

# LOTTE Championship presented by Hoakalei

Monday, April 10, 2023

Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, USA

Hoakalei Country Club

**Hyo Joo Kim**

**Brooke Henderson**

**In Gee Chun**

**Celine Boutier**

**Nasa Hataoka**

**Hye-Jin Choi**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the media center here to the LOTTE Championship presented by Hoakalei. We are here with our pre-tournament press conference presented by the Hawai'an Islands.

Quite a list of players here, a lot of champions, a lot of winners. We'll with Hye-Jin Choi, Brooke Henderson, Hyo Joo Kim, our defending champion this year, Celine Boutier, In Gee Chun, and Nasa Hataoka.

Hyo Joo, I know back where you won last year, back to being the defending champion. How cool is it to be back here at Hoakalei and back in Hawai'i where you won last year?

HYO JOO KIM: Obviously I have great memories here in Hawai'i, and as you are aware LOTTE has been my sponsor since I was a rookie, so I guess I was more excited to come back to Hawai'i this year.

THE MODERATOR: And I know they were excited to see you win last year. We'll go from one LOTTE winner to a two-time LOTTE Championship winner, Brooke Henderson. You've played well in Hawai'i. Just seems to be your kind of play. Windy conditions out there, but what is it that you like so much about Hawai'ian golf?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love coming back to Hawai'i. All the people are so nice and kind and the atmosphere is always really amazing. So beautiful everywhere you look, all the flowers, and looking out over the ocean is always



really cool.

I've had great memories here and fortunate to win twice here, and just really looking forward to the opportunity to come back. And this golf course is very challenging with the wind, so hopefully put together four solid rounds and just see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: Hye-Jin, obviously a LOTTE sponsored player as well. Rookie season last year. You finished third in this event last year. How cool is it to be back at the LOTTE Championship as a LOTTE-sponsored player and somewhere you played really well before?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Yes, I am a LOTTE player, and I have been working very hard for this year's championship. I look forward to tomorrow.

And I also had great memories here in Hawai'i last year, and so I am very excited to play.

THE MODERATOR: Celine Boutier, you got that third LPGA Tour victory a few weeks ago at the Drive On Championship. I know you are a player that likes challenging conditions. Been in good form as of late. Got some rest after that win. How confident are you feeling coming to this golf course where the conditions will be a little tricky, which might play in your favor?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I feel like it's so windy it's a little bit unpredictable here, but I definitely like challenging conditions. I feel like it just makes my focus more and just a little bit tougher. Yeah, makes me able to dig deeper I feel like.

But I feel like it's hard to expect anything here because there is so many different things that can happen, especially with the wind.

So, yeah, just going to try to focus one round at a time and just do my best.

THE MODERATOR: In Gee Chun, you're a player that has figured out how to play in the Hawai'i conditions. Had a couple top 5s in this championship a few years ago. What is it about this style of golf that really suits your game?



IN GEE CHUN: When you see the ocean and all the pretty flower it make me feel really relax and it help more on the course as well, so I always really enjoy to come back to Hawai'i. I love to have like acai bowl, so I already had with Haru Nomura, so I think I pretty really enjoy this week, yeah.

Hopefully I can make better result this week as well.

THE MODERATOR: Nasa, I know you've been here since last Wednesday I heard. You helped with a clinic for some local kids in the area. How fun was that clinic, and how cool is it to be in Hawai'i and get ready to play another tournament?

NASA HATAOKA: You know, it was actually my first time doing this type of junior clinic. It was a lot of fun. A lot of young, passionate kids asking me a lot of questions, so I had a really good time there.

THE MODERATOR: What was the most interesting question you got?

NASA HATAOKA: There wasn't any funny question. Just general, you know, how far can you hit drivers, what's a good practice routine, that type of question.

**Q. Nasa, saw that you went to Pebble Beach over the break. Was that your first time out there and what was the course like?**

NASA HATAOKA: Yes, that was my first visit to Pebble Beach. 7:00 a.m. tee time, so it wasn't windy as I expected, but it was just amazingly beautiful place to play golf.

**Q. And for Brooke, it's been well-documented about your friendship with Jin Young Ko. Can you reflect on that friendship and what it means to you, and any favorite moments with Jin Young that come to mind?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, she's a great person and a obviously a great player, too. I'm really lucky to have her as a friend. A lot of our friendship has been based on our Christian faith and being able to talk about that and kind of lean on each other in that way, which is really cool.

I think end of 2018 she gave me a head cover and we both had matching head covers for the following year. Just really fun things like that. But a lot of it is surrounded by our faith.

**Q. What were the head covers?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: So it had Jesus forever written

on it and it was a hybrid head cover, bright pink. It caught the eye. When you're out in contention and in those high pressure moments it was something nice to look on the and kind of remind yourself.

**Q. Any moments that come to mind of leaning on each other this you talked about?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I think we're always cheering for each other. She's had an amazing career out here, and it's really inspiring to watch her play and just try to be as good as she is.

**Q. Celine, were you out at Pebble Beach last week that you got to play all the there as well?**

CELINE BOUTIER: I think it was two weeks ago. Yeah, it was unbelievable. I did play on the other end of the day so it was the last tee times, I think 2:30. But it was just pretty amazing. I didn't expect it to be that good. I thought it was just going to be like a public course, to be honest with a view.

But no, it was an amazing course, so really excited about having the U.S. Open there.

**Q. Hyo Joo, just as we head into the meat of the season, and this will be something for all of you, you've had two wins the last two seasons. I know Brooke has had a streak like that before. Coming back here as the defending champion, playing good golf, what are you looking for from yourself as you try to defend this week?**

HYO JOO KIM: So I won the championship last year, and since then a lot of people have approached me and they said that I hope you will win again this year. So I will play hard as much as I can to live up to this expectations, but I just personally love playing in this championship and in Hawai'i.

**Q. Another player that had a pretty solid season last year was In Gee Chun. Got that major victory at KPMG. We are five, six events into the year. I know goals are kind of out the window at this point, but what are you looking for from yourself? Pretty big stretch of golf coming up with KPMG, International Crown, couple bigger events with LOTTE. What are some of your goals for the next six, seven weeks?**

IN GEE CHUN: First thing for the International Crown, I'm very excited to go there because I always very honor and very excited to play with the flag on my T-shirt. I hope I can help me team and my country proud.

And then, yeah, I wish I can make another win on the tour, so I always try my best, and now I want to make good focus on this week then we'll see where I am later.

**Q. Hye-Jin, obviously rookie last year. 2023 has been okay so far. What did you learn in your rookie season that you're going to carry with you? You had a lot of very close calls when it came to winning last year. We always saw you on the leaderboards over the weekend. Anything you might have learned that you'll carry with you as you look to chase down a win this year?**

HYE-JIN CHOI: As a rookie I had a satisfactory season last year. I did have lots of close calls, like you just said, but it was all very important learning experience for me because I focused on my practice, on how to grab an opportunity when it comes to me this season.

Also, I focused on how to make my shots more sophisticated. So it was a good learning experience.

**Q. I like that. Sophisticated golf shots are always a good thing.**

So a fun question to end. Start down here with Nasa. Is there any sort of food that you really try to latch on to? I know In Gee mentioned acai bowls. When you come to Hawai'i, what do you got to eat? There has to be something.

NASA HATAOKA: Same answer, but when it comes to Hawai'i, first thing that comes up is acai bowl.

**Q. In Gee, since you already answered that question I am going to ask something a little bit different. Would you rather be able to surf or do the hula?**

IN GEE CHUN: I never tried surf before, so I think I can do hula better.

**Q. Maybe we'll see that on Sunday.**

IN GEE CHUN: I wish.

**Q. Celine, anything that really stands out? I think acai bowls are taken at this point.**

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, mine is definitely like poke bowls. Yeah, I could pretty much eat it every day here and then be satisfied for the rest of the season. (Laughter.)

**Q. Hyo Joo, similar question. When you come to Hawai'i, anything you really got to eat or do? I know you got to do the hula a little bit last year. Anything**

**you really try to do or eat while you're here?**

HYO JOO KIM: I would eat anything, so it doesn't have to be acai bowls, but I did try it and I liked it in the past.

No special food that comes to me.

**Q. Brooke, same question, food question.**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I eat a lot of fish while I'm here. Got to be fresh because we're so close to the ocean. I just try a whole variety of fish and it's worked out well.

**Q. Brooke, two-time winner here. You've done the hula a lot. Any advice?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Zero advice, yeah. Not very good at that. Maybe someday I'll learn.

**Q. And then Hye-Jin, similar question. You've been here a couple times now in your second season. Anything you really look forward to I guess coming to Hawai'i?**

HYE-JIN CHOI: I do like acai bowls, but last time I was here I went up to North Shore and saw a lot of food trucks and I tried shave ice. That was very good. So I hope this week I will have time to go up there again?

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. So we'll wrap it up here. Just want to thank our players for joining us today, LOTTE, and play well this week and enjoy it out there. Thanks, guys.

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