

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Yuka Saso

Quick Quotes

Q. Here with Yuka Saso who just opened your 2022 LPGA tour season with a 4-under 68. That was an exciting round for you. Lots of ups; couple downs. I wanted to ask you, tell us about your eagle on 14. That's a pretty fun hole out there.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, firstly, I'm very thankful I was able to play in this event. Yeah, up and downs like you said. That eagle, that was unexpected, but I really hit a good shot. Landed probably a feet left of the hole and spin back and went in.

Surprised, but, yeah that was really good.

Q. How far out were you and what club did you use?

YUKA SASO: I think that was 60, around 60, and I hit a 60-degree wedge.

Q. Awesome. That was a fun experience playing with two really tall baseball players in John Lester and Tom Glavin. Have you done anything like this event before? This is something very different for us.

YUKA SASO: No, this is my first time, so it was very fun. Yeah, we talked a little, and, yeah, it was really good.

Q. Were you familiar with who they were at all?

YUKA SASO: I knew they were baseball player, but I have no idea what they've done or what they do, so I asked a lot of questions.

Q. Do you follow baseball in Japan, or the Philippines?

YUKA SASO: More like baseball here in America, but not as much. I mean, I like baseball, but I'm not very -- like I'm not fan of any teams, but I like watching.

Q. You had two of some of the best pitchers.



YUKA SASO: Yeah, so I asked them few tips.

Q. Overall how did you spend your off-season? Did you get to go home at all, and what were your preparations for this event?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I went back home in Japan and spent time with family, spent a good Christmas there.

Was really good. I didn't really do much of anything. I slept a lot and played a lot with my brothers and sisters.

Q. When did you come back to the states? How long have you been back?

YUKA SASO: Before New Year, December 31st.

Q. And you've been looking for a place to live here. Have you got a house?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, we rented a house in the Dallas area.

Q. Followed up the eagle with a couple birdies. Tell us about those.

YUKA SASO: So hole number -- I don't remember the hole.

Q. 15, 16.

YUKA SASO: 15 is a par-5. I hit a good drive. I had 238 for second shot into. Hit a little cut but left myself around 35 yards for a third shot. Yeah, chipped it really good, probably three feet, and, yeah, made a birdie.

And then 16 I hit a good tee shot again with my 3-wood. I had 150 or so. I hit an 8-iron and I had probably 15 feet to the hole. Yeah, made the putt.

Q. Have you played this course a fair amount?

YUKA SASO: First time this week, yeah.

Q. First time this week?

YUKA SASO: Yeah.



Q. What did you think of the challenge? What's the biggest challenge of it?

YUKA SASO: Wind and around the greens. Wind can get really tricky, and around the greens, because the grass is so short, very tight. So, yeah, I want to hit as much as possible greens.

Q. I watched you warmup this morning. You hit six 3-woods and didn't seem to be happy with any of them. What were you working on and how did you turn it around during the round?

YUKA SASO: Well, I wasn't really expecting anything to go good because this is our first tournament and I didn't do much of anything at the off-season, so I'm trying to get the tempo, but obviously wasn't able to hit the way I wanted to.

So I just trying to stay calm and just not really think about it. More like the feel of hitting the ball.

Q. Is there an arc to low expectations, in keeping your expectations low?

YUKA SASO: I think so, yeah. It made me a little relaxed before hitting the shots with 3-wood or any other shots because I have not much expectation with it.

Q. And now having been out here for several months, I know you've got Jeff as your agent now and you've been trying to get a few more sponsor deals and business deals put together. Are you more comfortable in this setting now than you were say right after the Open?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I still have a lot of things to learn, but having a good team who supports me and that gives me maybe not more, but little confidence with playing. So, yeah, having my sponsors, new sponsors, it's really great.

And having -- like I said having a good team really helped me I think.

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