

Dow Championship

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Midland, Michigan, USA

Midland Country Club

Lydia Ko

Danielle Kang

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, very pleased to be joined by Danielle Kang and Lydia Ko here at the Dow Championship. Third time playing together. What is it about playing with Lydia and Lydia for you playing with Danielle that makes this week so enjoyable for you?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, last year was obviously our second time playing. I thought we had a lot of fun and a lot of good laughs. I don't think we necessarily came into the week playing that solid golf, but it was a huge kind of like reset for me.

I think you kind of realize how important the people around you truly are, and I've obviously known Oni for a really, really long time, so just for us to enjoy or time out there and not get 100% I guess pulled away from the golf, but I think there were a lot of other variables and we had a great time with our caddies.

In general I think we were just having a good time that the golf kind of sorted itself out. There was no real other partner that I would've wanted to play with this week. I think we had already decided to play this year together even before the week had finished.

I remember she holed a birdie putt on the last, which was on the 9th hole, for us to make the cut, and I was really sad like before she had made the putt because I didn't want the week to be done.

When she made the putt I was so happy we could spend another couple days together doing that. She was clutch and got it done for us.

DANIELLE KANG: She birdied the hole like two before, so we were leading up there. Yeah, like Lyds said, I think there was a lot of momentum change for us starting like last year. Lydia has been telling me that was a big shift for her. For me obviously as well there was a big shift.

It's like people only see results on how we play and stuff,

but I don't know, I really appreciate Lydia just in life. If I can play with her every week -- we've been looking forward to playing this one since last year, so I've never had somebody like commit, hey, by the way, Dow, this is the date. We're going here. Oni, you need to sign up. I'm like, oh, my -- schedule is not out yet.

So I think you have a really good brand ambassador at this point. Dow, like we need to play. I'm grateful for that. She even caddied for me earlier this year. I didn't post or anything like that. It was just so fun to play with her. And it's not just the result, right? I had such a good time.

I forgot who we all had. Last year I had one of my best friends on the bag for a week so the four of us had a really good time. It's going to be a really good week.

Q. Obviously you have great chemistry of the course. What's it like playing a round with Lydia and Danielle?

DANIELLE KANG: For me it's literally hanging out with my sister. I know I say that, like, oh, my baby sister, and people keep saying, why do you call her your baby sister? Because she's literally my baby sister. I've known her since she was a baby.

It's just another day I get to hang out with Lydia. I sometimes see everyone is asking, hey, don't you guys play practice rounds together, don't you do this, evens or odds? Honestly, she's Lydia Ko. She doesn't need to play even or odd. She can play whatever she wants. We can talk about whichever ball, so that's the fun of it all.

I was telling someone, I think it was Somi that was like, oh, who are you playing with. I was like, Lydia. She was like, oh, that's a scary team. I was like, well, we didn't mean to be scary. Lydia is scary right now. She was like, oh, I wonder how dynamic works and talking about who picks what putt. Oh, no. I'm like, Lydia, you got that, right? I'm just going to go over here.

I think there is a lot of easiness to it.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I mean, I think there is a lot of trust. You know, it's not our first rodeo. It's not like oh, what's



your favorite color. We don't have to do all the basic questions.

Yeah, I'm sure there are a lot of partners that played together, but I think we have done a lot of that, and I think because we can almost stick to our own schedules and just focus on us and just try and be the most prepared ourselves, I think that's the best we can do at this point.

I think our chemistry, the years have kind of sorted that part out. That's why I think in team kind of formats it's just great playing with a person that you just genuinely enjoy being around.

Because, I mean, if you're out there for five hours and you don't really know this person or you're uncomfortable or you're worried this person is going to be mad if you hit a good shot. Yeah, I want to hit a good shot for us and for Oni, but I think it's greater than that.

I think it's so easy, like she said. It was so much fun last year. Even though we've known each other since I was like 15, it's crazy because I felt like we got even closer through that week.

I'm excited to spend this week together.

DANIELLE KANG: We cried. Making the cut we cried. It wasn't that we were so happy we made the cut. We cried because we didn't want the week to end.

Both of us haven't felt like that about golf in so long. I can't speak for you, but like it was just oh, my gosh we get to play two more days with each other. So that was so cool.

LYDIA KO: Yeah.

Q. How do you complement each other's games on the course?

DANIELLE KANG: Honestly, I don't think she does anything wrong ever, right? She doesn't think I do anything wrong ever.

So we don't ever really say sorry. I'll go, what was that? If the ball just jumps she goes, huh. For her it's never my fault and I never think it's her fault. I think that's kind of how we kind of see life. Something goes wrong, it's never her fault.

So there isn't -- I played a lot of different team games and I don't want it to be taken the wrong way, but she's my favorite to play with. It's because you think about certain team games and I've always felt like I had to be the like the veteran or like be that like rah-rah, all this stuff.

But then like you just have -- I have like a nice just --she just stands there and she's like a rock, like a nice anchor. I look over and she goes, you got that. I'm like, yeah, you're right. And I'm like 185 yards away. I hit it and she goes, see. I hit it. She goes, see, chill.

I think that's how she complements me, just the trust.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, for sure. Even if I do hit a bad shot Oni always goes, that's not your fault. Did you see that bounce.

DANIELLE KANG: Worst bounce ever.

LYDIA KO: That started left, but, okay. I think we're just so easy that if we do hit a miss-shot it's like oh, we were probably going to make a bogey at some point so we're just going to make it on this hole and move on. I think that's a really good mindset to be in.

That frees us up and it's not as rigid and you're not playing the game for somebody else. Obviously there are tactics around it, but that was kind of the cool thing about caddieing for Oni a couple months ago, that I feel like I knew her and trusted her that I was like, hey, you got this.

I truly believed that she could pull off the shot, and whether it ends up being a good shot or not is secondary. I think that trust is really important and I think that's more valuable than exactly what kind of form we're really coming into.

I think that's why we can kind of bring out the best in each other. It's just another day out at the golf course.

DANIELLE KANG: At this point in our career I think I would have to thank Lydia for how far I've come I guess. There is not much I can explain what goes on behind the scenes, but, I don't know, it's been a lot. Lydia has been my rock for years now at this point.

Yeah, there was a shift -- we got closer and closer but she caddied for me, instilled certain confidences. I have gone through certain scar tissues because of her. She's watching every round. I know she's playing but she's watching how I'm playing in the best way possible.

Even this week I wish I was at a place where I could be her teammate and sometimes I think she's there to guide. I already know that. I'm here to lean on her and that's kind of the balance this week.

But I have no -- this is going to sound so selfish, but I'm so excited to lean on her. She's like, I don't know, that bright light. She's like, all right, I got you. I'm going to do

whatever I can to get whatever we need to get for you this week. So it's like she's playing for me and I can see it.

I can't even be like, I'm playing for Lydia this week. No, Lydia is playing for me this week. I'm really thankful for that. I know she has a busy month coming up.

But, I love you.

LYDIA KO: (Heart arms.) Got 18 holes done today. I'm ready.

DANIELLE KANG: She's like grinding right now. I go Lydia, just play like you play every week. Like stop. Honestly, our 36 hole caddieing was the best, quickest 36 holes we played, too.

LYDIA KO: I realize that I take our caddies for granted, but it was so much fun. You know, I think we both have gone through our own ups and downs. I think a lot of times people only see what is shown through camera or social media; I think there is a lot more to it.

We're human beings. Tough times are really hard. I think Oni has always been there for me during my difficult times, whether it's golf related or not, and I think just to have those kind of people in your life, you realize there is not many of them that actually truly care.

I think that -- like I think when we're not playing as good we think that we've lost it, but -- which I felt that so much, too.

But I think once you've had it it's really never gone. It's just about bringing it back. Even though -- I was really hoping for Oni to make the Open qualifier a couple months ago, I thought she played great.

Sometimes the score doesn't show. I think that's why it's going to be good, because we can just feed off each other.

Q. Following up on that, you two are playing for each other, for the team. Here in Midland, this is one of the LPGA events that's more of a community-driven event, a community-based event where this entire city basically shuts down and comes to see you guys. Playing in a team environment where you're playing for each other but you got the support of all the fans out here this week, how does that help energize you guys on the first tee Thursday and you see the lines of fans that are out here this week?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think there has typically been a lot of juniors that come out and obviously this is summertime so school is out; a lot of dad's that bring out little girls, et cetera.

So I think we've always had a pretty good crowd. It's not a big town so I feel like the whole community really gets into it. I also heard we are playing for a charity this week, and for us it's the Special Olympics. For us both being an Olympian, too, I think it's great that we're all kind of in this together.

But, no, tournament isn't only made up of only the best female golfers. It's the volunteers that get involved, sponsors, and really the community. I think there is a huge difference between us playing at golf courses or in areas where they're kind of tired of us coming back because we've been there so long or we're not really the big thing anymore.

I feel like this is one of the places where they are excited to see us back every year. I think the fans show it. I think it energizes us, and every good shot, getting the clap, you don't realize how big it is until it's gone. We've had to play in circumstances where we had no fans, so to see them out here is really cool.

Hopefully we can showcase some good golf and a lot of birdies and eagles.

Q. Danielle, same.

DANIELLE KANG: What she said, yeah.

Q. Just about playing here and amongst the big crowds and the big fans here this week.

DANIELLE KANG: I have not played in front of a crowd in a long time, so that's a little bit different for me. I think I know that people are going to come watch and I hope they do, especially I'm playing with Lydia, and like you said there is Special Olympics going on.

I'm going to make a joke and be like I played with Inbee Park, So Yeon, you, and somebody was like, oh, you have ten major championships in this group. I'm like, I've won one. I was like, oh, there is seven and two.

So we have three Olympic medals in this group; they're all Lydia's. That's actually going to be my joke of the week. Oh, yeah, we're two Olympians. We have three medals between us; it's all Lydia, and then comma, parentheses.

I saw a lot of juniors out there on the driving range today. That was a lot of fun, seeing kids all involved. They're getting actually really good. I can see the game is growing.

I really appreciate the volunteers and everyone is so excited. I can see the excitement. Speaking for me, I



hope that maybe I'll ride off it and be able to kick back into that mode. Just haven't been in that mode for so long.

If anything, I couldn't be in front of a crowd. I couldn't be in front of cameras. I can't be that person that people expected me to be because at the end of the day I'm not being that player anymore.

So hopefully maybe it'll trigger something. Yeah, I think like I would be more of a fan as well this week being like, go Lyds.

She'll just be like Oni, you got this. The best part of me comes out when I'm playing with her so I'm excited to play fun, happy golf.

Q. Last one from me. Talk about the golf course a little bit. Lydia said you walked 18 holes today. How does it look? How is it set up? How is it set up for your team play this week?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, obviously it's very different to what we came off last week, but the golf course really hasn't changed much in the years that we have come. But I do find it a little bit firmer than previous years, so I am hitting shorter clubs into greens. Unless I've all of a sudden got stronger in the last year, which I doubt it.

Yeah, I think because it's firmer it's obviously -- and with pins being tucked and being in corners, it might be a little bit more difficult to get to. I think it's going to play a little bit more fun being this way, and hopefully the wet weather kind of stays away and the course can dry out.

I think it will make the golf course tougher at some point because there will be a lot more run-outs that come into play as well.

DANIELLE KANG: No, I'm okay.

Q. What's the team name? I believe it was Team Budha&Kai last year.

DANIELLE KANG: I know what name I'm going to put on now.

LYDIA KO: We did Two Peas in a Pod first year. Last year it was my idea of our dogs, but I'm not the creative one, so...

DANIELLE KANG: I have one. We haven't decided yet, yeah.

LYDIA KO: It's a secret.

DANIELLE KANG: It's nothing that creative. I just was going to tell her I thought about a name.

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