

ANA Inspiration

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the virtual media center here at the ANA Inspiration. I'm pleased to be joined by Rolex Rankings No. 4, Nelly Korda.

Nelly, how are you doing today?

NELLY KORDA: Good. Pretty good. Warm.

THE MODERATOR: The weather here, it's getting pretty hot. How are you feeling just overall as we enter the season's first major this week?

NELLY KORDA: Pretty good. You know, the golf course, I played it yesterday. It's playing really firm. Overall I feel pretty good. My body feels good. So hopefully I'm in for a good week.

THE MODERATOR: You're coming off a couple of Top-10 finishes in 2021 and of course your win back at the Gainbridge LPGA. How confident are you feeling in your game as of late?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I put a lot of work into it over the off-season and it just feels good for it to pay off. My coach is out here this week. I'm working on my swing a little. I felt pretty uncomfortable with it actually. I've been working on it all season. It's a perfect says but hopefully I'm on the right track.

THE MODERATOR: You're saying you're uncomfortable with your swing but we see these incredible performances. What are you working on and why now.

NELLY KORDA: It's actually crazy because it's a swing plane, which I feel like it's one of the hardest things to kind of change, especially during tournament golf because you don't really want to think about your swing plane at all. It's something I worked through on Monday to Wednesday, and I don't really try to think about it from Thursday on because when you get technical out there, it can take you to some dark places.

THE MODERATOR: On top of that, what was it like being

able to have another Top-10 finish at the Kia Classic and what was it about Aviara that brought out the best in your game?

NELLY KORDA: Actually I have not played Aviara since my rookie year, so I have not been back in a while.

And I don't usually play poa golf courses just because I'm a Florida girl, and the bumpy greens before a major, the last thing you want to do is lose a little bit of confidence on the putting green. But I played well and hopefully I can take that into this week.

THE MODERATOR: You said you played this course and you're feeling confident in your game. What's different since the last time we saw this course in September.

NELLY KORDA: I think the grass and firmness of greens. Last year they were definitely a little softer so you could spin it and come in with longer clubs and hold the greens. And I played the back nine yesterday and it was very hard to hold No. 17. So those par 3s or those holes that you're coming in with like longer clubs, it's definitely going to be a little difficult and I think you're going to have advantages to hitting it long out here.

THE MODERATOR: Last year in 2020 we saw you in contention here at ANA and it was a pretty good week for you being able to come up in that second-place position, but do you ever think about that experience of being in such contention at a major championship when you're going through your other times of contention over the past few events?

NELLY KORDA: I've always said when you put yourself into those positions, you get more comfortable being in those in the future. I've said this so many times, but the more I put myself into that position, the better. So I feel like the more I get out of each kind of time I put myself into that position, I feel the more I grow as a player.

THE MODERATOR: Definitely. And this is the 50th anniversary of this major championship. It's got a lot of history, traditions. What does it mean to be a part of the 50th anniversary here as someone who has done quite well here in the past.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it's amazing. Honestly we all love



coming here. Unfortunately the past two years we haven't had fans but the atmosphere here is always great. The views are great, and as we said, the history, too. It's like -- I've always said, it's kind of like the Masters for us in women's golf, so it's definitely something you as a professional golfer, you want to win.

Q. What specifically did you learn from last year? What was your takeaway?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, anything can happen pretty much. If someone's got it going, they have it going. I wasn't really disappointed last year. I played well. You know, there's nothing you can do. Mirim played really well on the last day.

But I think just in those high-pressure situations, there are a couple shots going down the stretch where that adrenaline kicked in and I was starting to fly my irons a lot further than I normally would; so situations like that.

Q. 18 obviously has a very different look. How are you finding it with no wall and grandstand? What will your strategy be?

NELLY KORDA: Very different. You're definitely going to think about going for it. I hit a 6-iron in just short of the green and it rolled up to the middle and then I also tried to hit like a little 5 yesterday to land it middle of the green and it went over. So it definitely going to be very hard to hold.

Q. Do you like it?

NELLY KORDA: Undecided. I mean, I wasn't a fan of last year of how close they put it to the green. I feel like in the past years, those palm trees were definitely in the way, like people were chipping around them. It's different. I know in the past how they used to play it as an island green par 5. We'll see. I mean, we'll see how I like it during the tournament if it's good or bad.

Q. When you come here, what is it about this golf course that you get excited about? Is it that you can let go with the driver?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I feel like there's an advantage to hitting it long out here for sure because again, like how firm it is -- it's usually always firm. Last year was soft. You have to hit it good off the tee. You have to hit decent shots into the green and you get rewarded for good shots, and I feel like accuracy pays off really well. You just have to be consistent throughout your entire game here.

Q. There have been a couple of times over the last

several years where you've actually hit driver off the deck here?

NELLY KORDA: That was my sister.

Q. Was that your sister?

NELLY KORDA: Come on, now.

Q. I thought it was you.

NELLY KORDA: No, I've never hit -- no, that was my sister. That was Jess.

Q. Would you consider doing it?

NELLY KORDA: No, I don't hit driver off deck. I hit my 3-wood long enough.

Q. Do you look at the 5s here and say, that's where we have to attack this golf course?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, you definitely want to capitalize off of the reachable par 5s out here because as I said, the greens are playing really firm. To it's going to be harder, especially if they tuck the pins, to get it close.

Q. How different is your comfort level in major championships now?

NELLY KORDA: I feel like a lot of people put a lot of pressure on themselves when it comes to major championships, and I feel like I've just learned to kind of put the same mind-set to every tournament and not put so much pressure on major championships. Obviously you want to win them but I feel like people get so in their heads when they get to a major.

Q. Usually your parents are here? Is anyone here?

NELLY KORDA: They are in Miami right now with my brother. It's day-to-day. I ask them every day, "Can I book your flight? Can I book your flight?"

So they are with my brother obviously. He's having a really good run, and he plays today again against I think the fifth seed. So we'll see after today. Hopefully they stay there.

Q. Was there a specific time maybe once you reached the LPGA where you translated or transitioned that pressure into that mindset that you just talked about?

NELLY KORDA: I think it just comes from experience and kind of learning what works best for yourself. I mean, I always try to play -- when I don't know the golf course, I



always play and practice way more when it comes to a major on Monday. But here, I just keep it nine every single day.

It's more relaxed. Try to keep it more relaxed, because again, with a major, there's a lot more pressure that comes with it and the more relaxed you are, the more you're enjoying yourself out there; I feel like the better it will be.

Q. What's the biggest thing you notice if there's not a crowd?

NELLY KORDA: I feel like someone -- I feel like, obviously, like they pump you up and it's a different atmosphere. Like the adrenaline, and if you're not having a good day, they are always there behind you, too.

It's definitely a different feel, but we've kind of gotten used to it. It's been like, what, almost a year. So it will feel weird when we have fans back again. You're going to feel nervous.

Q. Coming here this week to Rancho Mirage, do you feel like there's some sort of unfinished business that you have to attend to, or is it a matter of just letting it go and starting all over again?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's more of letting it go and starting all over again. It's honestly a completely different golf course. I'm pretty sure the rough was a little thicker last year. The rough in some areas is not as penalizing but you know, every week is a new opportunity and go in with the same mindset every week trying to win.

Q. What do you see as being the keys for yourself to play well and be successful this week?

NELLY KORDA: This week, consistently hitting the fairway. Consistently giving yourself opportunities and good looks at birdie. I mean, you have to hit fairways and you have to hit greens out here to play well.

THE MODERATOR: One more question before we wrap it up here from me. You spoke about your brother; what's it like watching him do well and is he pumping you up in your family group chat?

NELLY KORDA: Oh, yeah, he loves to pump up. He's definitely the hype man of the family. It's kind of funny. We watched yesterday his match and that was really exciting and he's playing well. He's putting a lot of work in, and it's so cool to see it pay off and it's so cool to see him do well. Like Jess and I are definitely his biggest fans.

Q. How you does he pump you up?

NELLY KORDA: I get text messages. Sometimes I get them when I'm already on the third hole and it's always I get them. I get a lot of text messages in all-caps.

THE MODERATOR: I think that does it for us here. Thank you for joining us.

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