

Kia Classic

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Carlsbad, California, USA

Park Hyatt Aviara Golf Club

Mo Martin

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to day two of pre-tournament interviews at the 2021 Kia Classic, and we're here with Southern California native, Mo Martin. Welcome back to Aviara.

MO MARTIN: Hi.

Q. This is always such a special week for you. A little different, but it's got to be such a great feeling to be back here in Carlsbad for this beautiful event. How are you feeling today?

MO MARTIN: It is super nice to be here. I love southern California for so many reasons and I love this golf course. It's one of my favorites. Definitely all season, all of my career, really love playing here. I think my second year here I finished in a tie for second.

So I've just had good vibes, I've had -- even from the volunteers to all my fans and family that have come down. It's just been special. I felt a lot of support and just felt like it's home.

Q. Definitely is home for you. I know you mentioned yesterday you caught up. It's going to be a little different not having the fans and the family out there, but you said it's still a special course. What makes it so special on the course, and how do you think you might be able to recreate some of those outside-of-the-ropes vibes?

MO MARTIN: You know what, you have to drive it well here, you have to hit it well. The greens are pretty difficult, which I love, so I think it's just a difficult but fair course. Those have always been my favorite.

The rough is very penalizing, and just bentgrass, it's grass I'm familiar with. You have to be creative around the greens. So you really just have to bring your magic stuff here. No matter what you do well, I think if you do well here you can play well. Those are the setups and courses that I am most attracted to.

FastScripts
transcript

ASAP text



So I asked the security guards if they see my mom in the bushes trying to sneak through don't tackle her too hard. Just gently bring her away. (Laughter.) I will miss everybody being there and the Go Mo signs and the buttons. I'll have them in memory from past years.

Q. Absolutely. And we're just glad to have you back. You were sidelined with an injury before we went into the pandemic last year. You played twice late last year and then this is your first event of 2021. How are you feeling?

MO MARTIN: I feel very good. My body feels great. I feel strong. There have been a lot of people who helped me emotionally, mentally, physically figure out what's going on and stay in the game and stay positive.

I had a session with my trainer this morning and he was like, Look at me, which is always super weird, looking into a camera. He's like, You got this. Stay positive. Just I've had a lot of wonderful support through this and I feel good. I mean, I'm really grateful I have another crack at it, I get to come back.

Just to hear some people on tour, some other players say it feels like the LPGA when you're back, super heartwarming and really nice to see all the faces, all my friends out here, and just to be able to do what I love again and what I'm most passionate about.

Q. That kind of ties into my next question. We're celebrating the two-year anniversary of the DriveOn campaign. You have a DriveOn story from day one, your childhood with your dad bringing you up, introducing you to the game, and now the last two years of having to push through this injury to get back. I love that picture of you with your homemade golf bag from your never quit piece. If you don't mind, remind us about your story, where you came from, and how this DriveOn campaign has given you the opportunity to share that inspiring story.

MO MARTIN: Yeah, well, thank you. I feel really lucky to have the platform to share where I came from and just have the opportunity to have some other kid look at me and be like, You know what? I'm in the same position. I feel that, and somebody be able to relate to me and realize that -- to stay hopefully and still dream big and to realize



... when all is said, we're done.®

that from -- no matter where you are in life you can achieve great things and there will be people there that will help you.

But, yeah, not a lot of money. Not the country club, so my dad taught me from a book in a driveway, cut down my clubs, made my golf bag from a poster mailer with electrician's tape around it. There as of rope, the only thing I could have to carry it. I was so proud of that bag.

I fell in love with golf really from day one, and through junior golf somebody anonymously started paying my entry fees and helped me for a couple years, and actually through this piece and reaching out to a few people I was able to find that person to thank them and promise them that I'm going to continue to do the same thing, so to look out for the kids who may be lost in the cracks to come and just to hopefully have everybody that wants to be a part of golf be a part of golf and let that magic happen, too.

Q. That's absolutely beautiful. I hadn't heard that part of the story and it reminds me there is a Monday qualifier twitter account has someone who has paid for I think ten Monday qualifiers for their week on a site completely anonymously.

MO MARTIN: Oh, that makes me so happy.

Q. What is it about golf fans that seems to bring that out among our community?

MO MARTIN: It's a huge community and I have met just the most tremendous people. Yeah, I think golf just calls to people of all different sorts. It really is a community builder. You know, there are some very successful people that play golf and have been driven to the challenge of it. I think that's part of it. When the most famous athletes say it's the hardest support in the world, you know, it is the very difficult but also very rewarding, and so I think we can all relate to that.

So, yeah, I think it brings out the generosity in people. I think ultimately there are some super kind people all over the world and it brings out the best in us.

THE MODERATOR: Exactly. Gives a reason to smile.

Q. Welcome back. Great to see you.

MO MARTIN: Great to see you too, Rick.

Q. You are a past major champion, I think six and a half years since you won the Women's British. What does it do to enhance the credibility of the women's game that their major championships are being played

on the courses in the British Open or the Women's Open here, goes to a place like Champions? What does that do to enhance the credibility of your game?

MO MARTIN: I think just playing on championship venues is just recognizing the LPGA is absolutely top notch, and just seeing the quality of the play out here really enhances everything and I think gives us the visibility that we deserve.

So I think it's just an enhancement to be able to come to the biggest venues there are and then to be able to put on such a show and things that people can be in awe of and relate to and watch, be entertained by, inspired by.

Q. What would you like your legacy in this game to be? I have two grand nieces. What would you like them to know about you?

MO MARTIN: That's a big one, Rick. You always come with the good questions.

Q. Thank you.

MO MARTIN: I just I want people to know that they can do big things, that they are already equipped with what they're capable of doing. They're going to find community, they're going to find help when they need it, and to dig in and believe in themselves and to really embrace the struggles.

You know, realize that there is a lot more that connects us than divides us. That's another part of these DriveOn stories that's super important. They seem different, you know, we may have different native languages. We all have different struggles. No matter what they are, embrace them, make the most of them, and have that be a reason for your success instead of something against you that is there to make you not succeed.

Use it as a steppingstone and use it as a way to connect with everybody else in our human experience.

Q. Going back to the Women's British, apart from winning of course, what do you remember most about that whole experience, just savoring the experience of playing in Britain and that whole environment?

MO MARTIN: Yeah, I think the fans over there are really true fans of golf. I think they're very knowledgeable. I think they can appreciate a bump and run as much as a flop shot that's got a lot of spin.

So I think that just true love of golf on the whole spectrum is really fun to play in front of. So it's just like my 3-wood that ran up and I was downwind and that was the only shot

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

to play, that was "the" shot to play. I had to play a drop against the wind, and they were just so appreciative of that. Even putting off the green when it's the right play or chipping with a 7-iron.

So just the creativity and the fanship over there and the quality is really fun to play, on top of obviously links golf which I'm very drawn to.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to close with one question and bring us back here to the tournament at hand, at Kia. I wanted to specifically ask you about hole 16, which is this week's Aon Risk Reward Challenge hole. If you don't mind walking us through that hole and what makes it such a risk-reward for you.

MO MARTIN: Oh, it's such a fun hole. You know, your drive, if you keep it out too far to the right you could potentially stay up on this platform, and the green, it goes for almost a country mile. So I have literally the times I have not hit my drive exactly where you wanted to and come down the hill, I have had 5-iron into a back pin and it's very narrow. It's about this narrow, so very challenging.

But then you hit that hill, come down, you've got a pitching wedge, very scorable. But there is a pond that comes up on the left side of it. There is rough that's up the right side of it. You can get short-sided. You can get in some pretty funky lies.

Then when they bring the tee up it's so much fun. For me it's a driver. Sometimes it's a little one depending on the winds. To be able to hit a driver in there and then still deal with the complexes of the green and the water, you know, I think even if it you miss it a little bit right and you're in the rough you have this weird chip shot.

Just the opportunity to make a one and potentially eagle and birdie, and I love when it adds that excitement, especially at like a No. 16, you know, where the momentum is there and where somebody can chase, you know, jump to the lead. It's just, I love this layout and 16 is a hole I get really excited about. There is a lot of drama there but it's good drama.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks so much. It's great to have you back. Welcome back The tour and have a great week.

MO MARTIN: It's so good to be here. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

