

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

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Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference

Q. And with that, pleased to say we welcome in the world's No. 1 player. Nelly, I am sure you are excited to get going. One of the oldest cliches in golf is that it's really hard to follow a good round with another one. You think about last year. It was more than just a good year. That may be a little bit daunting to you.

NELLY KORDA: I mean, I guess you can look at it both ways. You can look at it that I'll have a lot to defend and the expectations will be high, or you can look at it in a way that it's just exciting that you can kind of be in this position and see where it takes you.

I mean, I'm in a completely different and new position. I'm going to be defending. I usually always defend on different golf courses. Jess and I were joking that she's defending but I'm also defending this week, so I think it'll be nice to defend on the same golf courses.

And then I think I'm just really excited to get this year going.

Q. Yeah. Some of the same golf courses, but also some new ones. We'll talk about that in a moment. Your sister of course defending this week. Let's go back one year. If I had told you that you would have a major championship, a gold medal, and a world No. 1 ranking, as you stood there in Orlando a year ago, what would your reaction have been?

NELLY KORDA: I would have told you that you're joking. (Laughter.)

You know, it's something you just dream of. You go into every year trying to prepare and trying to play well in those big events, and just trying to even get into the Olympics.

To win a major and then on top of that, that same day getting to world No. 1 and then a couple weeks or a month, I don't exactly remember, later standing on that podium with a gold medal around my neck, I mean, that was a



dream come true.

Q. Yeah, I'm a little bit of an Olympics junkie. One of my favorite things to ask people who have won an Olympic gold medal, No. 1 being where do you keep the gold medal, and No. 2 are there any great stories about when you have shown it to somebody and the reaction you've gotten. It's one of the rarest things in our culture.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, to be honest, it's not very exciting. I just keep it in kind of my trophy room. It's sitting -- I'm still trying to decide what I want to do with it because I kind of want to have it on display but I also want to have it where I can easily take it in and out. So I'm still deciding on what I want to do with it.

For the showing off aspect of it, I was told to kind of wear it around my neck during Solheim Cup, but I never could. I don't know. I kind of like to keep it to myself in that sense. I'm not a huge person to go around and show it off.

But the reactions of my family, I mean, I went back to Prague after winning, and seeing my grandparents wear it around their neck, it was really cool.

Q. Yeah, I had one Olympic athlete who told me that he kept it in his sock drawer, so you never know where people are going to keep it.

NELLY KORDA: Well, I actually did -- I did travel with it in a sock at the start because I didn't have a case for it. (Laughter.)

Q. Well, also, as we said, gold medal, but also world No. 1. Just wondering how much attention do you pay to the world rankings, and how much does it mean to you to be No. 1 in the world? You've been No. 1 longer than any other American woman ever.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's super special. Obviously that's a very big goal that I can kind of check off my list as a professional golfer.

Obviously I'm hungrier for more, but in a sense of focusing just on that No. 1 spot, I'm not too focused on that. I mean, rankings come and go. Someone is probably going to have a better year or play well and you're going to lose that



ranking.

But just to have it for a little feels really good. I've always said, you know, good golf kind of solves everything, so if I go about focusing on one event at a time, one shot at a time, hopefully I can do some damage this year.

Q. Speaking of other people having a good year, lots of fun watching you and Jin Young Ko go back and forth last season. Does her success in any way motivate you?

NELLY KORDA: Oh, for sure. I think we played together in the final round of CME, and when she gets going, it's so hard to stop her. She is an amazing ball-striker, amazing, amazing putter.

I think it's a good rivalry. We're still good friends. We chitchat here and there. So it's nice to kind of in the sense feed off someone, and hopefully we continue playing well and have many more battles coming in on Sunday the last final holes.

Q. One can only hope. The purses on the LPGA Tour are increasing by more than \$15 million this year. That's a huge number. You'll be playing some of the top courses in the world also, some new places. Anyplace in particular that you're excited to play?

NELLY KORDA: I think next year Pebble Beach, I've never played that golf course and I'm really excited, just the history and traditions.

Q. Really?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I've never played, so I'm super super excited.

But I think women's golf is trending in an amazing direction, and I'm just super excited to see where it goes. Hopefully I can be a small part of just contributing to the game of golf.

Q. I think there is no question about the fact that you're more than just a small part of it. The last time we saw you you were playing with your dad at the PNC Championship and you got to meet Tiger Woods and play against him. Had you known him before? What was that like? What did you guys talk about?

NELLY KORDA: No, I've never met him before, so obviously I was a little star struck. I met him the day before that video came out, which was a little embarrassing to me. I didn't know I was being recorded. I look like such a fan girl, and then it blew up. It went viral. So it was really funny.

But he was so nice to me, and then actually the next day we were -- I was playing an hour before him, so he went on the putting green first and I finished up on the putting green. He was actually using -- I warm up with a tool called the Butter Putter, and he actually was -- he hit a few putts with it, and I told my caddie, I was like, Do not wash that.

(Laughter.) So it was well cool. I mean, he was my idol growing up, and just getting to take a photo with him and playing in the same event as him was really, really special.

Q. Well, just a reminder, you were the world No. 1 in that photo that we're looking at right now. All right, well, so the story is well-known. Both parents were pros in tennis, your father a major champion. Just wondering, what, if any, advice did they offer you growing up about competing? Not about your sport in particular, but about competing.

NELLY KORDA: Competing, I think they have always just kind of made sure that we stay on our path. There are people that succeed at a really young age and there are people that it takes them a little longer to get the groove of things.

I think one thing that they've always made sure was not to put so much pressure on ourselves and making sure that we stick to our paths. When we have a breakthrough year really appreciate it. If we're struggling, just to keep our head high and keep working and lean on the ones around you.

But they made sure that we didn't put too much pressure on ourselves and just took it, as boring as it sounds, day by day, shot by shot. My dad's motto was always, Find the ball, hit the ball, do it again. (Laughter.)

Q. Boy, that sounds like really good advice. The LPGA Tour season gets underway this week down in Orlando. World No. 1 player, Nelly Korda. Best of luck this week.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

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