highland Meadows have been two different golf courses completely and I was able to play well on both of them.

Couple of shots here and there. Got really firm out here, so I pretended I was on links golf and tried to run it up and things like that.

I'm really excited to go to Scotland. Going to be different. Different food, different vibe, different weather. But I'm kind of excited to see where my game going to be, and links golf is something I've worked on with Butch. Just want to -- yeah, it's a little new test for me, so I'm excited.

Q. Where does Toledo rank on your favorite cities list now?

DANIELLE KANG: Pretty high up there.

Q. You had mentioned like Lydia there at the 18th hole. How hard is that as a competitor, seeing someone, especially someone you're friends with, kind of struggle? Obviously her struggles the last few years are well documented.

DANIELLE KANG: I mean, my heart goes -- it's just -- I mean, there are really no words, to be honest. As a competitor, friend, I mean, she'll bounce back and she's a great player and she's proven to be one of the best players in the world.

Yeah, I'm excited to see what she's going to bring to the table for the rest of the year. She's been playing really good too, so...

Q. Is there anything about the unique nature of the two weeks here in town that really clicked for you? I realize two different tournaments. You didn't really go anywhere, so to speak. Anything that clicked for you just being in town, going from one course to another, few miles away in terms of just like comfort and obviously back to back in the same essentially town?

DANIELLE KANG: Okay. My game feels really comfortable mechanically, so a lot of things that I have to worry about are the golf courses, how they're playing. It's been varying a lot day to day, Inverness and Highland

Meadows as well. Every day has been different. Yesterday was very, very firm and today is softened up. Greens got a little bit slower.

So it's just an adjustment per day. I've been really comfortable. I didn't have to move hotels. As a golfer, that's amazing. My sponsor, BMW, gave me a car for two weeks, which was nice. Driving an SUV X5 around. I also had basically a chef staying right across from me, player Amy Yang, who was -- ended up being right in front of and me and she cooked for me every day. She made more food so I ate her food every day. I ate out one time and it was McDonald's.

So for two weeks, I thank her so much for making me so much food. Yeah, so it's been very comfortable here. Nothing really crazy. Just been trying to figure out golf courses. And, yeah.

Q. So I guess along those lines, that's what I was getting at. Really felt like a home situation because you're not worried about scrambling catching a flight on to the next city?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. I don't know. I didn't really think about that. I just kind of -- as I get to a destination at a golf course, all I think about is I need to get the green speed, grass, the golf course condition are my top priority.

Everything else is just part of our jobs where we go hotels, whether it's noisy neighbors to food to whatever it may be. That's just a part of traveling, so I don't really think about that as comfort versus noncomfort.

Q. With the rankings sort of changing this year, the LPGA can't project if you will go No. 1, but you're obviously No. 2. How important is being No. 1? How much time do you put into thinking about that? How will that change you if it happens?

DANIELLE KANG: I hope it doesn't change me, but definitely a goal of mine. Been striving towards it for my whole career.

Moving up to No. 2 was definitely a confidence booster. I've been playing really great consistently before and after quarantine. Butch always tells me, Good golf takes care of everything. I'm really trying to focus on my game.

I think a big part of how I've approached the golf game is I'm really not focused on a lot of other things other than just getting better at things I want to get better at. We always have room to improve, and that's the beauty of golf.

At the same time, I'm able to tell myself I did a good job



with certain things and positive reinforcements to myself so I'm not too critical. That's something that I think I've changed in how I approach a golf game and how I approach my own game.

I don't think they can project that yet, but I think it's -- I don't think we're -- yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I think Scotland is going to be good. I'm excited to play for three more weeks. Yeah.

Q. Down five with six to play, I know you're not giving up. Were you thinking winning was still like attainable at that point?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, I do. I don't give up very often. If somebody tells me it's over, I still think it's not over. It's like complete denial. That's just the personality I have. I give it all I've got until the end. Wherever I end up is where I end up, and as long as I've given it my 110% effort, I'm just proud of that result.

So with six holes to go, five down, it was a lot. But like I said, my caddie, Ollie, said to me, you know, You're five down, six to go.

The way he said it just triggered a match play mentality. That's what I took in, and I just kind of zoned in and made two birdies back to back and hit the next one close. Just kept trying to be super aggressive and shave some shots down. That's what I was doing.

Q. And then more of a big picture question: Just being back out here seeing how it all worked with the testing and no fans, everything, what was it like? Were you encouraged by how everything went?

DANIELLE KANG: I am really encouraged. I'm hoping for a better tomorrow. I know 2020 has been really rough for everybody around the world. I'm just so thankful to be able to be standing here able to play, being where I'm at.

It's just -- I can't say that any other way for other people, other than the fact that I'm just blessed and honored to be here.

All in all in how they're doing the protocols and everything, it's just been very stable, in my opinion. I really respect Commissioner Mike Whan's decision on when to start and how the tournament has been running.

Everyone has gone through extra steps to make it really safe for us, all the volunteers, everyone. Like without them we can't host the tournament, even without the tournament directors as well, the staff and all that.

So I just really thank them from the bottom of my heart to be able to host an event that's been around for over 30 years, and to be able to present a stage for us to compete. I just thank them for that. I know that's really tough right now to do, and I want them to know that -- I want to acknowledge the difficulties that they're going through to host events.

Yeah, so hopefully -- that's what I meant by hoping for a better tomorrow. Sooner or later I hope we can have fans, things can be better, and that's what we can hope.

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