

# CME Group Tour Championship

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

## Jin Young Ko

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the virtual media center here at CME Group Tour Championship. I am honored to be joined by this year's winner, Jin Young Ko.

Jin Young, just want to open things up with just the emotions that you had today when you got off that green.

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I would say I leaded two shot by Nasa, so if she got the birdie and I just need two-putt, so I didn't nervous at all.

But it just -- it can't believe I'm win again this tournament in two years in a row. Yeah, I was really happy.

**Q. You defend this championship. You had a remarkable greens in regulations streak. I don't think you missed a green since Thursday.**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah.

**Q. I know you were battling a wrist injury. What was this week like for you and how satisfying is it to come out with the win?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, well, I would say eight out of ten, so it was pretty.

I didn't practice at all for this week before the tee off, even Monday or Tuesday, but I had -- I still played really well this week, so I couldn't believe how to hitting so straight every shots and every putt made it.

And, yeah, it was cool.

**Q. There was four of you tied for the lead leading into today. What did you tell yourself? What did you think about as you were going about your round today?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, it was little complicated, like confusing because a lot of good players behind us, so I had to make a lot of birdies for front nine, and I made it.



I didn't look scoreboard even number -- until No. 12 or 13, but I knew Nelly and Nasa played well, so I just want to keep myself and don't want to look scoreboard or the other players as well.

**Q. I want to also talk about Maddie, who is here this week. Explain the lucky charm.**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, Maddie is my caddie David Brooker's middle daughter and she went to the VOA and I won the tournament. Then she said, I'm your lucky charm, and, yeah, I said, yes, you are.

And I win this week again and she were here, so I would say -- I say to, Maddie, You're definitely my lucky charms, so I'm really happy for that.

**Q. Not only do you win the CME Group Tour Championship, you also earn the Rolex Player of the Year Award. What does that mean to you?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, Nelly played really well. Nelly has great year, even gold medal, win major tournament, major win, and three more wins this year.

Well, I feels a little sad to Nelly, but I was a little lucky than her so I got the Player of the Year this year. I got Player of the Year two years, like even two years ago, 2019 and this year.

So it's really great honor to get Player of the Year.

**Q. To know what was at stake with the tournament, with Player of the Year and the way you played today, what are you most proud of?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I played with great other players, Nasa and Nelly, and they has a lot of fans out there, so I didn't nervous on the course. I hit a lot of great shots and putts as well.

So it's so proud of myself, and, well, I would say Player of the Year, it's cool. It's pretty. Well, I would say Player of the Year is best, and it's really tough to get Player of the Year, especially this year with Nelly.

Yeah, that's it.



**Q. After playing so well this week and not practicing much, when you are healthy will you think about maybe not practicing as much or not the need to feel like you have to practice so much?**

JIN YOUNG KO: No, I will practice again. I needed practice.

**Q. You said yesterday that you knew you had to win to win Player of the Year, and therefore you felt no pressure. At some point during the round today when you were leading did you feel that pressure?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I would say no, I don't had pressure on the course. I just want to better play than the other players. So, I did it, and, yeah.

And also I'm happy to make like my best career scores today, 63; 64 was my best score, record, but I made -- I crush it, and it's so happy.

Because I play -- I made it 64 is ten years ago, so it's one of the proud of me. Yeah.

**Q. You talked all week and really the last few months about kind of the tough start of the year you had from being tired and exhausted to losing your grandmother. Does that stuff make moments like this sweeter because of where you came from?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, of course, yeah. Yeah, I was really sad early of the year, and then I -- I couldn't think I can be win again. I did five times win of the year; it's first time to me.

Yeah, it's more sweeter than 2019.

**Q. And then also you would talk about how your grandmother used to call you after rounds. What do you think she would say to you if she were able to call you tonight?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I think she will be crying I think. I think she said, Your putter was good. (Smiling.)

**Q. With not being able to warmup on the range, what adjustments did you make to get loose before play each day?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I don't know. Just I had just some chips, few chip shot before the tee off and then few putts, and put on the sunblock on my neck and hand and just talking with my manager and David.

Just I had just no idea, just because first hole fairway is

really narrow from the tee shot, so I had a lot of pressure.

But I was hitting straight last four days, and, well, it's ridiculous, I think.

**Q. Was there any advice from friends or family that you talked with yesterday or today leading into the round that you leaned on?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I was talking with my mom last night, maybe over 50 minutes, and she said, You had injure right now so you doing well right now. If you can't win again, you'll be fine. Then you have great holiday and Christmas in Korea, so you going to be fine. And just enjoy for next -- for tomorrow with Nelly and Nasa. Just keep smile she said.

**Q. And you talked before the start of the week about how challenging it was to come back to the LPGA tour given what happened with your family. Has it been worthwhile to return? You mentioned at the start of the week how challenging it was to come back to the Tour given you were away from your family. Has it been worthwhile to come back?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I would say I don't want to come back here when I met grandmother, but I had play in this tour because I have a lot of good sponsors.

So I had to show the great performance them, to them. I did it, and I was feels not good, but I have great team, my caddie and my manager, so they're my great motivator for this year. Yeah. Yeah, I'm happy to be back here.

**Q. What was the pain level on the wrist today?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, better than yesterday, yeah.

**Q. And then considering that you have an injured wrist, to hit 66 straight greens in regulation to end your season. How impressive is that?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I would say just surprised. I hit -- I shoot 63 today and I did 100% greens regulation last two days.

Well, I think my irons are best. (Laughter.) Like club, I mean club, yeah.

**Q. Do you feel like your wrist injury held you back at all this season? Do you think you could have won even more?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say yes, a little bit. Yeah. Early of the year, maybe over in May, June, July wasn't good.

But especially Tokyo was so bad. So I just want to go back to Tokyo right now. (Smiling.)

**Q. Wanted to clarify one thing. This week did you take a full swing before hitting your first tee shot?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes, with my 52 wedge, yes.

**Q. So full swing with the 52 wedge?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah.

**Q. And secondly you, spoke about kind of losing motivation after your grandmother died. When did you find motivation again and what caused you to be motivated again?**

JIN YOUNG KO: (No microphone for translator.)

**Q. Last one. Every time you mention your grandmother you talk about how she talks about your putting. Did your grandmother ever say, You hit the ball really good today?**

JIN YOUNG KO: No. She knows putting is important for the golf. (Laughter.)

**Q. I just have two quick questions. Considering the 63 greens that you hit consecutively, is this the best ball striking of your career, this last nine events?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I would say no. (Laughter.) I was hitting well but not the best.

**Q. When was the season or the stretch where you feel like you hit the ball the best?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Was in Portland and Cognizant Founders Cup.

**Q. So still within the nine-stretch events, the last nine events. Yeah.**

JIN YOUNG KO: Yep.

**Q. Okay. And then my next question. You might have already answered this. I apologize. Do you remember the moment that your wrist first started hurting in May? Was it after one specific shot?**

JIN YOUNG KO: I think I did too much practice so I got the injured. So not in the tournament, just practice too much and then play too much.

So I need rest right now.

**Q. Got you. Thank you so much.**

JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you.

**Q. You are the first Korean player to win Player of the Year twice. Of all the great players coming out of Korea, what does that mean to have that title to yourself?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I didn't know that, and I'm happy to get Player of the Year again. It's honor to -- it's great honor to twice get the Player of the Year.

And especially we have a lot of good players from the Korea in this tour, so it's great honor.

Yeah.

**Q. \$1.5 million is a lot of money. Do you have any plans for it yet?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I will keep the money for my bank.

**Q. Christmas is coming up.**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, just small shopping with my parents.

THE MODERATOR: I like it, savings.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

**Q. You mentioned that 63 was on your mind throughout the round today. At what point did it first come up and you realized, oh, I could get there today?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I would say first hole I got birdie and my putting feel was really good last -- since yesterday, so, yeah, I felt I wish I could play well and I made it.

I did it. (Smiling.)

**Q. Would you say this stretch is the best stretch of your career compared to 2019?**

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I would say this year is tough season more than 2019 with the COVID and without the fans somewhere. (Through interpretation.) And I would say yes. It's amazing how I won five times when I look back. Right now it's the end of the season, the last tournament of the year, so I'm really happy with it.

**Q. With such a great round, what do you think was the**

**most important shot you hit today? And why?**

JIN YOUNG KO: It's a lot, but I would pick three shots. Number one is No. 3 hole second shot with the 7-iron. And number two No. 8 par-3. I got maybe three feet. Yep, with 9-iron, control 9-iron.

And No. 17 second shot with the 6-iron. I got two on so two-putt so made birdie.

THE MODERATOR: All right, I think I'll wrap it with this one here. You talked about it a little bit, but you have always said you aim to be the happiest golfer on the golf course. Five wins this season, Rolex Player of the Year. How happy are you after this season?

JIN YOUNG KO: (Through interpretation.) I want to enjoy the Christmas. I don't want to think about next year's schedule yet. But I had amazing year, five times win, and I'm very happy for it.

THE MODERATOR: Well, thank you, Jin Young Ko, and congratulations.

JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you.

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