

Meijer LPGA Classic

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Blythefield Country Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here with Nelly Korda at the Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give. Nelly, defending champion. This kind of kicked off a whirlwind for you last year.

Just walk me through this event last year, some of the good memories you had driving up here to Blythefield Country Club.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, can't miss Nelly Korda Drive. That's kind of cool. Yeah, last year I missed the cut at the Women's Open in San Fran. Was kind of bummed, actually really bummed after that.

Just kind of shifted perspective mindset-wise and kind of was expecting absolutely nothing going into this week, and played really well and then backed up with a major championship too, which was nice.

Q. I feel like a lot of players get one win and just frees them up to have another win. When you kind of got this win and that sigh of relief, did you feel kind of foot loose and fancy free heading into KPMG?

NELLY KORDA: I would say actually winning back-to-back was really the hardest thing to do because you're so mentally exhausted. And especially it being a major the next week I wasn't expecting anything. I was expecting myself to be absolutely dead.

I think I gave an interview last year when I won in Lake Nona and we played Ocala the next week, and I was so exhausted. I was like, I give props to the people that can win back to back. Obviously happened later on in the year, and that felt nice to be able to show myself that I can do that as well, play two solid weeks even though the mental exhaustion.

Q. Major reappearance this year at the U.S. Women's Open and had a really good finish there. How cool that was for you to come back in a major championship and play as well as you did on a course that's as hard as Pine Needles?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, for sure. I wasn't planning on the U.S. Women's Open to be my first event back. I wanted to come back earlier just to get a couple reps in before the major championship, because all the girls are in the middle of their season, they have a bunch of rounds under their belts, and I've been out for a couple months not even touching a club.

So to be able to show that to myself, that I can top 10 at major championship was good for me and so see what I've been working on is a step in the right direction.

Q. Obviously just being defending champion, how excited are you to make your second start of what's been kind of a crazy season -- or your third start here at Meijer?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I love this area. I love coming back. I don't think I've missed a year. So it's a very homey tournament and I enjoy being back.

Q. What do you like so much about Blythefield Country Club? Can be kind of short. Scores are low out here typically, but what are your thoughts on the golf course?

NELLY KORDA: I like the golf course. (Laughter.)

Q. I would hope so.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I've played pretty well every year. I think it suits a longer hitters as well. Definitely the scores are low. You have to figure out the greens because there is a bit of po in them as well.

So, yeah, I just like the layout and I like the whole town of Grand Rapids gets behind the event and I enjoy being here a lot.

Q. (No microphone - regarding majors.) Is it surprising how string the field is this week here in between two majors? So why did you chose to play here and why do you feel the field is so strong?

NELLY KORDA: As I said, it's an amazing event. The



whole town gets behind it. I love Grand Rapids, I love the city. We all like the golf course. It's always in really good condition.

It's great to get a couple rounds on a good golf course before a major championship, too.

Q. So talking about now next week and the memories from last year, your best memories of KPMG last year?

NELLY KORDA: Lifting the trophy. (Smiling.) Probably.

It feels like forever ago. The beginning of the year feels like forever ago now. I guess lifting the trophy on Sunday. That's about it.

Q. Okay.

NELLY KORDA: That's not bad, right?

Q. I was looking a little bit at your majors. You had top 10 in most of the majors. It looks like the only one resisting is Evian.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

Q. Is there a reason for that?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I think last year was my best finish and my caddie and I gave each other a high five because I never putt there. Like I'll hit it to like ten feet and can't make anything. If I finish inside the top 20 I'm happy there.

Q. So is that your plan for this year or you think you can do better?

NELLY KORDA: Honestly, my plan is to just try and play the best that I possibly can. I do that every week. As boring as it sounds, I take everything shot by shot. I try not put too much expectation on myself, try to enjoy it out there, and see how it goes.

If I put together a great round, great. If I don't, obviously I'm going to go in trying the hardest that I can -- every girl out there is trying the hardest that they can -- and see how it goes from there.

Q. What was your reaction when you saw Nelly Korda Drive?

NELLY KORDA: I was just like, oh, my God. (Smiling.) It was really cool. Definitely I think they do that with every defending championship. I think last year it was Brooke Henderson Drive.

But it's super cool. I know there is like this event that I played as a junior golfer, Scott Robertson, and every winner got a tree planted. So it's cool that this event does that, so it's kind of special and different.

Q. As you look back to last year and playing so well, what do you feel you did best?

NELLY KORDA: I just enjoyed myself on the golf course. I kind of soaked up -- I think this was like our first event with fans back as well last year, so I kind of enjoyed just having fans out. Had a lot of fun on the golf course and obviously played some good golf, too.

Q. Any particular part of your game that felt really strong?

NELLY KORDA: I think when you win everything clicks. I mean, even luck is on your side as well. Everything has to click for you to win an event.

Q. One last one. Players talk about lowering expectations maybe coming off injury or whatever, and often perform very well. What is it about that mindset that gets you in a spot to perform well?

NELLY KORDA: I think it's literally just not expecting anything honestly, having fun. I think when people get wrapped up in, oh, I need to play well, that's when like -- when they miss a shot they get so angry and they get so annoyed on the golf course that you kind of lose the mindset of just enjoying yourself and that you're doing this for a living.

Especially coming off an injury. I think you get kind of a different perspective when it's taken away from you as well. It's very humbling. And to make sure you're enjoying yourself out there. Expectations, I think anything can kind of take you off.

Q. Like you said, you went a couple months not touching a club. How long has it been since you went a couple months without touching a club before that?

NELLY KORDA: 15 maybe, 15 years old. Yeah, this was definitely my longest time without touching a club.

Q. Did you get bored?

NELLY KORDA: Oh, my God, I was so bored. I think a couple days of a my surgery actually I went down to watch my brother at the Miami Open. I told my parents, we're going. I am not staying in your guys' house. I was staying at my parents' house. I felt like I was back in high school.

When I got diagnosed with the blood clot I wasn't even allowed to go for walks, just I was just sitting on the couch watching a lot of TV. That's what I did.

Q. When you were diagnosed, obviously your goal was to get better. Did you look at this tournament and say, I really want to get back for this one? I would imagine it's a special thing to defend.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, when I got diagnosed I was still looking at Chevron because I wanted to play the last year there, but then my parents and doctor were like, are you crazy?

Honestly I was aiming for maybe a couple events before the Women's Open. This was always like I'm going to like I am definitely going to play U.S. Open and Meijer and KPMG. Those were events that I really definitely wanted to play.

I didn't really know until I saw my doctor and got a diagnosis, had my surgery.

But yeah, I love this event as I said before. I don't think I've missed year.

Q. How did Sebastian do when you saw him play? How many matches did you get to see him play in Miami?

NELLY KORDA: I think -- good question. I think he won three matches.

Q. Did you get to see all three?

NELLY KORDA: No. I just went for one. Actually, I went for two. He won one, lost the other, so I'm 50/50. That was my first time watching him win in person, too, so that was nice.

Like at an ATP event.

Q. I know we're here talking about you playing golf, but was that cool to see your brother succeed on that stage like that?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. I hope one day they're going to call me Sebastian Korda's big sister. Yeah, usually it was always Jessica Korda's little sister, and now I'm hoping to be Sebastian Korda's big sister as well.

Q. That's awesome. While you were off and now that you're back, what were some of the things that you learned? Did you miss the game and like you said kind of not maybe not taking it for granted? I know

you probably don't do that anyway, but now that you're back, what were some of the lessons that you learned and how are you applying them here?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, definitely it stung a good bit, especially watching Chevron being the last year there. I've always kind of played well at that golf course. That really stung.

So I watched a couple holes of my sister because she was in contention. So I watched a couple of her last holes on the last day and that's about it. That's all I could bear.

I think just a whole different perspective of taking care of my body, being a little bit more professional about the way I look at things, my body, listening to my body as well.

I listened to my body when I felt something was wrong and I immediately went to the ER. I can't stress that enough, because I was supposed to get on a flight the next day. If I flew with that who knows what would've happened. So just being a little bit more professional about the way I handle situations.

And, yeah, golf does humble you a lot. You're never at a really big high. It's a rollercoaster out here. Getting it taken away from you and spending a couple months without it really makes you appreciate it more.

Q. It sounds a little weird, but how do you not grow to resent a situation and just say, you know what, I'm going to be back to where I want to be? Just kind of working to get back there, was that difficult for you? How did you manage that?

NELLY KORDA: I think when you're going through something like that you'll have moments where you go through all the emotions, and making sure that you have good people around you to lift you back up when you're down is really important.

Q. Obviously you mentioned Grand Rapids shows up and shows out for this event. This year and I guess in previous years as well the champion gets to make a donation to a charity of their choice. What does that mean to you to be able to give back in that way?

NELLY KORDA: For sure. I always said when a tournament works with a charity or there is a charity behind it they attract a bigger crowd, a bigger meaning to it. I think that's really important to do with every event.

Obviously it feels good for yourself to be able to contribute to that, but I think it's just a good way for us to even just expand the game of golf as well.

Q. What's your favorite part about playing here at Blythfield on this course specifically, and what do you think is the hardest or trickiest part when you're getting ready to play here?

NELLY KORDA: The golf course or...

Q. Yeah.

NELLY KORDA: I just like the entire layout of the golf course. They changed it a couple times since I played, but I like -- I like a golf course that suits a longer hitter. There is a bunch of opportunities obviously to make birdies and eagles, and I feel like the scores are always super low.

I think that's fun. It's fun to do when you go from a really hard golf course like I played at U.S. Women's Open where I think the low scores -- or just under par was in the top 10, and you come out here and you have to shoot a good number every single day.

I think it's fun to get two different aspects of the game of golf where it's really hard and you have to push to make birdies.

So, yeah, I like the entire layout of the golf course. I think there is some tricky holes where you really have to think. I think 12, I really like that tee shot. 12, 13, 14, those are probably my favorite holes there.

But as I said, I really like the whole layout of the golf course.

Q. Now that you've had a year's time, when you had that whirlwind stretch last summer with great play, do you have kind of a new appreciation for how good that stretch was and all you accomplished in that short span?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. I think it's hard with golf because you're always kind of -- you don't let it settle in a sense. Like you don't take a couple months off. Like after the Olympics, runners, if they do well, take a couple months off.

With golf, we had British the next week. We were already looking at flights and getting ready for the next week. With golf it's a little different. It doesn't really kind of settle in. It's like, okay, what's next in a sense? That's always been kind of my mindset.

But I have had time to kind of look back, and even kind of -- I looked at a couple of highlights here and there and it is very special.

But in golf, you're constantly moving forward, looking at what's next. So it's kind of hard to sit back and reminisce. It's nice to, but I also like to look at what's ahead of me.

THE MODERATOR: I think we'll wrap it up there. Thanks Nelly, and good luck this week.

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