

# Pelican Women's Championship

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

## Nelly Korda

## Jessica Korda

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you four joining us in the media center at the Pelican Women's Championship presented by Konica Minolta and Raymond James.

Joined by Bradenton natives, sisters, Nelly Korda, Jess Korda, thank you both for joining us today.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you for having us.

**Q. As much of a home event as it's going to get for you guys on the LPGA Tour schedule. What it's like to compete in your backyard and maybe have some familiar faces, not as long of a commute to work as normal?**

NELLY KORDA: Well, unfortunately I live like an hour 15, so I'm staying up here. But it'll be super nice to have our family and friends come up. I always love playing in Florida because they just drive over, and it's nice to see some familiar faces in the crowd.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I live on the other side of Florida now, but obviously growing up an hour away it's just nice. Like Nelly said, I drove over to my parents on Sunday and the got to spend some time with them and have dinner and then casually made my way up Monday.

So, yeah, it's super nice to be this close.

**Q. Growing up here in Tampa, Bradenton area. What memories do you have of your junior golf days? Any courses that you remember going to play or just learning the game in this area, what was it like?**

NELLY KORDA: I do. I remember Saddlebrook. I don't know why that one pops right in my -- yeah, I mean, in the summer you would definitely play a lot of the one-day events up here. We would drive to Tampa quite a bit.

But in the past couple years, I mean, last year I didn't get to play, so I haven't played in Tampa. It's actually a good bit colder than Sarasota, even if it's just an hour.

But as I said earlier, it's so nice to play near home. I actually drove home after my practice round yesterday and spent some time at home as well.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I played Howey-in-the Hills. Like we played a bunch of SCWTs around here, so it's really nice. And same as we go down to next week to Naples; played a decent amount there.

You know, Orlando, between Orlando, Tampa, and Naples we played a decent amount. It's nice to be able to drive to an event, just pack it in the car and go, and not have to think about flights and all the extra stuff that goes into it.

NELLY KORDA: And stop home on Sunday and do your laundry.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. That's a win. Did Nelly invite you for dinner yesterday or do you have to ask?**

JESSICA KORDA: Mom actually cooked up a bunch of stuff for me to bring to the house we have this week, so I just warmed up whatever mom made.

**Q. I'm sure it's a good dish. Nelly, the vagaries of the world rankings, because neither of you played last week, somebody drops off, you're back to No. 1. I know you try not to think about those things, but with two weeks left, are all the awards left up for grabs anywhere in your mind?**

NELLY KORDA: Honestly, no. I was super shocked. I had someone come up to me on 18 yesterday when I was finishing up my practice round and told me that I am back at world No. 1. I was like, No, you're joking. How is that possible? So it was a little bit of a shock to me.

No, to go back to your question, I'm honestly not thinking about it because I haven't played in three weeks and I have



kind of had a weird schedule the past two months where I haven't been playing a lot.

Just trying to get back into the competitive golf and take it one shot at a time, because I can definitely tell that I haven't been playing competitive golf a good bit.

**Q. Which leads to the next question. You did a tremendous amount of world traveling in the middle of the summer and now you've been home for a while. Did you feel like Gee, this is better being rested after three weeks, or do you like being on the road?**

NELLY KORDA: I think that there are pros and cons to both. I think when you're playing well and you're going, it's nice, you have a flow in a sense. But when you play well and you come home for three weeks, you kind of get eager to get out there again, and maybe you're nervous coming back after you've had a break and you're in a sense expected to play well.

That's why I said I'm just looking forward to hitting that first tee shot and seeing how the week goes.

**Q. Jessica, I want to ask you about some advice you may be giving Nelly. You have fought through injuries and may have played some weeks when you probably shouldn't have. Is there advice you give her about, Hey, look, don't overdo it.**

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I've played a lot of weeks I shouldn't have. I'm stubborn with that. We talk about it a lot, and it's something she has seen as well. The schedule was absolutely ridiculous for us this year with the Olympic Games, with Solheim Cup, majors in between it. It was almost silly.

But at the same time, like when are you ever going to get an experience to play all those events kind of like that? Like Nelly said, it's got its pros and cons. We've been trying to just listen to our body. It's a long year, number one; two, long careers, so missing an event here and there isn't going to make a huge difference to us in the long run.

Definitely trying to say healthy and relevant is the most important thing for us.

**Q. You two had an exciting summer. What were some of the things you were able to take away from the Olympic Games, and especially for you Nelly? You made history there. How much did that mean to you, to your career?**

NELLY KORDA: Honestly, it'll be nice to kind of after we're done after these two weeks put the clubs away and kind of

reminisce and think about it all.

As Jess said, it was a very crazy summer with a lot of big tournaments. It was an amazing feeling. I wasn't really too sure how was it going to feel playing in the Olympics. I didn't really -- golf was introduced in 2016 so growing up I never really dreamt of playing in the Olympics.

Standing on the podium and wearing the gold medal around my neck was an amazing feeling. I got really emotional, to be honest.

**Q. How about you, Jessica?**

NELLY KORDA: Jess was bawling on the side.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, Danielle has a great video of me sobbing on the side as she's getting the Olympics medal and the anthem is playing. You watch it all those years where athletes that you follow go through these -- it's just an emotional thing. When you're playing I think Thursday through Sunday you don't realize. You're like, It's another event. Where it really hits you is during the podiums, because it's insane.

Like even though he with didn't fans and didn't get to be in the Olympic Village as free as we wanted and there were a lot of restrictions because of the pandemic, that moment when she steps on the podium and receives her gold medal and the National Anthem was playing, that was just -- it was just incredible. I was speechless. I really was. I tried to get a Woo out; just my voice cracked. Tears were coming. It was not pretty. But that moment you realize it was different than any other like tournament or whatever.

She had just won KPMG, winning a major, and that was a totally different emotional response to this.

**Q. Then your family has such strong tennis ties. What was it that made you guys fall in love with golf and take this route instead of maybe the family way, so to speak?**

JESSICA KORDA: She didn't have a choice.

NELLY KORDA: Exactly. When our dad retired he picked up golf and Jess, you were probably, what, like five and a half?

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

NELLY KORDA: So it was something we could all do together. Once I start walking I was swinging clubs and I was that annoying little sister that had to do everything big sister did.

JESSICA KORDA: Wouldn't leave me alone.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I honestly wouldn't.

**Q. What's the excitement coming into this week? Nelly for you it's your first time here, and then Jessica, returning after last year. To see the golf course and then experience it this year with fans, what are your thoughts going into this week here?**

NELLY KORDA: It just being kind of a home game feeling I guess. I mean, we love it whenever our parents are out and as Jess said, we can drive to events. Just gives it a whole different excitement.

Once the event is done, you put everything in your car and drive an hour or two and you're home. It's like a whole different feeling. You kind of feel more at home.

JESSICA KORDA: I'm excited to have fans at this event. I think one thing that we've definitely appreciated is having them back. It was tough to be out here doing what we love to do with dead silence.

You just realize that as much as like we are athletes and we are very competitive, we love to entertain. You know, seeing people just as into it as we are is really, really cool. Seeing the kids back out and just the whole atmosphere of what a professional event is supposed to be like, we've -- not that we took it for granted, but we definitely appreciate it more than ever.

**Q. Nelly, you mentioned being away from the tour for the last couple months. What has it been like watching Jin Young's recent run of play, and what has impressed you the most about it?**

NELLY KORDA: How dominant she's been. It's honestly been really super exciting to watch. You're never going to be world No. 1 forever. You're going to jump people; they're going to jump you. It's been super cool to see how dominant and well she's been playing. Because if you're out here and you're playing week in and week out, you appreciate how good she is playing. So she's been on a run, and it's going to take some really, really good golf to catch her.

But, yeah, I mean, I was pretty dominant in the summer and now she's dominant, so I think that is just how sports go. You kind of pass on the baton in a sense, and someone passes you and you just try to battle it out.

But it's been super cool and special to see what she's been doing.

**Q. What makes her as good as she is from your perspective?**

NELLY KORDA: She just knows how to get the ball in the hole and doesn't make mistakes. Her putting is pretty amazing. I think she's just all around a really, really solid player.

**Q. As you mention, you were dominant earlier this year. How hard is it to be the dominant player on tour for a given stretch?**

NELLY KORDA: I just feel like you kind of get in a zone. When I was playing well I just got in the zone and I felt like everything was kind of flowing well in the sense it wasn't easy, but it may have looked easy. There was just a flow to it that I just knew that I could play well every single day.

**Q. I know you've probably got the sister question ad nauseum, but would you mind describing just having the comfort level of having someone you know so well to lean on on tour, and how important it is that you each have your own identity?**

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I mean, we've kind of said so many times, but it's just so nice to basically travel with your best friend. Always have a lunch buddy, a dinner buddy, that kind of -- you know, if something is really going sideways, one of us is always there for the other one. Sitting on the driving range, on the putting green, whatever it might be.

So obviously that's super, super nice. It's lonely out here, so just having that sense of comfort, sense of home almost, is nice. I always say that we're sisters by birth but best friends by choice.

NELLY KORDA: Built in best buddy.

JESSICA KORDA: Built in, yeah. And then obviously being individuals is really important. That's why I said we kind of still choose each other, which is nice, because we don't have to.

NELLY KORDA: You said it all. (Laughter.)

**Q. Are you aware of where you stand against Jin Young in the Player of the Year race? Whether or not you do, do you like the point system that's in place or would you rather see a player vote?**

NELLY KORDA: Sorry, say the question again.

**Q. In regards to the Player of the Year race --**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

NELLY KORDA: Player of the Year.

**Q. -- do you know where you stand against Jin Young? And whether or not you do, do you like the points system that's in place or would you rather see a player vote?**

NELLY KORDA: No, I actually don't know where I stand. I know I'm second in CME, and that's really honestly all I know. I know I have no chance to win the Vare Trophy. That's what I know.

But, yeah, no, I don't know. Honestly, I think I've always said good golf kind of solves it all in a sense. I'm not going to worry about anything, no trophies, nothing, until I tee up that first shot and hopefully sink that last putt on the 72nd hole.

**Q. And then do you know where you stand in terms of qualifying for the Vare Trophy?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. And was there any consideration in playing more events to be eligible?**

NELLY KORDA: No. My schedule was crazy enough. I had to pull out last minute from Portland because I just wasn't feeling well, and same with Walmart, yes.

So, no, I don't think I could have played more events because my body was just so tired. I typically play all the events at the start of the year, and if I play well then I'll take some time off, because the traveling in the summer was just so crazy.

JESSICA KORDA: Vare Trophy is also based on scoring, and if you're not feeling great your scoring is going to plummet.

NELLY KORDA: I honestly he didn't even think about that until the article came out that Jin Young and I, like we can't qualify to win that event.

JESSICA KORDA: I been on tour for 11 years. I didn't know there is an event minimum. Or a round minimum. Sorry.

**Q. Should that be changed or reconsidered?**

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, 100%, especially with the way the schedule is. That's for other people to decide. We're just here to play.

**Q. Absolutely.**

NELLY KORDA: Yep.

**Q. Jess, I was going to ask you, we talked about the team series you both played in in New York. When you can play in a team setting, does that rejuvenate the competitiveness this late in the year?**

JESSICA KORDA: It was just really fun to do something different, support the LET. We were just up the road in New Jersey, so it made total sense to go play with another kind of big break.

I know the first one is -- we took it on purpose just because the summer was crazy with travel and everything. People don't realize just how big a toll it takes on you.

So we took some time off, and then just kind of playing one event it's almost a mini off-season. We just didn't want another big break, so it just came at the perfect time.

But it was a really fun event to play.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

JESSICA KORDA: You know, if it works out I would love to play in another one. It's different, but really, really fun.

**Q. Oh, yeah. When you win as a team you got to come back.**

JESSICA KORDA: I mean, playing a playoff in the dark, how much more interesting does it get?

**Q. No kidding. Did you have something to add?**

NELLY KORDA: Not really, no. It was a very exciting playoff.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. So No. 12 this week has the Lamborghini, unlimited two year leases. If there is 20 hole-in-ones, there is 20 leases on a Lambo. Have you ever ridden in a Lambo? If one wins does, the other get a share of it?**

NELLY KORDA: One and one.

JESSICA KORDA: Well, Austin just did that yesterday, but she was looking at the insurance on it and it's coming out to be just a little bit more than what you would like to pay.

So, the two year lease sounds great, but I would like to just drive it for a couple hours and give it back.



NELLY KORDA: The practical one over here. I'm like, Yes.

JESSICA KORDA: I'll take the cash. (Laughter.)

**Q. You could always split, do a time share.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, for sure.

JESSICA KORDA: Drive it down 70. I think we could -- we should just take bets on who bottoms it out first. (Laughter.)

**Q. You both mentioned you weren't aware of the Vare Trophy minimum. How did you react when you found out you weren't going to be able to qualify?**

NELLY KORDA: I was like, Oh, okay. Cool. That sucks. That's pretty much what I said in our group chat.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I was like, Great rule.

NELLY KORDA: I mean, I would say Jin Young has had an amazing past couple events. If she was to win it she deserves to win it. I would say the same for me. It kind of sucks that that's just how it is.

Yeah, that's all I have to say.

JESSICA KORDA: It's just that the person who's now in the running, is it considered an asterisk or -- I don't know. It's just such a weird rule when your No. 1 and 2 player in the world.

NELLY KORDA: And 3, right?

JESSICA KORDA: And 3 player -- is it 1, 2, and 3 aren't eligible? So it's just weird.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

JESSICA KORDA: It's just weird.

**Q. It'll be back to back seasons where the lowest scoring average won't win the award. What alternatives have you thought about in regards to the round minimum?**

JESSICA KORDA: Last year was weird. Last year with the pandemic we didn't have too many events. Just didn't know that we were going to do that last year with awards.

But there is a board --

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

JESSICA KORDA: -- of players and people higher up than us that are going to need to come up maybe with a different plan or no plan at all.

Now people are more aware of it.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. Growing up did you ever think of the LPGA Hall of Fame? Sei Young was in here earlier and mentioned how that's one of her career goals that she established a long time ago. Knowing that there are different trophies and despite all the hoopla that comes with it, knowing there are points up for grabs, is that something that given your career earnings and what you've accomplished so far, something you've given thought to as your career has gone on?**

JESSICA KORDA: I think it's really hard to get into the LPGA Hall of Fame, so not really. You know, I try to have a successful career, make an impact, grow the game of golf, and what comes with that comes with that.

In terms of points system, the fact that Lorena Ochoa isn't in the LPGA Hall of Fame I think is --

NELLY KORDA: -- BS.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah. It's laughable honestly, because she's a great player and she deserves it more than anyone.

NELLY KORDA: I think what we focus on is major championships. What I always focus on is CME and end of the year Money List. That's like where my main focus always every year.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, if we could do something to be remembered for, and like I said, grow the game of golf for the next generation and leave it in a better spot than we found it, that's huge for us.

If that comes with a LPGA Hall of Fame, great. I just know it is a very hard thing to get into based on the points system that I think we have in place.

NELLY KORDA: We still do have big goals.

JESSICA KORDA: Yes, we do. We very much do.

**Q. Back to the sister thing, obviously you said you lean on each other and you're supportive. On the other side of that coin you're both competitors and pro golfers and there is also the natural sibling rivalry**

**thing. How do you balance that?**

NELLY KORDA: We obviously want to beat each other every week, but we want each other to do well as well. We don't like seeing the other one struggle, I think.

The best weeks are when we both do well, but I think there is like always going to be a competitiveness there. I mean, you're playing not just -- we're not playing just against each other. You're playing against 144 other girls. No matter what, you're trying to go in and play the best you can against everyone.

At the end of the day you're playing against a golf course. It's not like tennis where it's one-on-one. It's more like one-on-one with the golf course, going out there trying to beat the golf course.

JESSICA KORDA: If it was tennis I think you guys would be much happier because there would be a rivalry. You can see we have a rivalry with every single person in the field as well.

So like Nelly said, it's an individual sport. We're playing against more than just one person every week. But like Nelly said, the golf course, we're just trying to beat it every day. It's us against the course in a sense.

**Q. Just one quick question about the green complexes out here. Jess, I saw you chip it around on 9. I mean, they're ridiculous, like hard and fast, really undulating. What's the strategy going into this week with such challenging greens?**

JESSICA KORDA: I mean, I know we got a lot of rain on Friday, so I think the greens are softer than they were last year. Last year was it really, really tough. It's a pretty new golf course, so to have firm greens is expected. Once the course settles in a couple more years it'll be completely different.

But they're definitely a lot softer this year and more receptive, which is super nice. We were having a hard time keeping it on certain surfaces last year.

But this golf course is great. The biggest defense are the greens, so they're big and undulated; missing in the right spots is going to be key.

Like I said, the greens here are the biggest defense, obviously as well as the wind.

NELLY KORDA: Especially on the front nine. I think 11 through 17 it's kind of -- the greens are kind of more scorable, but the front nine is very tough.

And 18 is very hard to hole, especially if you have a long club in. You're hitting it over the water a lot. You'll see a lot of people long.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Last one I have and we'll wrap it up here. Jess, you mentioned a minute ago just about leaving the game in a better spot, growing the game. I look at your relationship with Sophia that we connected with earlier this year. Just did a DriveOn piece Autumn Soulsby and she said, I want to be like the Korda Sisters one day. You guys have always been popular on tour, but it seems that that popularity has maybe taken off with the younger generation to a greater extent this year, at least from what I've seen.

Do you feel that with the younger generation and some of the girls you see week in and week out that you mentioned, fans are out here, do you feel that?

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, obviously it helps playing well. Being relevant, like I said before, is really important. I think people maybe relate a little bit to how we celebrate each other's wins. Obviously Nelly winning -- how many times did you do that? Three? You won three times this year?

NELLY KORDA: Four.

JESSICA KORDA: Four, whatever. Too many to count. So we have five wins between us. But, yeah, I think people just can relate to that. They see how much fun we have with it. That's what I always hoped for people or kids to see, that it is a game, it is fun. Obviously winning is obviously fun, but when you're not winning you can still have fun doing it.

We are living our dreams at the end of the day. This is where we wanted to be when we were their age and growing up. I remembered walking outside the ropes, and if a pro gave me any attention I would idolize them for the next I don't even know how long.

NELLY KORDA: And we've also had fans out this year, so it's been super nice to see them. I think a lot more kids are coming out and it's fun. I think as a tour we do a really good job interacting with the young kids.

I think it just makes them really excited to try the game of golf, too.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Love it. Thank you both for your time. Good luck this week.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.



JESSICA KORDA: Thank you.

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