

# LOTTE Championship

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Kapolei, Hawaii, USA

Kapolei Golf Club

## Danielle Kang

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone inside the virtual media center here at the LOTTE Championship.

Without further ado, aloha, Danielle.

DANIELLE KANG: Hello.

### Q. Welcome to the LOTTE Championship. How are you feeling to be back in Hawaii?

DANIELLE KANG: I love it here. I've been here for over a week actually, so I had a little girls' trip out here and enjoyed every bit of Hawaii.

We've done all the touristy stuff so we so just kind of enjoyed the weather, laid around the pool, I went to the beach.

Yeah, but work is work. Got to start practicing and play the golf course because it's not Ko Olina anymore.

So come back out here and try to figure out what the golf course is playing like.

### Q. How exciting is it to take the off week and just enjoy paradise?

DANIELLE KANG: It feels amazing. I really needed it. I think my girlfriends needed it as well. I think everyone needs each other and that's what friends are for and families are for.

We had so much fun. Just we tried to go on a food tour at some point. We got stuck in traffic. We thought we knew better because we had a local in the group as well who was born and raised in Honolulu. Just she couldn't control the traffic for us.

But, yeah, it's been awesome. During the tournament week I think just -- I don't know, my whole idea is to get food still. Yeah. (Laughter.)

### Q. I was going to say, what are some of your favorites

parts about being back in Hawaii and what do you enjoy most about being able to enjoy the Hawaii experience?

DANIELLE KANG: I feel like I belong here. I want to move here. So I just -- I come here and I just feel relaxed and I feel ready to go. It's kind of the serenity that you can't feel in certain places.

I feel really calm and right where I need to be.

So Hawaii just brings me that kind of chillness, and I think it does that for a lot of people. That's why people vacation here.

But, yeah, with that said, I think the golf course that we're playing, Kapolei, has been -- conditions are impeccable.

Hopefully the wind is kind to us throughout the week. I think the golf course can play very difficult.

### Q. I was going to say, also just your mental game, what does that do for your mental game as you then switch over into the more competitive mindset after having had a more relaxing way to spend that off week?

DANIELLE KANG: Right now I'm trying to work on some of my mental game on the golf course more so than anything, so I really need some off time. I love competing, so stopping competition really isn't an option.

If anything I'm actually trying to play more, pack the schedule as much as possible because there is some unsettling times on the golf course. I been feeling a little anxious about certain things and there is nothing going on on the golf course. I have a putt for par I'm anxious for something.

It's just creating an unrealistic fear, unrealistic doubts. So those are the things I'm working on and trying to be the person that I am and figure out how I feel and the way I used to feel.

### Q. If you don't mind me asking, when did those



**thoughts start creeping into your head? Did that happen earlier this year?**

DANIELLE KANG: No, it's been there for a while. I think it's just magnified I think. I don't think it's helped or hurt my performance, but it's the way I feel.

That's the best way I can explain it. I've won a tournament feeling the way I felt and I've lost a tournament feeling the way I felt.

So I don't look at it as a positive or a negative, more so that it's making me -- gives me that little twisted feel and I don't like that. I want to be able to be in control of how I feel.

A lot of people can't. They can't control the way they think, the way they feel, but what I can do is work on it and practice how to accept that or deal with it better. That's one of the things I want to figure out.

Kia I failed. I doubled the last hole knowing it was going to happen. It's things like that. At ANA 18th I felt it, but knowing it's going to happen I almost holed out. It's sometimes hit or miss.

**Q. It's like a rollercoaster.**

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, and I don't like that.

**Q. So just trying to stay even keel and get the thoughts out of mind?**

DANIELLE KANG: No, I tried that too for a while. That's not who I am, though. I'm not a very even keel, all good, chill person when it's not all good. That's why I want to be able to feel what I feel and be able to accept it more efficiently and quicker.

Oh, this is happening; oh, this is what I felt. Let's try to do this and move on to the next step. That's kind of the steps I'm trying to figure out. If anything, I'm trying to make it worse before it gets better.

So before like last year if I felt a little something weird I tried everything to block it out and I tried everything to feel -- don't feel it. Just stay calm, everything is okay.

But actually I needed to learn how to deal with that, you know? I'm sure 2020 has brought a lot of unsettled feeling and anxiety to a lot of people. With that said, we have to let the feelings come and feel them.

**Q. Yeah. And to be so open about it is huge.**

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, it's not something that's -- Oh,

my God I thought that was Sang-moon Bae for a second. I was like, Sang-moon Bae, what are you doing here? (Laughter.)

Oh, my gosh, he's a doppelganger.

Everyone is going through struggles in their own way. That's something I want to work on and get better at. I've opened up the flood gates to make it worse.

**Q. But at the same time, I mean, are you focusing more on how to improve your mental game as opposed to are you working with any -- is Butch giving you any pointers in that regard?**

DANIELLE KANG: Butch has been trying to help me with the mental side of it, being able to be comfortable on the golf course, the way we think and trying to be more accepting for what's happening and trying to let go of things and understanding why I feel the way I do, and then stop and move on.

And it's really hard to do, so...

But I try and create situations to feel it on purpose, because if I do it a million times maybe a million and one will be easier.

**Q. Looking ahead to this week, so we are here at Kapolei, different than Ko Olina. We've heard it's quite similar but definitely some differences. What have you taken out of the course so far?**

DANIELLE KANG: The course is pretty straightforward. With that said, it's not a lot of gimmicks to it, so you have to hit it really straight and control distances with the second shots.

I didn't really see much of the difficulties off the tee, but hitting second shots into the green, if you're a little left it goes all the way down; if you're short it rolls way down.

So I think judging distances and hitting as solid as possible when you're going to leave yourself long putts, if you're in between clubs. So I think the weather is going to be the big factor. If it picks up with wind it'll be really hard to judge left to right and short to long, so I think short game will be -- you know, it's a test to that.

I remember at TPC Summerlin their greens are the worst, so this is a nice little break.

**Q. One of the things that I think I remember in the past when it's a new course is you've gone to Google Maps.**

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah.

**Q. So have you done that for Kapolei?**

DANIELLE KANG: I actually haven't. I've been -- I wasn't even watching golf and my girlfriends made me turn on Masters. They were like, We got to watch the Masters. Hey, it's a Friday. Relax. You got to wait until Sunday. Let's just watch the highlights. They were like, No we got to watch this.

So, no, haven't thought much about golf. No, I haven't been watching. So, no, I didn't Google Maps it. I did Google Maps how far we are so I could hit all my food spots. That's what I did.

**Q. Got you. One of the things that you just said, it's a second-shot kind of golf course. So how imperative are the windy conditions going to be in the way you strategize your game?**

DANIELLE KANG: That's going to be the big thing on the golf course. When the condition is pretty calm -- I had so much caffeine this morning. I'm all over the place. If the conditions are calm I believe that your second shots will be more controlled and there will be lower scores. The greens are really nice and pure and just rolling at a nice speed, not too aggressive, not too timid.

With that said, Olympic we're going to have to be able to control left to right, right to left and short to long. So short out here, the entire course basically says don't be short, so I'm sure everyone is going to be going for longer shots.

But we'll see. I mean, I don't know. I believe it is tougher than Ko Olina depending on how it plays though.

**Q. We shall see. It was reported today Juli Inkster is attempting to qualify for the U.S. Open Women's Open this year. If she does, it'll be her sixth decade in the tournament. I know being on Solheim you have a great relationship with her. How impressive is it for her longevity in an event like the U.S. Women's Open?**

DANIELLE KANG: I didn't know she had to qualify. She's just -- one of the funny conversations I've had with Julie was. I didn't win my first -- I don't know if she said the word major or something with major -- until I was 30 or 40.

I said, Oh, that's your first time you won a major? She goes, No, that's the first time I won my first Open. I'm like, oh, okay. That was funny because oh, yeah, duh, she's won it so many times. Not surprising to me at all.

She's feisty and a go getter. Never quits. It's not that she

never quits, it's just she's got that fire and it's never died down. I look at her and I think, did I ever do what she can do. And for her to be able to compete still to this now, her body keeping up with what it's doing, she's gone through a lot of -- she's gone through some operations as well to deal with some pain, but I love it when she competes. She's done everything that everyone wants to do.

She loves playing.

**Q. She was at Kia as well.**

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. She was playing well.

**Q. Yeah. With that, as we begin to wrap it up here, you've been coming to the LOTTE Championship since 2013.**

We weren't able to have this event last year because of the pandemic. What does it mean to be able to return to Hawaii and compete with help from sponsors like LOTTE.

DANIELLE KANG: When it got canceled last year I was really bummed out. It's one of my favorite events. But when LOTTE decides to host an event, even through the pandemic, and I'm sure it's very hard with the quarantine in their country. If they're partners come out here and all the supporting subsponsors coming out playing with us, and that's what it they enjoy the most, and for them to go through whatever it takes operations behind the scenes to host an event, I know they've been through a lot, so I'm very thankful to have another tournament we can go to, and I know that every single tournament sponsor is doing the best they can so we can perform on TV, off TV, for the fans, and for the company.

So companies like LOTTE just been a consistent sponsor out here. It has been so helpful, and to our careers, too. It's the only tournament on the island and it's in Hawaii, so it's one of the best tournaments in my opinion.

To be able to come out here as vacation/working, I'm really thankful and hope that we have a long partnership together and whatever they need from us we'll always be there to sport, too.

THE MODERATOR: All right, well we appreciate the time. Thank you for coming out.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you.

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