

Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Chandler, Arizona, USA

Whirlwind Golf Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, hello and welcome everyone to the Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse. I'm joined by defending champion Nelly Korda. Just bounce back to last year real quick. What do you remember most about winning this event last year?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I came in from the event in LA and didn't really have too much time to recover. Just kind of really enjoyed myself this week. I know a couple people here in the Arizona area, so it was nice to see some old familiar faces. It was just a great week to top it off with a win.

Q. And first time seeing you since Founders Cup. What have you been up to? Anything fun you've been doing?

NELLY KORDA: A lot of training, gym work, and then lots of practice, too. Got to play in the Seminole Pro Member with a sponsor of mine, so that was fun.

Got to play alongside my sister in the group, and we haven't played together in a group in a really long time. So that was really fun.

Other than that, just kind of spent some time with family. Didn't really travel too much. Did some exciting things here and there. Mainly just practiced and worked out a lot.

Q. Awesome. And you haven't headed out for majority program yet. Assuming you practiced here. What's your thoughts on Whirlwind Golf Club and what it's going to take this week to have some low scores?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it's really pretty. There is a little bit more undulation from the greens from what I'm used to in Arizona. I haven't played in the afternoon so I'm intrigued to see how different it plays.

I've been first off Monday and Tuesday, early morning riser. Didn't want to wait in the practice rounds. And I'm just intrigued to see how firm it plays in the afternoon as



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well. You just have to adjust with the morning and afternoon rounds usually in the desert.

Q. Having this second offseason a little bit longer considering you played through December to early January, how mentally and physically refreshed to you feel now?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's always nice to take time off where you're not injured and you're kind of trying to hopefully become better and catch up on maybe some lost time.

But the first week after not playing for such a long time is kind of like a trial and error to see where your game is at. Have a couple weeks to play before the first major of the year, so we'll see what I need to work on.

Q. You've had some funny social media moments in recent weeks, hitting balls in sideways rain and then hitting a Persimmon wood.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

Q. Talk through those two things. Justin Thomas was chirping you a little bit.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I like to take one day off a week, and golf is a type of sport that you play in all sorts of weather. Sometimes you just got to practice in it, too.

That was me trying to work on my swing a little. Just needed to get my technique work in for that day to have a calm mind going into the next day.

Sometimes it's fun to play in that weather, yeah. Not all the time, but sometimes.

Q. Did you put the persimmon in the bag?

NELLY KORDA: No, but I was like, God, this would be a great Open club. It was going low and running almost 100 yards.

Q. Just one more. I know we talked a little bit about it



already since you have made a couple starts this season. It's a big year for the Tour, 75th anniversary. You carried this legacy forward in the last few seasons. How excited are you to see what develops over the next few months of LPGA Tour competition?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's hard to win out here. The competition is just getting better and better every year. Everyone is getting -- they're smarter with their bodies, the way they're playing the game.

So I think technology has to do with that as well. I'm excited to see the growth of the LPGA and continue to see it grow. I think it's really exciting to see kind of the next generation come up and hopefully continue to grow that as well.

Q. Your brother Seb plays Djokovic later today at the Miami Open.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. Are you going to have some time to watch that, and predictions for the match?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I'll tune in. It's so funny, I usually watch it on Tennis TV or on TV, but live scoring is always ahead of it, so I watch the live scoring while I'm watching him because I want to know how -- the outcome of the point before the point happens.

So I'm always like a nervous wreck when I watch him. I will definitely tune in today. I have major FOMO. Everyone is there. So I'm the only one not there, but I'll be watching.

Q. How different is it when you're coming to the tournament as the reigning champion, but it's at a different course? Do you have similar feels and vibes or it is very different?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I love coming to Arizona. I've competed here a number of times even just as a junior as well. Yeah, had a couple instances where I've defended at different golf courses, and you just have to take that with a grain of salt and just go out, have fun, compete, and see where it takes you.

Q. Obviously you were a household name before last year. Just the way that last year unfolded, wondering how different life might feel in terms of celebrity and when you're just traveling how much more you're recognized and how different life might be?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, definitely a little bit of a change in that sense. I think the people around me have kept me

really grounded. They're a great escape. I'm the type of person that likes to train, practice a lot, and then go home. I'm a homebody.

So outside of that, I haven't seen a big change. But definitely a little one when I'm traveling. A lot more people recognize me.

Q. You mentioned wanting to be out first and not have to wait. Do you enjoy golf any more when it's just you and an open course and you can zip around?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, that's my favorite. When I'm home I'm usually the first or second off. One, the golf course is the most fresh so the greens are pure, the whole golf course is super pure.

I can play at my own pace. I don't tend to play with a lot of people when I'm home. I just kind of like to dial in and practice by myself and I zip around.

Q. Nelly, if you can go back to your mindset last year after having won a couple as you entered this tournament, what do you remember about when you're playing so well and you're winning and what kind of state of mind you're in?

NELLY KORDA: You're kind of like in a zone. You're in your own little bubble. Nothing can really pop it. Even if you make a mistake, you know that it's okay and that you're going to bounce back.

You're just in very much of a flow state. Yeah, I mean, sometimes it's easier to get into that. It all has to do with confidence and putting really good rounds together. Sometimes it's a lot tougher when you're struggling.

Q. When you think about that, how many times for you would you say you've been able to find that zone in your career?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, last year and then I would say I had it a little bit in 2021 for a certain period.

But golf always humbles you so it's easily lost as well. (Smiling.)

Q. Lastly, about that zone, other athletes that you've either talked to or have you found a specific saying that you've gotten from another professional athlete that you've been able to build on when you talk to people about zones?

NELLY KORDA: No. I mean, I have thankfully -- and I'm so grateful for the family that I have because they've all

kind of been through that. So I can always just like pick their brain on what has helped them and what has hurt them.

So and then also having a great support system around you that's traveling with you week in week out. So my coaches, physio Kim, my caddie Jason, I mean, this is our eighth year together. Out of all of my -- I think I have all of my wins with him, too.

So having the comfort of people around you kind of puts you at ease in a good mental state.

Q. One last follow-up on that. Having had the same caddie, obviously you see men's tour, women's, a lot of caddie changes. Sometimes how much do you think that has played into your career?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, for sure. I'm so grateful for Jason. He's one my best friends. He's like my big brother. I'm just grateful for the ride that we've been on because there have been a lot of ups and downs. The most important is that like he's stuck with me through it all. He shows up when I'm down no matter what and he's a great teammate.

Q. You were talking about training a lot and your second offseason. Wondering what you're specifically doing? You had an involved regimen for your neck at the end of last year.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. Doing anything specifically in your training to guard that?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, just my entire body. I mean, golf, it's pretty demanding on your bodies being a one-sided sport, so trying to even it out as much as possible. You don't want to even it out completely because the way you swing at the end of the day, that's your DNA as well.

So just training it so that the longevity of my year is the way I want it to be. I know that there will be an issue here and there, but more of the fact that I just want my body to be not -- it's not going to always be 100% but if it's 60, 70% then it's great.

Q. What is the percentage right now that your body feels?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, I haven't traveled really. I've just worked out. I've been practicing a lot, but I also was in the gym five days a week. Kim lives near me so I see her literally six days a week. So it's feeling good right now. Knock on wood. You never know.

Q. And then this course has been known to have a lot of really low scores. Do you like birdiefests and how low do you think you have to go to win this week?

NELLY KORDA: Unsure on the number. I think that's kind of like the trend of golf here in Arizona. I mean, the weather is usually perfect. The grass is usually perfect as well.

So that all sets up for low scoring ability, and then it's hot so it flies really far. So the par-5s are pretty reachable.

Q. Do you like that kind of golf, birdiefest?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I wouldn't probably like it every week, but it's fun to do here and there. Yeah, where you can accumulate as many birdies as possible. Only thing is if you make a bogey then you really fall down the leaderboard.

But that's just the kind of week that like these golf courses kind of play.

Q. I have to ask, you every think about shooting 59 and what that would be like?

NELLY KORDA: I came pretty close at the Olympics.

Q. Uh-huh.

NELLY KORDA: Then I doubled my last one. It was like starting to creep into my head and I was like, yeah, I don't even think about it, no. I like to take it a shot at a time and see where the round takes me.

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