

ANA Inspiration

Thursday, September 10, 2020

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club



Lydia Ko

Quick Quotes

Q. You mentioned you were wearing a jacket when you went out a little earlier today. How were the conditions compared to your practice rounds?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I actually played in the morning all three days for my practice rounds, and actually earlier at like 7:30-ish the last couple days. I think today, though, in general the temperature was a little lower than the other days, so this morning was probably the most chilliest out of all the mornings I've been here. Right now it's warming up pretty good. I was just telling someone, when it was 116, I said I was surprised -- I thought 116 would be hotter on Monday, and then today I think it's only meant to be like 95 or something, but it feels hotter than that. My temperature gauge has completely gone off.

No, I think nice to be able to play in the morning in some really nice conditions.

Q. How about the conditions of your golf game? You had mostly pars and even an eagle. Do you mind talking about that hole and what went right today?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I felt like I hit it pretty solid. I gave myself a lot of good looks for birdies, and I think that's going to be the key, not only just at this event but especially at majors I think the more opportunities you get, it makes it a slightly stress-free par. I felt like I left a few out there, but overall I feel like I'm hitting it pretty solid, and all you can do is just commit and hit a good shot or a confident shot, and what happens after that, that's just a totally different result-wise.

Q. You've played here so many times and you've played here well, but do you have any favorite holes or holes that you're looking forward to throughout the rest of the week?

LYDIA KO: Today my favorite hole was 11 because I made an eagle there. But obviously the 18th hole is the signature hole, just with the Poppies Pond and normally that walk with the big grandstand. All these holes are really good holes. I think there's not a single hole where

you go up and you think this is an automatic birdie. You do really have to be focused on each and every shot. Hopefully it's a good shot from there.

Q. This event is really special. It's still a major. How do you let loose and how do you relax and sort of take your mind off of it being such a big event?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I mean, I'm just trying to not think of it as a big deal. You know, I think the more you think of it, hey, this is a major championship, you want to do well, I think the more you get stressed out about it. I'm just trying to stay as relaxed as possible.

Q. Any shows that you're watching or --

LYDIA KO: I've been watching Netflix but I'm the type that I'll just kind of go through everything pretty quick. I watched "Young Wallander" or something. It was about police. I love like those crime, police stuff, so I watched that show, but I'm the type that I'll really scroll through it really quickly. It's really bad when there's multiple seasons because I'll keep going through it, even sacrificing sleep. I think Netflix and just staying under the AC is going to be a relaxing point there.

Q. Any words of encouragement from your mom each night that you guys go back and relax?

LYDIA KO: She's been cooking amazing Korean food, so I'm very grateful that she can travel with me on the road. I was actually talking about the Shabu Shabu in my press conference a few days ago, and then Miho, the owner there, she got me Shabu Shabu last night delivered to my place, so maybe that was the key to playing solid today. I was so gutted that I wouldn't be able to go, so she brought the restaurant to me pretty much.

Q. And maybe more Shabu Shabu for the rest of the week?

LYDIA KO: Shabu Shabu is like one of my favorite food, and I always enjoy eating at Shabu Shabu there. Yeah, I don't think yesterday would be the last time for me.

Q. What are you looking forward to in terms of the rest of the week? What's the mindset? What are you telling yourself?



LYDIA KO: You know, I'm just going to go out there and just be committed and just hit it aggressively and confidently. It's not easy out here, especially with the Bermudagrass it plays a lot differently to when it was poa annua or bent or overseed what we normally play. I think the course definitely plays a little differently, but I've just got to focus on my game, and I think commitment is going to be huge for me the next few days.

Q. You've played here before and they've obviously taken out a lot of trees and added bunkers. How did that change how you attacked the course today versus how you attacked it in the past with all the changes?

LYDIA KO: Just with them trimming down some of the trees, so there's like less, I guess, overhanging bits of trees. But at the same time the rough is pretty thick. You know, the ball most times is quite down, so for me even on my first hole, I went two or three clubs up than I normally would from that distance. Even though it's open, I think it's going to be so important to stay on the fairways, and I think that way it just makes it so much easier to go at the pins or go at the greens.

It's kind of opened up, but at the same time I think it's more so important to hit the fairways. When you try and hit fairways, it actually doesn't matter if there's overhanging trees or not, but you do know that if you do miss it at some point in some places where in other years you would have had some tree trouble, you know that it's going to be most times a lot more open. That just kind of gives you a bit more relief, as well.

Q. Did you notice if the greens were changing speed as you went through your round as the grass grew?

LYDIA KO: I didn't think they were getting much slower, like progressively, but I did feel like the greens were a lot faster today than when I played the practice round on Monday and Tuesday and even yesterday. I thought yesterday was the fastest out of the days, and then today was definitely significantly faster than Monday. That's what you kind of assume it would have been, just with the nice and dry weather, that the fairways are going to start drying up and so are the greens. It just makes it tougher, but it's nice to be able to putt on these greens. It's absolutely pure, so if you put a good stroke on it, I think you've got a good chance of holing it.

Q. Sunday of Marathon there was a whole outpouring on social media. People were actually hurting because they were rooting so hard for you. Did you pick up on that energy and sort of the good wishes and just the desire of golf fans to see you get back there?

LYDIA KO: I don't have Twitter, so I don't really know what went on the Twitter world, but a lot of people reached out to me, just even through messages, some of my closest friends on Tour, they messaged me, and just people like fans, they tried to send me DMs. I felt like I got a lot of support.

Somebody told me that I'm not going to be the first player to do that, and I'm definitely not the last to do it, either. Obviously it wasn't the end that I had wanted, especially just being in that position, first time in a while. If that had happened on the first hole instead of the 72nd hole, it's a different story.

But I think all that aside, I was just excited to be back in contention and just to be able to play solid again. I think that gave me the confidence in my game to make me feel like the things that I'm working on are going in the right direction.

Q. There's so many of us who want to see you get back to that level. How do you stay patient as it's happening progressively?

LYDIA KO: I feel like the last few weeks have definitely helped with confidence, and I think when you see that, you start believing in yourself more. I think the more times you see yourself not going the way you think it would, you start losing a little bit of belief. I think you've just got to stay patient and just keep grinding and working on what you're working on and just go from there. It's such a tough game itself, so there's no point in me putting more stress on it.

Q. I've heard Rory and J.T. talk about they watch old highlights of their victories when they're feeling a little down just to remember that feeling and pump themselves up. Do you ever go back and watch old clips?

LYDIA KO: I sometimes watch my highlights, but then it feels like such a long time ago, as well. I think there was a point for me where I felt like I needed to take myself back to when I was playing at my best, but the thing is so many things have happened between then and now and through all the experiences and everything. I'm never going to be the same person as then. All I can do right now is just be the best version of myself, and I feel like I'm working on the right things and doing the right things, and when I keep doing that, I'm sure the time itself will sort itself out.

I think I'm trying to be less, like, so result focused and just trying to kind of believe the process and just see where the current takes me.

Q. Are you ever amazed at how easy the game seemed at certain points for you in the past?

LYDIA KO: You know, I feel like a lot of people said, oh, man, you played golf so easily, even during when I was world No. 1, but I was like, I never think this game is easy. They go, oh, that was a stress-free, whatever, round, and I'm like, man, there was no stress-free bit about that.

I think this game keeps you pretty humble. There was no points where it was easy. Obviously sometimes things might have come like a lot quicker or easily than I expected, but I don't think the process was ever easy, and I think that will be the same for the end of your career, and that's not only the case in golf but in anything that you do.

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