

AmazingCre Portland Classic

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

Andrea Lee

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, here with the 2022 AmazingCre Portland Classic champion, your first win ever on the LPGA Tour. I know you told me earlier you were like shocked, but just take me through all the emotions you're feeling right now.

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, feels amazing. Better than I had imagined. Yeah, just can't believe it. All the hard work has paid off. It's been my dream to win on the LPGA Tour, and the fact that I accomplished that today is just pretty surreal.

THE MODERATOR: You can talk about your round for a little bit. First today I know you got off to not the start you wanted, but really picked it up and turned it around. What did it take to do that?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I was two over after I think four holes, and I was pretty frustrated, because I started off good every day, except for today.

I just told myself to stay calm, that there was a lot of holes left to be played, a lot of par-5s still.

So, yeah, just stayed super patient out there. Made a lot of putts and got three back on the front nine, and then the back nine was just crazy.

THE MODERATOR: It was crazy. A lot of birdies back there. Just a crazy leaderboard throughout the day. I know yesterday you said that you are one of the players that keeps the leaderboard in mind. Were you doing again today, seeing where you were and using that to motivate you?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I was a little bit, but I think 17 was it, I didn't want to know where I was. I didn't want to just think about it on 18 tee. I was just playing really solid golf all day, especially on the back nine.

Yeah, just wanted to keep my head in it and really not think about the score.

THE MODERATOR: You've had quite a journey to get



here I know, and I would like to ask, how has playing on the Epson Tour prepared you for this moment, and how is it different and how has it helped you to get where you were today, which is a champion?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean at the beginning of the year, started on the Epson Tour because I didn't have much status on the LPGA. I think I played about five events and my last one I ended up winning it with dad on the bag, so that was really cool.

It really prepared me for this season on the LPGA. I've been in contention a few times earlier this year. I think those experiences have really helped me get through today.

So, yeah, it's just a pretty crazy journey I've been on this year.

THE MODERATOR: There were two other Epson Tour players up there at the top with you, Lilia and Daniela. Lilia you played with today and you guys have similar journeys. You know each other well. How was it playing with her and competing against her again?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, super fun. I grew up with Lilia. We played junior golf since we were like eight years old and played college golf together in the Pac-12.

It was just really fun out there. She's a great player and was playing solid all day, too. It was a great battle. It was super fun and really exciting just to see that crazy leaderboard on the back nine and kind of have that fight.

Yeah, it was fun.

THE MODERATOR: I know you mentioned today that you're going to dedicate this win to your grandfather who passed away. Can you tell us a little bit about your relationship and your relationship with golf together?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, my grandpa loved golf. I'm kind of sad that I didn't get to play more rounds of golf with him or just go to the range together, but we were close and he helped us out a lot when we were in tough times during junior golf. It's a very expensive sport and he was a huge supporter and he was my No. 1 fan besides my mom and dad.



So, yeah, I thank him, and he always called me a champion and he always believed in me. I was super grateful for him and I know that he's watching today.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Questions?

Q. Congrats. What are you going to do with that big check?

ANDREA LEE: What am I going to do with the check? You mean what am I going to buy? I mean, the money hasn't even like come into my mind at this point. Just the fact that I won on the LPGA Tour, it's just kind of sinking in now. Probably just going to save it all.

Q. Okay. Now that you won the tournament, LPGA tournament here, I was told you would be allowed to participate in BMW in Seoul, South Korea. Are you planning to go there?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I am planning to play. I've never actually played in Korea before, so I'm really excited.

Q. This is going to be your first time?

ANDREA LEE: My first time playing in Korea.

Q. As a pro?

ANDREA LEE: As a pro.

Q. All right. Are you excited?

ANDREA LEE: I'm really excited. Actually my other grandpa on my dad's side, he lives in Korea, so I'm excited to see him, too.

Q. So one of your grandfathers was from Korea?

ANDREA LEE: Yes.

Q. Want to fill in a little bit of blanks. Your grandfather that died, when did he die?

ANDREA LEE: Last November.

Q. What's his name?

ANDREA LEE: It's a Korean name, but call him Min.

Q. And your caddie, his name is Drew?

ANDREA LEE: Ernst, Austin Ernst's brother.

Q. And he caddied for one of the former winners here; who was that?

ANDREA LEE: His sister, Austin.

Q. Congratulations.

ANDREA LEE: Thank you.

Q. You had such a wonderful amateur career and achieved so much. I wonder if you could just talk us through the struggles for the last two years and did it surprise you at how difficult it was to reach this point?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, my junior career and my amateur career have always been kind of smooth sailing I would say. I kind of expected myself -- a lot out of myself coming into the LPGA and turning professional.

Yeah, just had really high expectations for myself. Put a lot of pressure on myself to do really well off the bat. That wasn't the case at all. 2020 was a decent year, but then 2021 was a struggle. I think I missed like my first ten out of 13 cuts last year.

I realized it is really difficult to win out here. Everyone is such a great player. I think every single player out here has the ability to win on the LPGA Tour.

Yeah, just learned from all those experiences last year, and I really have grown as a golfer and really proud of the way that I managed to use all those experiences to get that win today.

Q. And just one more. The tee shot on 17 looked like it was in the middle of the fairway. On television it looked like that divot was about three inches deep. Can you walk us through that shot and how you took on that shot?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, it was a bad break obviously, but nothing you could do about it. I was kind of in between clubs. I was debating whether I should hit a really full 7-iron or choke-up 6-iron, and I went with choke-6 and tugged it a little. I caught it pretty clean. I think if I aimed it a little bit more right it would've been on the green.

But tugged it and went in the bunker. I just had to keep myself calm and try and get it up and down. Hit it to about a foot so that definitely helped calm the nerves.

Q. Thank you, congratulations.

ANDREA LEE: Thank you.

Q. Congratulations, Andrea.

ANDREA LEE: Thank you.

Q. Amazing finish. You had a lovely moment with your dad there in the end. What did he say to you?

ANDREA LEE: He just said, I'm so proud of you. I started crying because I was thinking of grandpa and actually my dog, who was very precious to me, she also died earlier this year, and her birthday was yesterday. She would've been 14 yesterday.

He just gave me a big hug and said, I'm so proud of you. That was it. My dad is not a man of many words, so it was just a nice moment to have with him.

Q. What was your dog's name?

ANDREA LEE: Toki. It means bunny in Korean.

Q. You just won a tournament that's been around for a long time and has a lot of history. Have you had a chance to look at some of the names on this trophy beside you and what does it mean to join that list?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, some of the past champions are legends of the game. Kathy Whitworth and I think Annika has probably won this event. But just a lot of legends. Probably take a closer look a little bit later.

It's such a huge honor. I know this tournament has is one of the longest LPGA running events out here. I'm extremely honored to join that list of names. Yeah, just so grateful.

Q. My last question is what is your big goal now?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, this was my biggest goal this year was to win an LPGA event. I still can't believe that I managed to do it. But my next goal is probably to win a major on the LPGA. I've always wanted to be a major champion. We'll have a little while to wait before the next one, but, yeah, just continuing to play really solid golf and just go tournament by tournament.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me. What did you learn about yourself today that you maybe didn't know before you won?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, I still can't believe I actually did it. Yeah, the back nine I just kept grinding and going about my business. I thought I would be super nervous -- okay, honestly, I was nervous, but I thought I would be more nervous than I was.

But I was surprisingly pretty calm and relaxed out there. I think that surprised me a little bit, the way that I was I believe to finish it off.

17 and 18 are not easy holes. They're pretty narrow fairways. The fact that I managed to par out knowing that I was at the top of the leaderboard, yeah, I'm just really proud of myself for persevering.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome.

Q. You had to go back to Q-Series last year. I mean, you had had a great first half the rookie year. COVID was weird. Had to go back to Q-Series. Now you're set for two years. How much of a weight off your shoulders is that to know that you don't have to worry about keeping the card? Now it's all about improvement?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, definitely. It's a huge weight off my back. I knew the last couple few months I've been playing really great golf, so I wasn't really concerned about keeping my status for next year. The goal was to be in contention and try to win an LPGA Tour event.

And now that I did that, yeah, it's kind of like a sigh of relief. I still want to win more now that I've won one. Just want to keep on doing it.

Yeah, I'm just trying to play the golf that I have been playing this season, and we'll see where that takes me.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports