

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Saturday, January 20, 2024

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Lydia Ko

Quick Quotes

Q. I'll start off with two questions. Obviously to be where you are heading into this final round, how are you feeling after the third day of play?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I played solid again. Yesterday was kind of the first time in a long time where I thought all round my game was in a good position.

I was able to attack pins and not get worried about am I going to miss the fairway or not. I may not execute it the way that I want to, but I felt comfortable and really good out there.

I think I was a little nervous today just being in this position for the first time in a while. Definitely nice to have a partner like Jason at Grant Thornton where if you mess up you've got Jason. Here you're like, you mess up, you're cleaning up your own mess.

So, yeah, I played well solid. I played solid these past few days. It's just great to kind of feel these nerves and excitement. I think because I am at home in ways maybe the nerves are a little less than if I was somewhere else.

So great to see familiar faces and, yeah, I'm excited for tomorrow.

Q. And you talked with Golf Channel about watching Mardy Fish's documentary last night. After what you talked about all this week about the feelings you had over the last season, was that a motivator for today after watching him tell his story?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I had heard a little bit about it, but I wanted to see the documentary because, Paul, my caddie, watched it on Thursday and he said he she a tear and they actually hugged it out today.

I think when people are looking, you don't realize what that person is going through, and sometimes you could be at your best, like Mardy was. It wasn't like he was at a low



time in his career. I think I too, when I was No. 1 the first time around, there were things going through my head.

I remember sometimes saying, man, I wish I wasn't on Golf Channel and I wish the camera didn't catch me hitting the shot just in case I didn't hit a good shot. I think those are thoughts -- I mean, everybody varies to a certain point but those things are very I think normal. It's not weird.

To kind of see that, and see somebody that's in the industry but plays a different sport and now he's playing golf, it was really cool. I thought it was really relatable in ways and awesome that like he came out and was vulnerable and to tell his story to other people to help other people, I thought that was awesome.

I'm sure it wasn't an easy decision.

Q. For somebody that has been vulnerable when you have been struggling -- end of last year is not a good measure of that -- but how gratifying is it to you to fight back every time, to have that bounceback, and now you're seeing the fruits of that labor this week even?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's crazy, because when you're not performing well you wonder if you're ever going to perform well. It's not just one round, but they keep adding up.

As much as sometimes you try and brush it off and say it's only golf, but golf is -- like I dream about golf. I dream about missing my tee time. That's how much golf is -- knock on wood that never happens -- but that's how much it means to me.

Sometimes I think it is hard to like differentiate your identity to the game or to what you do. To be able to see good results, I played really well in Korea, few putts here and there, but to keep putting myself in better positions and have under-par scores I thought was really helpful for me personally.

I remember in Portland Juli Inkster said, hey, you're goal is to shoot under par every day. Whether it's one or six, doesn't matter. Like every one of those counts. I think that makes a lot of sense.

Sometimes we try and make a bunch of birdies and doesn't go your way and I guess you get deflated. It's not about



that. I'm just going to enjoy my time here. I know I played a bunch of rounds at this golf course and it's gone great hasn't been pretty at times.

To be able to put a few rounds together this week, good quality rounds together this week, has definitely been a good momentum, and no matter what happens tomorrow, I think it's going to be good momentum for the '24 season.

Q. What's been your best strength this week?

LYDIA KO: I think I haven't been like that wayward, whether it's putting or irons. I came off the first round thinking I like drove it decent, but just didn't hit enough greens, where it wasn't really a difficult shot coming in.

So I sent a few swings to Si Woo and said, you know what, my driving wasn't bad, but this is what I'm seeing with my irons. Yesterday I almost hit every green and the ball was going most of the time in the near proximity to where I was aiming.

That's what happens in like video games and not real-life golf. For that to have happened I think it was a confidence booster. I don't think today was as sharp as yesterday, but still didn't put myself in too many bad positions and if I did have to make a bogey or whatever, I was like, you know what, I've got the next hole to make a birdie.

Try not to make a big deal out of mistakes.

Q. When you sent the swing video to Si Woo, what did he say?

LYDIA KO: He pretty much told me everything he tells me every other day. It's honestly just making sure that I'm being aggressive from the top down and not having my tendencies come out. I think when it's pressure conditions like those tendencies are probably going to get more emphasized. You're probably going to hit it straighter on the driving range than maybe on the golf course.

I try and make sure that those thoughts are the last thoughts before I hit, and just so that that's what I'm focusing on and whatever happens to the golf ball is out of my hands from there.

Q. Can you remind us when you moved here to Lake Nona and why did you chose to come here?

LYDIA KO: I moved inside the gates just before COVID, so in 2019-ish. Actually like around Christmas Eve or something.

I remember the Asia swing my mom stayed back and tried

to do a little bit of help with the interior clean up because it wasn't the nicest house in the neighborhood.

But thanks to her hard work, we were able to move in just before the end of the year. It was great because I set up a little gym and during COVID that was like something that was out of reach because we couldn't be in like public spaces very much.

So, yeah, it was great that I could be inside the gates and I remember not being in a car for like three months. I stayed in here, drove the cart around, and that's it.

But I was a member here I think a year-ish before. I know there are a few other good golf courses in the area but I loved how everyone though this was a country club, everybody is so chill.

I see the same faces in the gym. They're coming out to watch me play this week. As players, because we're not here 365 days, you don't want to feel like you're stepping on anyone's toes when you come every month, once every month.

Here everybody makes us feel welcome. I think they're very generous of understanding like sometimes we might hit one extra ball on the golf course or like that if you're using the chipping or putting green they'll ask, hey, is it okay. It's a space for everyone. I think they're very supportive of like what we do.

I think that was why wouldn't you want to move to a place like that? Yeah.

Q. It's been I think five weeks since Grant Thornton. Do you see your good play this week as a continuation from something that happened five weeks ago or have you just flipped the calendar?

LYDIA KO: I mean, every day I feel like a new person. It's hard to say, like, oh, it's continuation of that. But definitely winning alongside Jason at Grant Thornton was a confidence booster. The perfect kind of ending to the season.

I think he said in a press conference on Saturday, like it would be -- it would mean a lot for us to win, outside of just the winning aspect.

For us to have done that was definitely a nice way to cap off the season. I think he gave me like confidence in myself when I felt like I was letting the team down a little bit. To see the things that like I worked with my coach, worked on with my coach kind of work out, and for me to hit some of those really good shots coming down the

stretch when it like meant the most, I think it gave me a little bit of assurance to say, hey, what I'm doing is good.

I just got to keep working at it. Kind of go from there.

Q. You kind of touched on it a little bit earlier with the familiarity. When you're standing on the tee, you've seen all these golf holes before. Do you have to tell yourself, oh, I'm playing a tournament this week? Are you in a tournament situation and look out and say, I know these golf holes and to relaxes you?

LYDIA KO: I think it's kind of a little bit of both. In ways it's kind of weird to see the huge grandstand on 18 and the DJ putting on the music from Fast and Furious.

It's very different. I love that by the way.

But it's just at the same time, you are familiar to the holes. It's kind of with any golf course, you feel like you know the golf course better by Sunday than when you first get there on Monday.

So it is nice to have that familiarity.

Q. One last thing: You said you were a little nervous today. Haven't been in this position in a little while. What will tonight be like? You get sleep at home, on a lead, on a golf course in your backyard. Is that a recipe for relaxation?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I'm just going to do what I did other days. I watched Mardy's documentary yesterday so I don't know if I should watch another documentary tonight. My mom is here and I haven't seen my husband in a while, so he's going to be here. We're going to have dinner together at the house.

Have mom's home cooking and get physio as usual. Really nothing that different. I was thinking of working out on Thursday -- well, yesterday, and then I was like, it's raining, no thanks. So I passed on that. So pretty sure I'm going to pass on the work out again today.

Just relax and take it like any other Saturday going into Sunday.

Q. I'm guessing you're not going to go to the Pitbull concert. Did you check out the other concerts or just focus on golf all week long?

LYDIA KO: I was there at the pro-am pairings party on Tuesday that was going on outside. It was unfortunate that we had a little bit of rain that night. On Thursday I actually heard it from my house, so I'm pretty sure it was very loud

At the Wave Hotel area.

But, yeah, I love Pitbull. I know he's come out and done I think a show for the Pelican event a couple years ago. It's just I'm not really much of a social butterfly. I wish I was. But I will listen to his songs on Spotify. Who knows, I might get a little bit of it because especially his songs we know it's going to be fun. I might get it at my house anyway.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports