

Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Midland, Michigan, USA

Midland Country Club

Minjee Lee

Yuka Saso

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the virtual media center here at the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational, our first team of the day coming through. What is the team name for the week?

YUKA SASO: Our team name is Team Nations.

THE MODERATOR: I like that. I want to know what happened. I know Yuka, you decided you wanted to play this event. How did this partnership come to be?

MINJEE LEE: Well, at KPMG my previous partner decided that she didn't want to play or something came up, so I just became available, and I was looking for a partner, and I guess Yuka was sort of 50/50 if she was going to play.

I asked her, and in a couple days, she said, Let's play. So here we are now.

YUKA SASO: Who would say no, right? It's Minjee.

THE MODERATOR: Have you guys played practice rounds together before? How have you grown into this partnership since you decided to become a partnership?

MINJEE LEE: We played together --

YUKA SASO: We played at Hana Bank.

MINJEE LEE: We played together at Hana Bank but we played together at U.S. Open practice round last year.

THE MODERATOR: What did you walk away, Yuka, from that practice round back at the U.S. Women's Open, do you remember?

MINJEE LEE: She played better than me.

YUKA SASO: She was so good. Like controlling the shots

and everything. Yeah. Having Minjee on my side is really good.

THE MODERATOR: Yuka, you're coming off a top-5 performance at last week's Marathon LPGA. Did you ever experience that kind of weather delay that we had last weekend?

YUKA SASO: It was canceled.

MINJEE LEE: Did it happen anywhere else or just that time?

THE MODERATOR: Did that ever happen any other tournament you've been a part of?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, in Japan there's a lot of because the rain in Japan is pretty bad, too.

THE MODERATOR: I know, Minjee, you were in London. Were you keeping track of how your partner was doing by any means?

MINJEE LEE: You know, not really because in London we played in a teams event but it was like three pros and one amateur, so it was like six-hour rounds, but it was really fun. It just took a lot out of me those three days, and a little bit with the jet lag, I was sleepy. Just played, and then it was a really quick trip.

Yeah, I just didn't really get the time to keep up with the scores on the LPGA.

THE MODERATOR: Minjee, you played in this event in 2019 with Jin Young Ko and you both did relatively well here. What's it like to be back at Dow?

MINJEE LEE: It's really exciting. Obviously with a different partner, but I know it's going to be a really exciting week. I really enjoy playing this kind of format. We can really feed off each other's energy and build a little bit of confidence.

I think, yeah, I'm just really excited for this week and excited to be back.

THE MODERATOR: Yuka, where do you think your



strength is in this partnership when you guys go through both formats this week?

YUKA SASO: My strength? What's my strength? Driving?

MINJEE LEE: You've got muscles.

YUKA SASO: I don't. On the tee, I think, yeah. Just on the tee. She's going to do the rest.

MINJEE LEE: I can answer that better. You know, she's got really accurate iron shots. She's a really good putter. She hits it really long. She's young, fearless. I know she's going to do well. I'm just going to go along for the ride.

YUKA SASO: That's me.

Q. Yuka, what is your experience in alternate-shot or four-ball in these types of formats? What else have you played in?

YUKA SASO: I've never really had a chance to play team events. Maybe a few times playing alternate and best ball. But from the records, I've been playing okay.

Q. What were those events? Which events?

YUKA SASO: Patsy Hankins Trophy. It's Asia Pacific versus Europe. You know it?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I didn't play, but...

YUKA SASO: It's pretty new.

Q. I know you got Stacy Lewis's autograph last week on a glove. Have you asked for Minjee's? Who else have you asked for so far?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, she got my ball.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I already did.

Q. You also played with Inbee and got a glove from Inbee, too, right?

YUKA SASO: Yeah. Should be a secret, but I'm trying to get as much as possible because I have a chance to get one, so yeah.

Q. What do you do with them? Where do you put them, your collection?

YUKA SASO: It's in my bag. Everything is in my bag. Not the golf bag but my backpack.

Q. Minjee, exciting Sunday for the family --

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

Q. Are you inspired by your brother's play, and I assume you've talked to him?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I have. You know, I think just seeing him emotional and seeing after he won how much it means to him, I think it just -- I got a little bit emotional, as well, just seeing him like that. I think I drew a little bit of inspiration from him just grinding it out there and coming out on top.

Yeah, it's our time. It's our time.

YUKA SASO: I was watching that, too. It was pretty good.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, it was pretty cool.

Q. Who else do you want an autograph from, Yuka?

YUKA SASO: I'll keep it secret for now.

THE MODERATOR: She's mad at me because I mentioned the Inbee one and I told her I wouldn't mention it.

YUKA SASO: She lied.

Q. This is your first time at Midland Country Club, Yuka. What do you think of the course so far?

YUKA SASO: It's long, a lot of water. Yeah.

Q. How do you think it'll set up for your game this week?

MINJEE LEE: Good, very good.

YUKA SASO: Very good, yeah. Very good.

Q. Minjee, I love the Team Nations team name here because you both are on track to go to the Olympics this year. What's it like that both of you are going to be competing here with this and then be able to compete also in Japan in just a few weeks?

MINJEE LEE: You know, representing my country is always really high on my very important list, so I'm just really humbly honored to be able to represent my country, and obviously the Olympics was really high on my list to get on that team.

Yeah, I'm just really excited obviously to be here and to be

able to go to the Olympics.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, same.

Q. Yuka, I think you just mentioned, you watched Min Woo win. How cool was that for you?

YUKA SASO: They had a rain delay, also, because we were in Marathon and we were waiting for like five and six hours and they had a delay, too. I saw his last putt. They had a three-way playoff, too. It was pretty cool, and he was -- you could really see it, he was really happy making that putt.

I hope we can have that putt, too, this week.

Q. Minjee, how excited is Min Woo for the Open this week, his first performance in a major championship?

MINJEE LEE: I know. I mean, I imagine he's going to be over the moon. First major, first British Open, so I'm sure he's going to have a really great experience.

Q. Have you given him any advice on British Open golf or major championship golf, Minjee?

MINJEE LEE: No, but he's had plenty of experience on those links courses over the years, obviously playing in Europe. I think he knows what it's all about. He's played on the PGA TOUR. He's been around a lot of crowds and that kind of atmosphere, so I don't think it's anything new to him. It's just if he can -- I think if he can keep himself in the game and just like keep his nerves like under control really.

Q. Yuka, going on the Olympics thing, I noticed you're not playing in Evian. Can you talk about how you decided your schedule leading up to Tokyo?

YUKA SASO: Yes, so I was supposed to play Evian, but with all the schedule, all the rules, it kind of made me hard to play in Evian. I just focus on the Olympics and then play Evian next year.

Q. What were the rules particularly? You mean for quarantining in Japan?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I wanted to go home first, but if I go to Evian I wouldn't be able to.

I wasn't planning to stay here in America for two months. I just want to see my family first and rest, yeah.

Q. Winning a major kind of changed your schedule quite a bit, huh?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, a little bit.

Q. Not in a bad way.

YUKA SASO: I'm grateful that I was able to play a few tournaments here on the LPGA.

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