

CME Group Tour Championship

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

Jin Young Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone inside the non and the virtual media center here at CME Group Tour Championship. I am honored to be joined by Jin Young Ko here, the defending champion.

Welcome back to Naples. How does it feel to be back here at Tiburón Golf Club?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say I'm really happy to be back here and I can't believe it's past one year, last year and here, so I feel just -- feel (indiscernible) after last year.

And I play some holes today and I can remember every holes, and every shots each day.

Yeah, I'm happy to be back here.

Q. Speaking of last year, when you came into this event, first off qualifying in the event, in three events on tour, and then going on to win, do you ever think about what you were able to do at last year's event throughout the season, or when you stepped back on Tiburón today were you like, Wow, I did that?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say yes, and I can't believe how did I play really well before the three event, CME, and I made it to play CME last year and I won.

It was unbelievable I think.

Q. What did you like most about Tiburón Golf Club, this course, and also just coming back here to the season-ending event? Can you believe that the season is almost over?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, yeah, I'm looking back of the year and I didn't expect four times win of this year. I was tired early of the year but I made four wins and I made it LEADERS Top 10, so happy.

And, yeah, I can't believe this one is last tournament of the year, but I'm ready to play this week. Overall for next year,



too.

Q. This has been an impressive season for you, four wins. I know you overcame a lot at the beginning of the season as well. When you think about your year, what are you most proud of?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say I don't know. I don't think -- I play really well, but I think -- I don't know. Nothing.

Q. I was going to say, does your win in Korea stack up?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah. Well, I would say BMW and playoff. Was my first time to play in playoff. That's good one, but, yeah, nothing else. Just one.

Q. Just that.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah.

Q. I know you played nine holes today, so what is the course like for you this year, and how do you think it will suit your game this year maybe compared to past years? You obviously are very comfortable here.

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, this course is not easy. If miss the green it's really tough chip around the green, and especially bermuda.

But if made it middle of the green every shot, every holes, it's going to be fine and easy to make birdies.

Yeah, just wide fairway and bunkers good, everything is good. Food is good, too.

Q. Jin Young Ko feels good.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

Q. When you won Player of the Year for the first time, what did that mean to you?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I had great year in 2019, so I would say just, yeah, it was great honor to get Player of the Year, but I got a lot of things, so feels just trophy and like nothing interest. (Laughter.)



Q. When you did win Player of the Year, what did it mean to you? Was that a goal of yours?

JIN YOUNG KO: Player of the Year, no.

Q. Oh.

JIN YOUNG KO: My goal was major, to win majors, and...

Q. You did do that.

JIN YOUNG KO: (Laughter.) Yeah, I don't had really want to get to Player of the Year or Annika or major award or whatever.

Just play, and I played well so I got a lot of things and happy.

Q. If I could ask just one more. I know it's been a difficult year in many respects. Was there a time when you didn't really feel motivated to play, or maybe to come back?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I was tired early of the year in March, April, May.

Yeah, many people knows my grandmother passed away in March. I really want to go to Korea to meet her, because I couldn't go Korea because quarantine is two weeks. I heard grandmother is passed away from my mother before the ANA.

I had FaceTime with my mother and she showed the grandmother and I saw grandmother on the phone.

Yeah, in March I was really tired so I don't had motivation for the golf on the course as well. But I had -- but still I had a good year, so I'm happy for that. Yeah, she will looking down me from the sky.

Q. What role did she play in your golf, Jin Young? Did she help you get into golf? Was she a motivator for you?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, yeah, she really wants to see I made a lot of putts. (Laughter.) If I missed a lot of putt, after the tournament she call me, why did you do that? More focus on the putting green and we're made it.

So I try keep putting hard, practice hard for putting, and I won, I win a lot of tournament.

And then she call me after when I win the tournament, yeah, good job, and she was happy.

Q. So every time you putt well you think of your grandmother?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I think so.

Q. What did it feel like when you found out that your grandmother passed away and you weren't going to be able to go back?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say I don't really want to play golf in this tour. Yeah, because if I did play in KLPGA I could meet her, but this tour, I love this tour, but it's too far from the Korea to here, so I couldn't get to Korea before when she passed away.

That's first time I really don't want to play in LPGA Tour.

Q. What led you to find the motivation to come back?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, she really wants to see I made a lot of wins, so after her passed away I was thinking, yeah, she really wants to see a lot of wins from the heaven, so I work hard and I won four tournaments.

So she's going to be happy, yep.

Q. I know your family watched you at most of your wins this year. What did it mean to you to have your parents support you as you went through this?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, that was first time they visiting this tour in one month, and my mom always cooked Korean food for me every morning, every dinner, and, yeah, we had a lot of fun. Before the tournament we went to a lot of good stores just hang out, just Publix, Walmart, wherever.

She made a lot of good food. So I, yeah, was happy, and I think they will going to coming back again for next year. I can't wait to spend a lot of time with my family in this tour.

Q. Was your grandmother's passing part of the reason they came out to watch you this year?

JIN YOUNG KO: No, not really. No.

Q. Was this the most challenging season that you've had?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah. I would say yes.

Q. Were there any other moments throughout your career that you felt like you didn't want to play, or was this the first time that you experienced that?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, it was first time I really don't want

to play golf.

Q. How did what you achieved this season compare to what you did in 2019?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say it's pretty same as 2019 and 2021, but feels way different.

Like in 2019 I had a lot of confidence from the early of the year to end of the season, but this year is really different. Like early of the year this year I don't had confidence for the golf course, for my swing, or my mental, everything.

Even especially her passed away I really don't want to play golf. But after that, I got something after the Olympics, so I want -- yeah, I played well after the Olympics, so, yeah.

It's fine, but it's a big different as 2019.

Q. What did you learn about yourself this year given what you just said and what you were still able to achieve given what you were dealing with?

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say golf is really hard and I need more practice and even rest, too, uh-huh.

Q. You talked about the confidence, maybe not having it as much in the beginning of the season. But now you're coming into this final event on a high almost.

JIN YOUNG KO: Uh-huh.

Q. How confident do you feel in your game heading into this year's CME Group Tour Championship?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, feels really good and my swing or my game is almost perfect.

If made more putts I can do win again. Yeah, I will try to made a lot of putt today. This week.

Q. And you also mentioned it, but being able to nab awards like the LEADERS Top 10 finishes for this year, what does that mean to you, as Amy said, after everything you've been through this year to still go home with some trophies at the end of the year?

JIN YOUNG KO: It's really honor to get LEADERS top 10 twice, in 2019 and two years later. Yeah, it means I play really well and I play really consistency of the year, even this tour is a lot of good players out there, but I got LEADERS Top 10. That mean is a little lucky.

Q. That means you did pretty well?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah.

Q. I love that. Could we have your grandmother's name if that's okay?

JIN YOUNG KO: Uh-uh.

Q. That's okay. Secret. No problem.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, I think that will be everything. Thank you, Jin Young Ko, for joining us.

JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you.

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