

Meijer LPGA Classic

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Blythefield Country Club

Jennifer Kupcho

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the online and outside Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give online media center. I'm pleased to be joined by the defending champion, Jennifer Kupcho.

I just want to start, welcome back to Grand Rapids. You seem to have quite an inclination to Michigan and winning here in Michigan. What's it like to be back here?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, it's great. I love Grand Rapids in general. My host family is great here. I love the city. It's just a really good feel, and I love the golf course as well, so it's exciting to be back.

THE MODERATOR: I know you have done some media leading up to this event. You talked about what this event meant to you. It was a dramatic ending, a playoff. When you think back to last year's tournament, what are some of the things that you remember most about being in that moment?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think in general, being in a playoff it's definitely really difficult. It's hard to come out. You have all kinds the nerves, but to come out and beat Nelly and Leona in that playoff, it definitely meant a lot to my game and myself just to prove that I'm ready to be out there, my game is there.

So it definitely meant a lot to me.

THE MODERATOR: It was your second win of the year, second one post your The Chevron Championship win as well. What did it mean to you to be able to grab that second title so quickly?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: It meant a lot. I think it was really hard after I won Chevron. I think growing up like I always want to be a major champion, so once I had done that, it's like, okay, well, what's next? Had a little bit of a funk there kind of leading up.

But, yeah, to come out and play really well against a really stacked field at the top the leaderboard, it felt really good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I spoke with Coach Kim from Wake Forest, and she mentioned that -- and obviously we've seen it from you before -- that you're quite the competitor, that you are so driven. Where does the drive come from and how excited are you to show the drive here at Grand Rapids?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I'm not really sure where it comes from honestly. I think maybe a little bit growing up. I obviously had an older brother. He's four years older and he played golf as well, so definitely competitive there.

But I'm definitely competitive in all aspects. I mean, in board games, in other sports, like I'm just a very competitive person.

So I think it's probably from my brother.

Q. And coming back here, I know first couple years throughout your career were building confidence, and then you win three tournaments last year, two of them here in Michigan. Where is your confidence now and coming back to defend your title for the second time this season? What are some goals that you have in mind? What's the feeling like?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think it's a little bit different compared to defending at Chevron. That was obviously a different golf course, so it's definitely a different feel doing that versus coming here. Playing well at Liberty National a couple weeks ago, coming into this event I feel a little bit better about my game after a rough start to the year.

So I'm excited to be back, and it's definitely comfortable to actually be on the same golf course defending.

Q. Have you played the course this week yet? What do you think of it? I don't believe we were as dry last year. We haven't had rain in a month or more. What have you seen from the course this week, if you've seen it?



JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I played yesterday as well as this morning. I think it's very similar. Yesterday or the day before it rained a lot, so it's hard for me to tell for sure whether or not it's actually firmer.

I do know in general the LPGA is setting up the golf courses a lot harder and firmer this year, so I'm sure it'll be very firm for the weekend.

Q. You talked a little bit about defending. It is different than the Chevron, like you said. Do you treat it any differently, or are you able to treat it like another tournament?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think I just come out and treat it as the same thing. I mean, practicing pretty much the same. Obviously there is a certain level of comfort being on the same golf course, but same preparation as I do every other week.

Q. I just got to ask, does a place like this become more special now that you're coming back as champion, or is it the same course or is it like, hey, I won here?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I don't really know for sure. I think it's probably about the same. I mean, obviously it's always special to come back to somewhere that you have won, especially a big tournament that I felt like I really fought really hard to win. It's definitely special to come back.

But I think just in general it's always special for me to come back to my host family and the city.

Q. I was going to ask you about your host family. I think you said last year you were playing Mario Kart a lot of the time.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah.

Q. Have you already gotten back on the Mario Kart with the family? Is it a different family this time?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Same family. They've grown a little bit from the Mario Kart and now it's baseball outside in the front yard, so I was playing baseball with them in the front yard yesterday.

Q. Do you have the same host family every time?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: My first year I didn't have a host family. I was in hotel with -- my parents were traveling with me, but since then, yeah.

Q. Are your parents here this year?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: They're not.

Q. What would it mean to win on Father's Day again?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: That would be awesome. It was really special last year with my dad being such a big person in my golf career.

Q. This is the first time I think we've seen you since Mizuho. What do you take from that experience and leading into this week?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think just my play at Mizuho, it was -- I mean, it was great to finally be back on top or near the top at least.

I've definitely had a rough start to the year, so to see my game progressing after all the hard work I put in, it's really exciting. I think I'm just excited to get back out there and see what happens this week with my game improving.

Q. When you talk about the work you have been putting in especially over the last few weeks, what exactly are you working on in your game? Is it more about just something with your game or is it mental as well?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think it's mostly mental, just feeling comfortable in the situation. At Mizuho I actually tried a different thing than I've ever done in my life of not looking at any leaderboards.

Coming off the last green on Sunday I had no idea where Rose was, so it was definitely very interesting.

I think it was just like try not, as I had missed a few cuts before and I was literally just leaderboard watching on the cut line, and that's not going to help anything.

So trying to fix that mentality and being comfortable being on top again.

THE MODERATOR: I feel like we have players on this tour, that that's what they're doing every single hole is looking up at the leaderboard.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: To strictly on that final round say, one shot at time, I'm not even looking, when you walked away did you feel any different?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think I was just like content with how I played because I was focusing on how I was playing



instead of comparing how everybody else was playing.

I think that's how I shot 3-under the last couple days, is -- I mean, girls played really well on Saturday, a lot better than 3-under, but to shoot 3-under on a Sunday when it was a really tough round, I just went out there with what I wanted to do in my mindset, trying to shoot a couple under, 3-under, and not seeing what everybody else is doing, and I think that's how I was able to get into the playoff there.

THE MODERATOR: I got to ask, when did you first come in contact with the host family, and what does basketball look like in the front yard?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I came in contact with them. Lauren Stephenson and actually Kristen Gillman my first year had a host family on my same street, so I went over to their house for a barbecue and then obviously they're neighbors.

That first year they were like, hey, do you want a host family? Our host family has someone for you. That's how we met, and it was like a month before. It's been great ever since.

Basketball in the front yard is -- I mean, it's very small but it is whiffle ball so we're not breaking any windows.

Yeah, it gets very aggressive. We are all very competitive, so...

THE MODERATOR: I got to ask, whose team are you on? Are you coming out on top?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Well, it kind of depends because we let the twin boys decide the teams and they're ten years old. They wanted to be on the same team so of course they didn't win. It was me and the parents against my husband, Jay, and the twin boys.

I'm very competitive, so that wasn't going to happen. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: When you're able to escape the course and have that environment, what more does that do not only for your golf game, but just in general when you're out here on the road knowing that there is a lot coming up this summer?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, it's definitely a different feel. I mean, I've compared it before to the -- some of the players out here, some of the moms out here going home to their kid. They're not thinking about golf.

This week is kind of what I assume that probably feels like

every week, is I have something bigger and I'm hanging out with my host family and building that connection and just relationship. It's just really special for me.

Q. Just a final question. (Regarding dingers?)

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I did not, no.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for coming, Jennifer.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Thank you, yep.

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