

CME Group Tour Championship

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburon Golf Club

Celine Boutier

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone to the CME Group Tour Championship. Final event of the year. To my left, Miss Celine Boutier joins us.

Celine, I'm going to ask the big question about Rolex Player of the Year. I know you've been in contention. You and Lilia have the only chance to win. How much is that a goal for you this year, and do you think about it that much?

CELINE BOUTIER: I wouldn't say necessarily it was a goal at the beginning of the season. I definitely found myself in the position to have a chance to win it at the end, so definitely has been more on my mind.

But, I mean, Lilia has had such an incredible season. It's hard to beat two majors. If I don't get it I completely understand. She also deserves it as well. Just going to focus on finishing the season strong and see what happens.

Q. Speaking of finishing the season, CME Group Tour Championship is one of our biggest events of the year. How excited are you to be teeing it up again this week? I know you had several starts here already. How much do you enjoy this event?

CELINE BOUTIER: It's a great event. I feel like CME is doing a great job putting it together. We feel very special and it's definitely rewarding to be able to qualify for the final event.

I feel like I've had some good memories here; also performed well. So I feel like I'm definitely excited to get started and see what I can do.

Q. I'm going to ask one more before I open it up. CME and all of our partners throughout the year have done a great job raising the purses and growing the women's game. What does that mean to you as a player to see partners across the LPGA really investing in this sport?



CELINE BOUTIER: I think it's very encouraging. I think as a player, you know, it gets more and more exciting because I feel like people, whether it's companies or people watching, are definitely getting more involved and interested in the sport.

So I feel like it's encouraging as players to keep going and getting better, because I feel like we are finally starting to see that we are having the platform I feel like we kind of deserve. (Smiling.)

I feel like we have a lot of talent, and it's been incredible to be able to show it to everyone and to be also kind of respected as athletes and professional golfers. I feel like it's very encouraging for us to keep going and getting better.

Q. Tiburon is a place that you just seem to love. Feel like you play well here pretty much every year. What is it about this golf course that suits your eye?

CELINE BOUTIER: Sometimes you cannot really explain why some courses are better visually than others. I feel like I feel a little bit more comfortable on this course. I think also the more you play, for me personally, the better it's been.

I feel like over the years I've gained a little bit of distance and that enabled me to be a little bit more performance, especially on the par-5s and stuff like that, so I feel a little bit more comfortable now than at the very beginning.

I also feel like around greens I seem to be reading them a little bit better than other places. Also speed has been really good for me so far this week. Also the fact that I've performed well in the past is also helping. You always have good memories.

A little bit of everything I think.

Q. I know you came close a couple times last year, but to four wins this year, what have you learned about yourself? How much has your mindset shifted from I'm trying to win to knowing you can come to every tournament and win?

CELINE BOUTIER: I mean, I think last year I did come close a few times. Sometimes when you're trying to force it



too much it's not always best way to win. I feel like my first win at the beginning in March kind of helped me relax a little bit more when I was in the position because I definitely felt more comfortable.

Then the more you do it the more comfortable you feel, so it's kind of a loop like that. So I feel like I'm just trying to get myself in the position to win, and then I also know it's not just depending on my performance. Some other players can also play really well.

So I don't put as much pressure on winning. Just try to put myself in the position and do the best from there. It's hard to win out here obviously, so I try to keep my expectations also more in the present and not too far ahead.

Q. You've had some great years in the past. This one obviously has stood out. What do you feel has been the difference maker this season? If there is one certain thing you can point to that you think has been the key to your success this year?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think last year was definitely very good experience for me. Even though I didn't win as much, I had a lot of Top 10s and weeks where I was in contention. That much did help me get more confidence about my game and me being able to win few weeks in the year rather than just once in a while.

So this year I just felt more comfortable in contention, which I didn't necessarily feel last year, and just a little bit less pressure to have to win so hard. I just feel like I just take the opportunities as they come and I don't necessarily try to force as much, which has been a little bit of a difference.

Q. With you being in the hunt for Player of the Year there has been debate throughout the years whether it should be points or vote like on the PGA TOUR. What are your thoughts on that and how it should be structured?

CELINE BOUTIER: I do believe in the points system because I think -- sometimes you just can't fight against points. There is a system and you have to perform to be able to win, and I feel like, I don't know, I just am very much about stats and points and things like that, and rankings. So I'm very much about that.

Q. Lilia said after her victory at the AIG Women's Open that was the first time she really felt like Player of the Year could be a possibility for her. Was there a certain time in the season you realized you could be Player of the Year?

CELINE BOUTIER: Not really. Like I said, Lilia has had two majors. It's hard to beat. I definitely felt like maybe after Malaysia it was maybe a chance, but before that, definitely not.

Q. When you started this season, what were your goals?

CELINE BOUTIER: It was to win tournaments. (Laughter.)

I hadn't won last year so I just wanted to win this year.

And then obviously wanted to win a major, so just being able to do both was definitely very fulfilling.

Q. You've had a lot of highlights this year. What shots or moments do you find yourself reflecting on the most?

CELINE BOUTIER: I mean, I feel like playoffs are always very tough emotionally, just to be able to handle the pressure. I've had two playoffs this year, so I feel like probably those two were very key for me.

And very different. One I just won after one hole and it was a great solid putt to get in the playoff, and one was more of a grind and longer. So I feel like two different ways, but just the way I was able to handle the pressure was definitely something that I will remember.

And then obviously I think the week in Evian was not necessarily one specific shot, but just the week in general. It's just such a tough week to handle as a local player, and so just to be able to have handled it successfully that week was definitely very rewarding as well.

Q. You mentioned adding distance and being able to reach par-5s in two. How do you do that, and how much do you think that impacted you?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think I just -- there wasn't really big improvement. I think there was probably ten yards over few years, but I just feel more comfortable having shorter irons into greens instead of hybrids or like just being closer or having a chance to go for the green in two, whereas just laying up and having a wedge shot.

I feel like it definitely adds up at the end, just the birdie opportunities you get. The way I achieved did, there wasn't really a specific way. I definitely tried to work out and get more speed, and then I think my swing probably helped a little bit, just getting it more efficient throughout the years.

Q. You mentioned Malaysia is when you first thought about Player of the Year being something you could

win. How did you react when Lilia won last week?

CELINE BOUTIER: (Smiling.) I mean, I was just like honestly very impressed. Being able to pull it off under the circumstances and pressure, I'm like, yeah, she deserves it.

We'll see what happens. Like I said, she's had such an amazing season. Even if I don't get it I'm very happy for her. It's hard to beat four wins and two majors, so whatever happens I'll be happy.

Q. One of the best years of your career. How would you compare yourself as a golfer from the start of the year to now?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think as far as skills I don't feel too different. I don't feel like there was a big improvement in any parts of my game. I was able to score a little bit better.

As a person, probably a little bit more, like I said, comfortable in the situations when I'm in contention, which I wasn't necessarily the case before. I think that would be the main difference. Overall I don't feel like a completely different person or a different player.

Q. If you could just kind of take us through the process of what it takes to learn to win. Obviously you won out here before. This year it seems like you really have learned how to win. I don't know if there is anything that you can speak to that.

CELINE BOUTIER: I'm not sure. I think it's a lot of the -- most of it is experience. Just being able to be in the situation. I feel like it's also a lot about confidence. You have to believe that you can pull it off and that you have the game to do it, versus just trying so hard. Like I said, just being able to force things too much or like having to believe you have to be play your best to win.

I just feel like you have to learn through experience that you're good enough pull it off. I think that's the mindset difference that can really make a difference whether you win or not.

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