

NW Arkansas Championship

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Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

So Yeon Ryu

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the virtual media center at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship. I am pleased to be joined by past champion, So Yeon Ryu.

Tell me what it's been like. We have had a couple weeks off, you've had a couple weeks off. I know you went back to Korea. What have you been doing in your down time since the last time we saw you?

SO YEON RYU: Actually I had a month off, and then my cousin just got married 10 days ago so I attended her wedding and then flew to Dallas and started to working with my coach. I stayed in Dallas for like a week and then I drove here yesterday for like five hours and a half.

I think to be honest, I feel like these days is like -- it's my, I don't know, like midlife crisis for me, just about the golf. I was just really all over the places, so I really needed to really took a really long break, so I think month off was really helpful for me.

And then if I'm to be honest, like my swing is quite far off right now, so I really need to work hard to get back on track. But I think month off was really great time to think about a lot of the thing and think about what I want and what I need to do to compete with the best in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Did you put the down the clubs the entire time of that month, or did you pick them up after a while?

SO YEON RYU: To be honest, AIG was disaster for me. Like I was not able to feel like any of it. It was very grumpy on the golf course. I was not happy on the golf course. Of course result wasn't great, so I didn't touch my club for like maybe two weeks, and then I started thinking about what I really want and I started to think about why should I keep playing golf.

I still can feel like I still have that competitiveness in my heart and I just really love this game, so I really want to make everythings great again. But at the same time, I knew I just really needed time. This is my 14 years as

professional golfer, so I hope I can play great all the time, but this is golf. You have up and downs.

And then I think for me, like I just couldn't really be patient with my down time. So I really had to admit that this is going to be good time to learn something about what I need to do better to be the better golfer.

So, yeah, so I think that was really great time. I did not touch the club for two weeks.

THE MODERATOR: I think it's interesting you call it sort of a midlife crisis. Have you ever felt the way maybe you feel now at any other point in your career?

SO YEON RYU: I don't think so. I think COVID just made everything really change, especially last year. Because of COVID I stayed in Korea for nine month, and then even though I spent a lot of time in the U.S. since I joined the LPGA Tour I never really feel lonely.

I guess because I was surrounded by many family and friends while I stayed in Korea for nine month last year, after I got back to U.S. after that I really felt like I was very lonely when I'm in the U.S.

Si I think that sort of just make me think about why am I here, why should I sacrifice something because of my job.

At the same time, I knew because that I do that because I love my job. And then I started to have many friends and many people like family in the U.S. as well, but I think just like related family and that one is never really same.

So I think because of that I start to feel loneliness a little bit. But I should say I just cannot forget about the people who they help, help me in the U.S. as well. So I think that really help me out to keep grinding.

THE MODERATOR: I know you're saying you're working on your swing. The swing didn't feel all the way there back at AIG. What have you been working on in the last two weeks? I know you were at cousin's wedding. Other than that, what have you been working on to prepare yourself for Walmart?

SO YEON RYU: I think while I stayed in Korea I switch my mind mode as like a junior golfer mind mode. Since I



became a professional golfer when I plan about my practice it was more -- everything is more about the quality instead of quantity, but I felt like there was a time I really needed to focus on quantity.

So I started to hit lot of balls to try to find like what the best feel for me, and then after that I start to feel a little better with my golf swing.

At the same time, because I haven't seen my coaches for long time, I was not able to find out myself what's really the problem. And then since I started to see my coach last week we were able to figure it out when we need to fix, and we just start the progress.

And then I started to feel much better since probably last Friday, but at the same time I just told myself to be -- like it's going to be a long project; it's not going to be the short project.

At the same time I'm going to do my best to playing well for each of the tournament, and then like technique shouldn't be hundred percent to win the tournament, so I just really need to make a good balance between having good technique quality and then having good mindset quality.

THE MODERATOR: And one last question from me before we open it up for questions. This tournament is definitely a favorite spot for a lot of the these players. As a past champion yourself, what are some memories you have coming back here it Rogers, Arkansas?

SO YEON RYU: First of all, the reason I love this tournament so much is because this community is just supporting this tournament so much. And then, you know, I was here ten years ago the first time ever, and when I first arrived here I really felt like, wow, it's really nothing but Walmart.

But it's growing so much, so many things happening these days. I only had few option of restaurant, but right now I have so many great options. I really, really happy to see the LPGA and this community is growing together. Really looking forward to see a lot of fans out here this week.

And then I love this golf course. Golf course is always in good shape. And then pro-am is always happy. I always really enjoy that like chicken waffle at the No. 9.

So I really looking forward to having full experience here in Rogers. And then like to be honest, this is not like happiest moment in my life, but I think everything here will help me to enjoy this game even more.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. So I want to go back to this midlife crisis for a second. You are such a well-rounded person who can do so many things. What is it that keeps you in this game? What do you still want to accomplish in your career?

SO YEON RYU: Well, I want to win the grand slam. For that I need to win British, Evian, and KPMG Women's PGA Championship as well, so that's my biggest goal I want to say.

Then if I am able to do it, I want to play Olympic in Paris as well. For that I should win a lot of tournament.

And then if I'm able to win the grand slam, that means most likely I'm going to be close to make the team career for Olympic, so I want to pick those two as my goal.

Q. Awesome. So you're not slowly down at all clearly.

SO YEON RYU: I missed her. What?

THE MODERATOR: Oh, she said you're not slowing down clearly.

SO YEON RYU: Oh, no, no.

Q. It's obviously Ryder Cup week. Curious how much playing in the International Crown meant to you? And then second, what kind of event maybe you would like to see, mixed team event? I don't know, any ideas that you have of what you would like to see where the men and women would come together on a stage like, say, a Presidents Cup?

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, I actually like -- first of all, I really enjoy International Crown because, well, since I became a professional I never really had a chance to represent my country. I know right now we have Olympic, but that's every four years, so we don't really have to get a lot of chances to represent our country.

International Crown is really good format to represent our own country. I know like the American girls and European girls have Solheim, but Solheim is also -- for European girl they're representing just Europe, not just their own country. I really want to see International Crowns coming back, and then I do remember that when we used to play that tournament, like a lot of player's goal is to make their team and represent their country.

I really like the tournament, and then like lot of people have asked me, What do you think could be the best format? I actually really cannot think of any better format than what

we used to play. But like if somebody have a better idea than that, like I really hope it could help us.

And like your next question, I think the mixed up tournament, that would be really amazing. Not every sports have that kind of format, but you can see some of the sports tournament that women and men play together.

So I think if we can creating something like that it could be really, really great to promote our game.

Q. Have you practiced that much with male professionals over the years or interacted that much, whether in Korea or here in the U.S.?

SO YEON RYU: Because, well, when I was in Korea, I mean, when I was young, when I was a National Team member, we were always -- we train with the men as well, so I spent a lot of time with them.

To be honest, I learn like so many from them. Especially they had way more short game skills than I had back then. So they taught me a lot of short game skill and I still use this when I'm playing tournaments.

I always really enjoy to spend the time with them, and still when I'm going back to Korea if I get the chance to hang out with my old buddies I still play golf with them.

When I'm in Dallas I see like Jordan and I often kind of like staring his practice, like what he's doing and how he like train himself. Because like I got to meet the -- like I don't want to say like what kind of golf is better, but because of like power difference and everything I feel like the PGA guys definitely have more skills than LPGA girls.

For me it's really, really good way to learn how to play golf differently. I think these days I know golf became really like long drive championship, but I think creativity is really, really important thing.

So I think hitting a lot of -- spend a lot of time with the guys for us is really great way to learn how to play golf differently.

Q. You mentioned Jordan. I'm going to obviously assume Jordan Spieth. He's in the Ryder Cup this week. I know it's something completely different and you have a tournament ahead of you, but do you follow anything like the Ryder Cup?

SO YEON RYU: Yeah, actually like following Ryder Cup is much easier than following Solheim Cup because I do have American friends and I do have European -- I mean, I do have American friends and I do have European friends

as well, and especially at the Solheim my current caddie, Michael Patterson, he actually caddied for Matilda, so I don't really know which team I to rooting for.

Then I saw Danielle play against Pedersen, Emily, in individual, and then I know like Danielle's caddie is dating Emily, so for me it's like I really don't want to follow these games.

THE MODERATOR: You don't know who to root for.

SO YEON RYU: Exactly, so following Ryder Cup is much easier for me than following Solheim Cup.

THE MODERATOR: So are you rooting for USA and Jordan then?

SO YEON RYU: Well, actually my coach is there right now and he has Berger and Jordan, so, well, they're part of my team.

So I know like European friends going to be mad at me, but this year's European team won Solheim, so if the Team American going to win Ryder Cup, I think it's going to be the good balance.

THE MODERATOR: One more question from me before we let you go. Just with a few tournaments left in this 2021 schedule, how do you hope the break that you took and what you were working on gives you that confidence going into the next couple events?

SO YEON RYU: I think just playing practice round and playing tournaments completely different story, so even though when I feel really great when I'm playing practice round, it could be feel really different during the tournament.

I really want to take this time as my learning time. I want to see how good I could be with this sort of new swing feeling, but this is not new swing. This is the one I'm just kind of going back to when I'm playing way better than these days.

So I want to see this time as my learning time, and then I want to grow my confidence level. Like I really want to get back to like happy mode on the golf course.

Then like you mentioned, we don't have much tournament to go, but I want to do my best to get a best result before I finish the season.

THE MODERATOR: Well thank you, So Yeon, for joining us.

SO YEON RYU: Thank you.

