

Meijer LPGA Classic

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Blythefield Country Club

Jessica Korda

Nelly Korda

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center at the Meijer LPGA Classic. Jess and Nelly, first off, you guys have a special guest with you today, Sophia Howard from Hudsonville, Michigan.

Whoever would like to take the first one, go ahead. Just take us through how your relationship has started with Sophia.

JESSICA KORDA: Okay. Well, we actually got contacted by Dream On 3 Foundation, and I guess one of her dreams was to meet us, and we found a time where it worked for everyone, which was awesome.

Then we had a great day down in Concession at Bradenton, Florida. And then we got to talking and she was like, I'm from Grand Rapids, Michigan and she -- we were talking and I was like, Yeah, you should come up for the tournament if possible.

And then I thought it would be really cool not only just to play with us, but to see what it's like during a practice round out here.

THE MODERATOR: Nelly, if you can, take us through the Florida trip and what it meant to have her fly down and play with you guys and just to get to show her around the hometown.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it was a lot of fun. She was saying when she flew into Sarasota, Oh, my God this is the home of Nelly Korda, which I thought as really funny.

But, no, she's super nice, super spunky. We had a lot of fun at Concession. We played the par-3. We actually went into the bunker, too, tried to see if we could help her out.

JESSICA KORDA: Which found out today that open club face definitely doesn't work for her. You know, it was a good learning experience for all of us.



Q. How is her golf game?

JESSICA KORDA: It's good. I'm actually really impressed with her swing. You know, it just shows that if you put your mind to whatever you want, you can do just about anything.

NELLY KORDA: And she also plays softball, so I feel like it's little bit of a similar action, so. She's very athletic.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

Q. What's your best professional advice to her as she grows up to be like you both?

JESSICA KORDA: Have fun.

NELLY KORDA: Never lose the love.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, just have fun with it. You grow up too fast.

Q. What was it like for you to play with somebody who really idolized you and really looks up to you both of you?

JESSICA KORDA: It's really fun. I mean, honestly, we see the joy in it and kind of reminds you why you started doing what you -- this is the reason why I love playing golf.

Yeah, we were her, you know, when we were little. So one, getting to play with one of your idols was always something really, really cool. And then two, just seeing the love for the game, love for being out here and just seeing like these bright eyes and taking everything in.

The longer you're out here you kind of forget how cool it is. To see it from somebody else's perspective is really special.

Q. I was going to ask if that love reinvigorates you both, because this becomes a job after a while, you lose sight of that youthful exuberance. So every time you see something like that does that just further remind you how fortunate you both are?



NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I think you kind of realize. You're like, Oh, man, this is so cool we get to do this for the rest of our lives. Definitely kind of brings back the love and see how much joy is in their eyes. That smile she has when she steps on the golf course kind of makes you appreciate it a little bit more.

JESSICA KORDA: I think that's what we've missed too, not having fans or kids out week in, week out. Kind of took that a bit maybe for granted. But that was something that I always loved to see. I loved being able to interact with the kids and giving them the memory that they'll either hold onto for a while or something that they will come back to maybe the next year and you can see them after that.

So definitely something that we've missed.

Q. Can I ask you about the outfit? Was it an accident?

JESSICA KORDA: So she got -- last time we saw each other at Concession adidas gave her a nice little swag bag, and I guess that happened to be one of the outfits. I did not know this getting dressed today.

NELLY KORDA: We sent each other out an email.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, we sent each other a text of what we were wearing. So, yeah, that was funny.

Q. How much of a goal is it for you both to play in the Olympics?

JESSICA KORDA: Honestly, we're still really far away. We have a major coming up and I think -- and this event, so we still have lot of golf in front of us. Maybe ask us that question closer to it.

NELLY KORDA: A lot of Americans are playing well, so it's going to be a tight one.

Q. Nelly and Jess, this is for both of you. Heading into the 14th tournament of the year and we have had no multiple-time winners yet; 18 of the past 20 years have had someone win at least twice by this point. Why do you think there hasn't been one so far this year?

NELLY KORDA: Everyone is playing really well. I mean, competition out here is getting better and better every year. A lot of young girls are playing, a lot of first-time winners, so I think it's just golfers are getting better and better and more people are contending.

JESSICA KORDA: I concur. (Laughter.)

Q. Jess and Nelly, I wanted to go back to our questions about Sophia and your relationship with her. I know she's only 14, but do you text with her? Do you communicate, stay in contact? Have you stayed in contact since meeting in Florida or anything like that? How does that kind of piece of it...

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, we have a group chat.

JESSICA KORDA: We have a group chat and we've been in contact with her mom, Karen, about organizing all of this. Mind you, this only happened a couple week ago, so we kind of tried to pull everything together pretty quickly. With all the restrictions, too, we weren't sure, so we've been in contact trying to figure everything out.

Q. And just kind of another question about that, too. Do you maybe see Sophia as maybe an inspiration? I know you talked about her kind of refreshing to see the love of the game in someone so young, but is there maybe a sense of inspiration that comes from her that, you know, like someone that you're really excited to maybe play for or anything like that?

JESSICA KORDA: Honestly, I think it's just really inspiring to see her personality shine through and how motivated she is to play sports and interact with people. She's very spunky like Nelly said and very happy and definitely rubs off on you.

But I just think that it's a really, really cool thing to be around and just, I don't know, it just makes me happy to see somebody like that just thriving.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, whatever you put your mind to.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

Q. And then last question from me. Appreciate your time. Just how important is it to have cool relationships with kids and whatnot trying to help grow the game?

JESSICA KORDA: Inspire the next generation, right? That's the whole goal, is leave this place better than what we found it. They are the future. You want to be able to inspire them to go for their dreams, whether it's this or whatever their dream might be.

That's kind of our goal. Creating lasting memories, bringing people to the sport, I think that's all really, really important. This is just one way we're able to do it.

NELLY KORDA: I agree. You want me to just leave? (Laughter.)

JESSICA KORDA: No.

Q. I was just wondering, I know you have inspiration in your own family, but if you were her age or younger and could go visit a pro and do what she did with you who would that have been?

NELLY KORDA: I love Roger, Nadal, Tiger. I know Jess would say Lindsay Vaughn. There are a couple.

JESSICA KORDA: I'm going to stay quiet now.

NELLY KORDA: There are a couple. Probably Tiger.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I was lucky. I was actually at academy, so I had -- like Michael Campbell when around when I was younger. We had so many great college players around. Alex Cejka, he was a good friend of our dad so I played a decent amount with him every time he came home.

So I always had a little bit of -- you know, I just had people kind of looking after us.

NELLY KORDA: And you're constantly, like when you have people like that in your life I feel like you're constantly pushing yourself to be better.

JESSICA KORDA: When you were 14 you had me, babe.

NELLY KORDA: Great. (Laughter.)

Q. Any concerns about playing in Japan in the midst of COVID and with restrictions there?

JESSICA KORDA: We play all the time.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I think it's safe enough. I think if we're having the Olympics they're going through all the precautions. You trust their protocols.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

NELLY KORDA: So I think they've got it all figured out.

Q. Bummed the family can't be with you?

NELLY KORDA: Super, yeah, that's one of the downsides of it.

JESSICA KORDA: And then not being to watch any of the other sports.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, we can't even -- I think the golf

course is so far from the Olympic Village that we won't even get kind of like the Olympic experience, which kind of sucks but still super cool getting to represent your country.

Q. Last question. What would it mean to make the team for both of you?

JESSICA KORDA: I mean, it would mean a lot. Obviously every time you get to represent the United States is amazing.

NELLY KORDA: Stars and stripes.

JESSICA KORDA: Stars and stripes, exactly. But, you know, like I said, it's still a long way to go, so -- or not really, but it's two events left and two big events left, so we'll be kind of thinking about it I guess after.

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