

# CME Group Tour Championship

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

## Inbee Park

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you and welcome inside the virtual media center here at the CME Group Tour Championship.

I am pleased to be joined by newly minted Rolex Ranking No. 3, Inbee Park. How are you doing today?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I'm just fine. I just played a Pro-Am yesterday. I'm just taking today easy. This week is gonna be really short week because last week we played until Monday, so super short week.

A little bit tired. Just trying to recover from last week.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, what have the last couple days been like for you after adjusting from what was the U.S. Women's Open to now, the Tour Championship?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I think I haven't played on Monday for like in while. I can't even remember last time I played Monday.

So, yeah, it has been different. I got in like Monday night like 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and got tested. Tuesday had the Pro-Am and today I'm just taking it easy.

Yeah, tournament again. Just feel like tournament after like right after tournament. Feel like we got like a couple days of rest, but, yeah, it's just going again.

THE MODERATOR: What was it like for you, just overall the whole week in general? I know the U.S. Women's Open has a special place in your heart. You finished tied for sixth after a final round 68, and it was your 14th U.S. Women's Open. Overall what were you happy about after last week.

INBEE PARK: You know, I've played many U.S. Opens, and obviously last week has been another special week. The course is just getting really longer and longer for me every year.



It's getting tougher and tougher obviously. Last week was definitely a tough week. I hit a lot of long clubs into the greens, and obviously the last day they moved all the tees up. I was able to score little bit well. Just after the round I said I'm just really happy that I conquered this golf course finally, because I played the practice round and playing three rounds of tournament golf there I just thought that maybe under par on this golf course is not possible for me.

I was finally be able to do it, and that's what really matters in U.S. Women's Open, just trying to beat the golf course and trying to conquer the golf course. That is really the key.

I mean, no matter where I finished I would be really happy that I shot an under par score on the final day.

THE MODERATOR: Fantastic. This has not been the year you probably expected. 2020 has been like no other, and here we are at the end at the CME Group Tour Championship.

Let's break down some of your incredible accomplishments this year. You had your win back in February, and were able to close off the season before even CME with seven additional top 10 finishes.

On top of that, you currently lead in Rolex Player of the Year standings. What have you thought of your game in 2020 since your win and also after everything that happened with COVID?

INBEE PARK: You know, when I started the tour, when I played couple in Florida and couple in Australia, I thought I was in really, really good shape. I was really feeling like I'm really ready to play this year.

And then after the COVID hit and we had to take quite a few months off, so I didn't know whether my game was going to be the same as in February when I came back in August.

I came back and I felt like I was a little bit rusty but able to manage myself really well and played really, really good. So I'm really proud of myself. This year I was trying to leave the expectations that I had in February, and I was able to do it pretty close to what I wanted to do.



I came couple of -- little bit short of winning last maybe couple of the tournaments that I played at the end of the year, but I really feel like I've played really good golf and very consistent golf. I'm just really thankful that we get an opportunity to play this year. It's not really about the results. Just opportunity that we get is very special.

So many people really, really struggling this year, and just happy that we are out here playing and playing staying safe.

THE MODERATOR: I think a lot of people would agree with you. You ever think back to the win in February and think, Oh, my God, that feels like a lifetime ago?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it does. It actually really feels a long time ago to me. Definitely doesn't feel like the same season because we're here still playing at the end in the December. It's a different feeling.

I enjoy playing golf in December. Maybe. (Laughter.)

And, yeah, it's a little bit cold and different weather, but I guess I'm better at cold than the hot weather, so, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: I mentioned it earlier, but you are now No. 3 in the Rolex Rankings, cracking top 3 since September of 2018. How satisfied are with you that, especially after everything 2020 has kind of offered us?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I just didn't know how the season was going to go this year. To be honest, I didn't really have any goals coming into 2020, coming back since the August, and I just told myself that, Let's just play as good as I can every week and that's what I can do.

So let's just appreciate the opportunity that we got given, and, yeah, that's just what I did, and I was able to play really good.

THE MODERATOR: As we gear up for CME this week, I know you said you got in late Monday. Still kind of adjusting. What are your thoughts about the course here? You've played it a number of times. Never finished worse than T24.

For you, what has Tiburon brought out in your game, do you think?

INBEE PARK: You know Tiburon just is -- I've played this golf course many, many times and I never really feel like I've conquered this green at all over all those years.

The tee-to-green is not a big issue. I think it just really comes down to the putting, and the bermuda greens can

get really tricky on you reading as feet.

So, yeah, I'm just trying to adjust the speed on the greens and read the putts right. You can't read them right all the time, but I'm just trying to do a little better at a time, and hopefully I can putt a little better this week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Going back to when this whole thing started back in March, what was your biggest fear or sort of worse case scenario for what might happen?**

INBEE PARK: I just thought that maybe this year we are probably not even going to be able to play at all. I mean, that was kind of the concern of everybody. I think maybe we're not going to be able to play golf at all this year. Maybe no tournament golf.

So, yeah, that was kind of the concern, and we end the up playing a lot of events and LPGA has done great job of putting a lot of tournaments together and being able to have players out playing under their protocols. I just think they did a great job this year.

**Q. You've been player of the year before. Would it feel different this year to win this award?**

INBEE PARK: You know, it would be nice to have some kind of I guess souvenir for a great year. To be honest, it really really doesn't bother me that much anymore.

It would be nice to have another award obviously, but, yeah, I just -- like I said, this year has been a gift. I'm just happy that we got to play.

Just that's really all I can ask for. If the results follow, that's great. If not, I'm just really happy we're out here and playing and playing some really good golf.

**Q. What did you have to wear, and when was its last time you played in that cold of weather?**

INBEE PARK: What was that? Sorry, I couldn't hear.

**Q. When was the last time you played in something that cold? What did you have to wear? I saw players with ear muffs, gloves.**

INBEE PARK: Cold weather, okay, okay. I kind of think that I probably play under cold weather couple times a year anyway in Korea, so I'm really used to wearing thick clothes and big parkas. Everybody was really jealous at me last couple of weeks that I had this long parka that was covering me like totally.

I was just wearing that in between shots. I wear really thin under. I probably wear like two layers max, and then I wear this long parka with two big hand warmers in the pocket. No matter how cold it is, it keeps you warm.

**Q. Is it a relief not to have to wear that this week?**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I'm really happy we get paradise weather this week. I probably packed too thick of clothes because I didn't bring any shorts or any short sleeve shirts. So you're going to see me all covered up this week because I don't have any shorts.

But I'm just trying to wear as thin as possible, and, yeah, just happy to play without the hand warmers and the big parkas. It was heavy.

THE MODERATOR: I love that.

**Q. Where in the ranking of priorities do you put player of the year? Something you even thought about prior to the last few weeks?**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I just think it got a little bit of attention maybe couple weeks ago. My parents just mentioned, Oh, you know that you're maybe really close to leading. I was like maybe second or third by then.

Yeah, I just knew that. Obviously I won the Player the Year Award before and obviously give it to the player that's played the best that year.

Yeah, definitely means a lot, and obviously 2020 I played the year -- start out the year really, really good and I had so much passion going into this year. I didn't want it to be just nothing.

Yeah, it would be nice to have some kind of, yeah, award at the end of the year. That would be nice.

**Q. And speaking of the passion you brought at the beginning of the year, when we spoke in January prior to the win, the Olympics was a really big thing.**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it was.

**Q. That's why you were playing.**

INBEE PARK: Yeah.

**Q. With it being pushed back, how do you keep that fire going into 2021 to make that team?**

INBEE PARK: You know, it's not that far away anymore.

We're almost finishing year 2020, and obviously 2021 is coming really quick. Yeah, with the COVID I really don't know how the world rankings is working right now.

I have no idea how it's going to go next year. I'm just trying to do my best every week, and if I get given an opportunity, that's great. I'm just trying to play good golf, and that's what I have been doing. So I'm really happy that I'm, yeah, being able to play out here and still being able to compete every week and compete for the trophy.

**Q. We're also not very far away in the Tournament of Champions. What's your plan for after this tournament? Will you go back to Korea?**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I'm going back to Korea after this week. I think I'll probably spend some time back home and come back later. Yeah.

**Q. So skip the TOC?**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I don't think I'm going to make it back in time after I do couple weeks in quarantine, and it's just not going to be I think long enough for me.

**Q. So if you quarantine during Christmas you get to stay at home, though, right? Home home?**

INBEE PARK: Yeah, yeah, home home. We stay at home.

THE MODERATOR: As I wrap everything up here, if anyone has any other questions, just what have you thought about this course just in general? What would another win in 2020 mean to you to get it here at the Tour Championship?

INBEE PARK: Well, it's always nice. Best way to finish is to win the golf tournament. I've won very early in in the year, in February, and it would be nice to wrap it up with a nice win. That's definitely a goal. This golf course needs really, really good putting, so the putting is going to be the key.

Trying to hit some good iron shots in. In the last week was mostly just woods, but this week I'm hitting some irons, so really excited. Yeah, just happy that I get a little bit shorter clubs into the green and opportunities to birdie. It's a great feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us and thank you Inbee.

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