

The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Saturday, November 11, 2023

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Alison Lee

Quick Quotes

Q. Joined by Alison here after her 8-under here at The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican. What was working so well for you today?

ALISON LEE: I hit my irons really well today. I feel like that's definitely the key to this course to be able to shoot a low round. Definitely helped today that there wasn't as much wind, so hitting the approach shots, I was able to hit a lot of the approach shots a little more aggressively, not worrying too much about the wind, and trusting my number.

So I think that was definitely the key today.

Q. Take us through the eagle on 7.

ALISON LEE: Yeah, great drive down the middle of the fairway. I had 200 to the pin. I was in between clubs, so went with a longer club. Hit a hybrid over the back on the fringe and I thought, okay, let's just roll one up there. I joked with my caddie because the pin was at the front of the green, I hope I don't putt this off the front, because that's definitely possible out here.

Yeah, hit a great putt. The whole time it looked good. I didn't think it would go in, but, yeah, last minute turned a little left and went in. Definitely a nice surprise.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, first time playing at this event.

ALISON LEE: Uh-huh.

Q. What has been your experience so far here at Pelican Golf Club?

ALISON LEE: It's been great. Yeah, first time here. The course is amazing. The fans are great. It's a great golf course. Definitely very different than a typical Florida golf course that I'm used to. Definitely a little tricky.



I didn't think I was going to be able to shoot a low round like that, but definitely with the wind dying down a bit and the greens being a little on the softer side, definitely allowed for a lot of the birdies.

Q. Are you getting more comfortable in these positions when you put these really, really low rounds together?

ALISON LEE: Yeah, of course. I feel like my game is in a really good place. Obviously had a lot of confidence over the last month coming from Korea. I feel like I've been hitting the ball really great.

I've said this so many times, but the key has been my putting. I feel so much more confident and comfortable on the greens. I've been striking the ball really well all year and putting has just kind of been something I've been lacking in my game.

I've been working really hard on it and it's been paying off.

Q. What mentally shifted for you with your putting?

ALISON LEE: I don't know. I guess it was more of a gradual thing. You know, working with my putting coach, just taking baby steps here and there, seeing a few low rounds, making a lot of good putts, slowly build on that, and really just trying to store all these good thoughts, good putts made, and slowly trying to build confidence and build those building blocks.

I think that's been the key. There has definitely been times this year where I felt so uncomfortable on the putting green. I had no idea where it was going to go. Didn't think I could start the ball online. Obviously seeing putts drop here and there definitely adds to a little more confidence, feeling a little more comfortable on the putting green.

And, yeah, I mean, especially having a really good week in Korea, it just -- I feel like it turned my game around. I was able to trust myself again on the golf course, and I'm really enjoying the moment and embracing the pressure when I'm out there, so, yeah.

Q. Having fun on the golf course, I know hasn't been as easy for you the past few years. How cool is it and gratifying to be in this spot where you're having so much fun, scores are showing up, putts are rolling?

ALISON LEE: Yeah, golf, it's a love and hate game. I feel like the last couple years I've definitely had a few really good events and it's just all I was lacking was one good round. I would kind of have one round where I fell apart or got a little ahead of myself.

But I would say, yeah, it's nice to be able to put four rounds of good golf together. I mean, that's the key basically. Yeah, one more day. Hopefully I can build on this confidence and keep it going.

Q. When you get on a roll like you did kind of through the turn there, string of birdies, how do you balance keeping the pedal down with not letting your confidence maybe get ahead of itself?

ALISON LEE: I would say just staying in the moment. You know, like I said, I feel like I was hitting the ball well, driving it well, hitting my irons really well, especially with a day like today, no the a ton of wind.

With this course, if you don't hit it right on your line or you're a little bit off it can roll off the green, can roll away from the hole. So, yeah, just stepping on the gas, playing aggressive golf, and taking advantage of a day like today where it's not too windy and the greens are soft and you can attack pins.

Q. How big of a difference has it been this week because the wind has been down, up and down, when the wind is up as compared to down? Couple shots? More than that?

ALISON LEE: I would definitely say it obviously depends on pin placements as well. Yesterday I would say it was pretty difficult. It was pretty windy out there. The first round I think I only hit 10 out of 18 greens in regulation, and I still was able to shoot 2-under. I was putting quite well.

So, yeah, I think that's honestly the key, just trying to play aggressively and really trusting your line, trusting your numbers. That's a lot easier to do when it's not blowing in your face 10, 15 miles per hour. So being able to trust the number and go back to all the work and practice you've done trying to dial in those numbers.

Q. Who is your putting coach and how long have you worked with he or she?

ALISON LEE: His name is Chris Cho. He lives in Vegas. He works with a few other girls on tour and a couple on the men's tour as well. He lives in Vegas and I started working with him this summer.

You know, I've been working with my swing coach, Chris Mason for like -- I mean, I think more than five years now, and over the summer, in the middle of the season, we kind of reflected back on how I've been playing all year.

We looked through my stats, and it just showed that I was really lacking in the putting department. Strokes gained per putting was not where it should have been.

Like I said, mentally as well I haven't been comfortable over putts. I would be nervous over two footers -- nervous over 20-footers. There just wasn't a putt that I felt good in. I just felt like I was trying to make it through the day.

But, yeah, working with my putting coach, not really on my stroke or anything like that, but just building up confidence, doing drills, anticipation drills. You know, just going back to the basics, see if I'm starting it online.

I found out like I was actually aiming like way right of my target and maybe that's why I felt a little uncomfortable before I even took the putter stroke back.

So little things like that that he helped learn, and I learned more about my putting through that. It's been amazing. I feel like night and day on the putting green now. So much more confident.

I look over a 10-foot putt and I truly believe I can make this. There is no, okay, hopefully I can start it online and hopefully it can get somewhere close or maybe go in.

I feel like that was the mindset I had earlier this year. Yeah, it's definitely changed a lot.

Q. First putting coach you've ever worked with?

ALISON LEE: Yes, yeah, it has.

Q. What's an anticipation drill?

ALISON LEE: Yeah, so I would just be so nervous, so we would just do something fun. Like he would just sit in front of me and I would just keep stroking back and forth and he would kind of play around and move the ball back and forth to where it would be, where it wouldn't be.

So when I was putting I wouldn't know when he would just place the ball so I could really feel comfortable stroking instead of just trying to guide the ball to the hole, if that

makes sense.

Q. Gareth has been out here for a while. Just seems like more players are starting to work with putting coaches on the women's side. Do you feel like that's a new -- is that just me or is that a thing?

ALISON LEE: Yeah, I would say so. I see him out here all the time. He works with quite a few girls out here. These girls, some of these girls their putting is so good. It seems like it's so simple and for the longest time I always thought to myself, like I don't need a putting coach. It's fine. I don't need to work on my stroke. There is nothing a putting coach can really like teach me or help me with.

It's so much different than the golf swing. Everyone has their own stroke. It's tough to change a stroke that doesn't help you get the ball in the hole. And, yeah, I mean, my swing coach, Chris Mason, he was like, why don't you just see him, give it a try just to learn something, pick someone else's brain.

I was very stubborn about it for a very long time, and I'm glad I was able to listen to that and start working with someone.

Q. Annika alum, ANNIKA Award recipient. How much of a full circle week has this been for you?

ALISON LEE: Yeah, it's really cool. Annika has given back so much. I played in her ANNIKA Invitational as a junior when I was 17. I was able to win The ANNIKA Award in college as well.

I mean, she's been such a great presence I feel like in my life, giving clinics when I was young, just doing everything she can to inspire young girls, and she definitely inspired me. It's really cool to be here, have her out here as well. See her name on the banners all over the golf course.

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