

Honda LPGA Thailand

Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Pattaya, Thailand

Siam Country Club Pattaya, Old Course

Danielle Kang

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here with Danielle Kang, back at the Honda LPGA Thailand. I have my number here and it just went out of my brain. Your eighth time playing here in Thailand.

Welcome back. You just played nine holes in the pro-am. How does the course look out there?

DANIELLE KANG: The course looks very soft. The greens are a bit slower than normal, but the conditions itself is great. Just a little bit softer and greens are softer than Singapore.

I'm chipping better, which is nice.

Q. Is that something you were working on, something that's been in your mind?

DANIELLE KANG: No. I just chipped really bad last week. I think I made three doubles with just a wedge in my hand, so...

Sorry, one second. I just needed to know where my water bottle was. I can't lose that guy right now.

Q. Water bottle is very important.

DANIELLE KANG: That guy keeps cool, so I go, wait, did I leave it on the range? I was just thinking about it.

Q. Back to the course here. You said it's soft but you've been working on your chipping.

DANIELLE KANG: In the last few days, yes.

Q. What do you do when you're working on chipping?

DANIELLE KANG: I try and calibrate to how the golf course is playing, how the ball reacts. I try and check the shot, and if it checks up, how much it checks up with different clubs. I use a 58 all the way to 9-iron.

How much it's going to roll out depending on what shot I was hitting. Wanted to see how far I could throw it and spin, et cetera.

I'm just basically just calibrating, and I'm calibrated better than I did last year -- last week.

Q. Is that something you do during a practice round?

DANIELLE KANG: Every week, yes. Tuesday is the most important for me.

Q. Really?

DANIELLE KANG: So if I get the feel on Tuesday, Wednesday is my testing day.

Q. Okay.

DANIELLE KANG: It passed.

Q. Good. Glad to hear that. When you're over here, do you -- I know you do, you FaceTime and talk to Butch and the other coaches, but do you that at all while you're over here, or that just you and Ollie right now?

DANIELLE KANG: No, I definitely do. I used to call Butch at 2:00 am in the morning, 3:00 in the morning. I'm pretty sure at Shanghai, I think it was the first year. It might have been the first year. I called him at 3:00 in the morning and I said, Oh, were you asleep. He said, Yes, I was asleep. Not anymore.

It was right before I tee'd off and he helped me kind of dial my swing back in, and I went and ended up winning the tournament.

But I have not called him this last couple weeks. Swing feels fine-ish and I think I've learned enough where he's given me kind of a guideline on what to do.

But we talk almost every day. He just texted me, How is it going? How are you feeling? So no emergency calls.

Q. Good. We like that. We like that. Looking at some of the questions we've got popping in here on the Zoom, one from some friends in Malaysia. You played well on this side of world. You mentioned your wins in Shanghai, two Top 10s here at Pattaya. What's your mindset going into this week, especially looking back to what you did last week in Singapore?

You say you dialed in, but you had a good week in Singapore.

DANIELLE KANG: To be honest, last week was pretty sloppy. I made a lot of doubles. I chipped the shot into the water. I've never done that. I made doubles out of greenside bunkers.

I lost four golf balls in one round and I threw one in the water because I was mad, and I only had one left and I had to play 16 and there was water on the left on the tee shot and second, and I had to play 17.

I thought I hit my golf ball in the water on 16 and I was thinking, Ollie, can you please run up there and see if my ball is a safe because it's my last one. Seriously.

And in retrospect I scored really despite how many makes I made. Jin Young played phenomenously. She is world No. 1 because she just doesn't make mistakes. You look back, and very steady, very confident, and it's something I'm inspired by.

My motivation this week is to just kind of minimize mistakes. I know I'm hitting it well, putting well, chipping well, so being able to execute and letting go of what happened last week.

And I know it was still a good finish, finished 9th and I was happy with making a birdie on the last hole. Three-putting on a par-5 for par to making a bogey from two feet off the green, things like that, it adds up. That's the difference between winning and losing out here.

So with that being said, I'm hoping that I just make a little less mistakes. I hope that my game will back me up and play good.

Q. How does your game set up here for the Old Course?

DANIELLE KANG: I don't hit it as far as people believe that I do. It sets up where I really have to use my wedges. I have to dial in my wedges here. It's because there is a lot of reachable par-5s for long hitters and it's a lot of carries.

So a 235 carry with the bunker, and if you didn't hit it hard enough you have a slight downslope and you have to carry a bunker to get to the green, and you're always going to have that 25- to 40-yard pitch shot into the green.

So that's where it's going to be crucial for me to make my up and downs and to deduct my scores to birdies and et cetera.

And around the green there is a sneaky protection around the green where the rough is very puffy and the

ball sits. Those are the type of places I'm pretty good at, and I'm hoping I don't hit it there, but if it needs to be, I feel confident enough to make pars there, so that will give me confidence to be able to attack pins that some people might not.

At the end of the day you just got to play well. One disadvantage I have on this golf course might be that I don't hit it as far. Just got to bank on my wedges. Got to do what I got to do.

Q. Exactly. That actually lines up with something Brooke just said, that this just seems to be a good course for longer hitters.

DANIELLE KANG: She hits it far. Brooke hits it very far. Brooke outdrives me by like 20 and she's smaller than me. Every time I get paired with Brooke and May I go, Oh, God. Bye.

Yeah, Brooke gets it out there, so it does benefit a lot of long hitters. It's okay.

Q. Long hitting is not the only part of this game.

DANIELLE KANG: It's not, but sometimes in golf course setup, though, it's -- I believe that a reachable par-5 should be not a 3-wood. We don't hit it 250 yards like people think we do. We carry maybe 225, 230. If there is a 230 bunker carry, average tour player is not going to cover that. There is only a handful of really long hitters.

Sometimes people have the misconception of -- driver 3-wood is not a reachable par-5. It's an opportunity to reach. If you expect me to chalk line a 3-wood down there and cover 220, that's no realistic.

So I think me understanding that kind of setup and working on a lot of the pitch shots and wedges has really helped me play better on this tour, instead of sometimes dwelling on the fact that like why are we at a 247-yard par-4? I can't reach this.

So I just go left and then pitch back on.

Q. Focus on what you can do.

DANIELLE KANG: Yes, exactly. Sometimes you have to acknowledge it and let it go and play to your own strengths.

Q. Fun question here: Tell us something about your game that no one knows.

DANIELLE KANG: That know one knows about my game?

Q. Yeah. Is there something no one knows about your game?

DANIELLE KANG: What do you mean? Can you give me an example?

Q. Well, you just said I'm not as long as people think I am. Is there a particular drill you love to do or something you wish you could get better at?

DANIELLE KANG: At everything. I just want to make every putt and hit every green. Who doesn't, right?

I don't know. I don't know. I guess me saying I don't hit it as far, I just don't think we hit it as far as people believe -- set out to be, right? That's one.

And then, I don't know, I'm a good putter. I don't know.

Q. Okay.

DANIELLE KANG: I four putted last week and I thought it was hilarious. What are you going to do? I can't say I'm a bad putter because that happens.

I change putters a lot. I guess that's something people don't know.

Whatever I feel is what I play. Some people say if you putted with the other putter you might have played better; doesn't really matter.

Q. Could have, would have, should have.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, so I guess it's something you don't know about my game. I do change my putters a lot.

Q. Last question: It's already yesterday here, but it's International Women's Day.

DANIELLE KANG: Okay, happy International Women's Day.

Q. Yes. Who are some women who have inspired you on the course, off the course, out of golf? Who are some women that you look at that you've learned from?

DANIELLE KANG: Oh, my biggest women inspiration has to be my mom, without a doubt. On the golf course, off the golf course, as a person. She's one feisty, strong woman, and I love that about her.

She's independent. I mean, apple doesn't fall far from the tree. I'm feisty for a reason, but she's feistier than I am. She's helped me become the strong person I am today, and any time I want to act vulnerable or weak or sensitive she's always there to listen.

Handles all my dramas and listens to all my complaints, but she is the mom that will still tell me to get my head

out of my butt if I have to. She'll just say, Honey, you need to deal with this. It's an issue. You got to figure it out.

I need that sometimes and I love that about her, and so I would say that she's my biggest inspiration.

Q. We love your mama too.

DANIELLE KANG: My mom is special. She's funny. She's funny right now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Danielle. Have a great week.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you. Bye guys.

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