

# LOTTE Championship

Monday, April 12, 2021

Kapolei, Hawaii, USA

Kapolei Golf Club

## Minjee Lee

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, we are here inside the virtual media center to the LOTTE Championship. Aloha, Minjee and welcome back to Hawaii.

MINJEE LEE: Thank you.

**Q. How exciting is it to be back here? We weren't able to come in 2020, but here we are in 2021 at a new golf course. How excited are you for this week?**

SEI YOUNG KIM: Super excited. We missed last year and I always love coming back to Hawaii. All the vibes and just it's so chill and beautiful, so I love coming back.

**Q. It's been five years since your LPGA Tour win here.**

MINJEE LEE: Yep.

**Q. What do you remember most about that?**

MINJEE LEE: You know, I actually just remember doing the, what do you call it, the hula dance at the end.

But I remember having a really good last round to win by one, so I think that was just like an exciting moment for me. Second win on the LPGA, so that was pretty special.

**Q. I was going to say, do you reflect upon that moment, as you've won numerous times since then?**

MINJEE LEE: I think I just sort of think about all my wins and the special moments in each one and just how I played. I reflect back on that.

No, every one has been special for me and just being back here is really nice.

**Q. I know your off-season was pretty busy.**

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

**Q. Explain to us what you were able to do with the off-season as you geared up for the California swing**

**and now here in Hawaii?**

MINJEE LEE: I had a good time at home, quite a long time. I think was there maybe six weeks minus the quarantine that I had to do.

So, no, I got in a couple weeks of holiday and couple weeks of good training with my coach. So, no, it was good to be back home.

**Q. When did you start really focusing on the competitive mindset going into Kia?**

MINJEE LEE: Probably like two weeks before I got to Kia. I didn't come back any earlier than the start of the tournament, so, yeah, I just had sort of two weeks of getting back into the rhythm of things and then two weeks of more competitive stuff.

Yeah, just probably then.

**Q. Nothing like tuning up at a major championship as well.**

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

**Q. What have you learned about your game or been working on as we head into LOTTE this week?**

MINJEE LEE: We've only had two events so far but I had a really good week in Kia and up and down week at ANA.

But I think just taking the positives out of ANA, my ball striking has been really good, so just trying to get the putter hot. Hopefully this week.

**Q. We had an off week in between ANA and Hawaii. Were you able to work on anything or did you put the clubs down for a little bit?**

MINJEE LEE: No, I think with having such a long break and coming back for two weeks, I was still practicing in that off week.

And I got here on Friday. Yeah, I mean, actually the time



change is pretty tough. Five hours from Dallas, it's a long flight over here. Yeah, just getting accustomed to that.

**Q. I flew from Atlanta, so I feel that.**

MINJEE LEE: Oh, yeah, even worse.

**Q. After playing at Ko Olina the last five times how much do you enjoy the challenge or learning the nuances of Kapolei Golf Club?**

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I mean, I played all my years at Ko Olina so it's kind of nice to have a change, break from Ko Olina. Kapolei is quite nice, too.

This is the first time I've seen both the nines, so, yeah, I think we had a little bit of everything. I think if the wind gets up it'll be a good challenge.

**Q. I heard if the wind picks up it's definitely going to be a little bit of an obstacle. What are some of the similarities between Ko Olina and Kapolei that make it easier to transition over here?**

MINJEE LEE: I think couple of the holes sort of are similar. I think the vibe of the Hawaiian golf courses are quite similar.

I don't know if like any of the holes are really the same, but just I think the grass, the track, like the greens are nice here, too, like Ko Olina.

So, yeah, no, I just think the conditions are pretty similar, and obviously with the wind it's pretty similar, too.

**Q. Like you said, conditions are pretty similar. When there is a new course with a tournament that's been around for as long as the LOTTE Championship has, do you adjust your pre-tournament preparation or routine?**

MINJEE LEE: I think a little bit because it's my first time here. I map out all the greens and just sort of make my way around the golf course seeing where everything is, just scoping it out.

So I'm just going to go see one of the nines one more time tomorrow, so I think maybe a little bit more practice on the golf course.

**Q. Which nine?**

MINJEE LEE: I'm probably going the doing the back nine tomorrow.

**Q. That back nine, those threes are...**

MINJEE LEE: Are really small, yeah.

**Q. Small. How does that pose as either a challenge or how do you prepare for those small greens?**

MINJEE LEE: I think it really depends on the wind. I mean, obviously if there is a lot of crosswinds then you're really going to have to play for the wind.

You know, just depends on how much wind there is. So I don't know, just do a bit more chipping and just try to accustomize when it is actually windy.

**Q. As we wrap this up here, it's definitely different because of the COVID protocols and guidelines. What is most exciting to you about returning to beautiful Hawaii?**

MINJEE LEE: I think I with COVID it's been really difficult, but just seeing the scenery out here, I don't know, just -- it's just really lovely to see.

It's just always nice weather here and you can go down to the beach and put your feet in the water. It's just a really lovely week and quite relaxing.

**Q. As a past champion of this event, this tournament, like I said earlier, it's been five years, but what does it mean to have LOTTE back this year as opposed to not having it in 2020?**

MINJEE LEE: You know, it's been really tough. It was tough year last year, and, you know, we really missed coming over here. Just a special thanks for them to step up and have the tournament this year.

So, yeah, just a big -- we're all really grateful to be back here and we all love it here. Just a big thank you.

**Q. One last question from Zoom. You did mention how you've been practicing a lot more. What are some of the training you've been doing with your coaches that prepare you for the onslaught of events coming up?**

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I mean, I probably put a lot of time probably on the driving range trying to figure out which driver to use this year.

I had a couple of options that I was trying to choose between, but I ended up just sticking with my Srixon driver. That was pretty much what I was worked on for most the time in my off-season.

**Q. Working on a particular part of the swing or...**

MINJEE LEE: Yes. Yeah, it's hard to explain. I am working on a part of my swing, more of my backswing, downswing to be exact.

Yeah, I'm just working towards getting better every day.

**Q. Who do you work with?**

MINJEE LEE: Richie Smith is my coach.

**Q. Is he down in...**

MINJEE LEE: In Perth.

**Q. Oh, in Australia?**

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I been with him like 12 or 13 years now so he knows my swing back to front and he knows me as a person as well. So, yeah, no, just works well. I pretty much know what I'm doing now as well.

So, yeah, I just, you know -- we do FaceTime calls sometimes or do videos of my swing so he can check it.

**Q. What part? You said the part of the downswing.**

MINJEE LEE: So like the very top to pretty much like this space. (Indicating.)

**Q. Okay. Is it different because the Australian time zone, so a lot of FaceTime?**

MINJEE LEE: It's actually quite difficult to get close to Perth time because it's so different from everywhere else.

But I try to get him at nighttime or early in the morning. So, yeah, we try to the FaceTime, but even that's hard. Just videos of my swing and he'll check it.

**Q. Thank you Minjee for joining us.**

MINJEE LEE: Thank you.

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