

Cognizant Founders Cup

Sunday, October 10, 2021

West Caldwell, New Jersey, USA

Mountain Ridge Country Club

Jin Young Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here with Jin Young Ko who you just defended your title at the Cognizant Founders Cup and earned your tenth LPGA Tour victory. How proud are you right now of what you just accomplished?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, this win is my tenth career win, so this is really special.

Two years ago I won this tournament again, and -- tournament, and I waited since the two years from the original to here.

And I got a lot of the pressure on the course. I knew I'm defending champion and I knew like 60s score beat Annika's record and wire to wire, so I got -- I had a lot of pressure on the course today.

Weather wasn't good, too. I needed to just bogey-free and lots of birdies, so I didn't look at the scoreboard whole way, whole day, and I just check the scoreboard on the 18th green.

My caddie told me, Did you notice? No. Yeah, I made it, and I'm so happy right now. Finally I can go back to Korea for tomorrow.

Q. I know you're very excited and we're what's keeping you from getting to your flight. We'll talk fast. You said you felt a lot of pressure, but you sure didn't look like you were playing with a lot of pressure. 18-under. You seemed very comfortable out there on Mountain Ridge. Did it feel comfortable to you?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, course, like I got a lot of pressure but I tried to be calm and like patient and just comfortable on the course.

And then I love this course. This course is like in Canada, like two years ago. I won the tournament bogey-free round and like amazing play. Like this course, it was same. So I love this course and fairways and greens are really clearing perfectly, yeah. I'm so happy.

Q. You said outside you thought your putting was the strength of your game. Were you really focusing on your putting this week?

JIN YOUNG KO: I think so. And I changed this putter five or six weeks ago in Korea, and I use this putter four weeks in a row from the Portland and here. I got two wins with this putter and two Top 10s, so, yeah, I think I will love to this putter. (Smiling.)

Q. I think this putter is your favorite. So two wins and two Top 10s with the putter, but also with your mom and dad here. Does it feel more special to do it with them around?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I think they will travel with me to whole thing. (Laughter.) But I don't know.

Q. Your good luck charms.

JIN YOUNG KO: I know, but I have dog. My dog is in Korea, so the dog needs to my parents.

Q. Yes. You're happy to share your parents with the dogs. But they can still be your biggest fans, right?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

Q. Absolutely. You've had the lead all week here at Mountain Ridge, and when you do have it like by such a wide margin, how do you stay in the present and just focus on yourself?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I had same situation as wire to wire when I play in KLPGA. I made a lot of wins from wire to wire, so I know how much pressure on me on the course.

But so played well and I just tried to focus on my body and my swing. I don't want to look scoreboard and the other players.

Yeah, I'm just talking my myself on the course.

Q. Do you feel more confident in those situations



rather than when you have to chase the leader?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I think so. I love to -- the other players follow me and I was top and I had to more than focus the other players, so I love that.

Q. Congrats, Jin Young.

JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you, Beth.

Q. What was the model of the old putter? What is the model of the new putter? And why did you choose this one?

JIN YOUNG KO: I can't remember old putter because I change a lot, so I don't know what was my ex-putter.

New one is Titleist Phantom X 5.5 with (indiscernible)^ grip 2,0.

Q. What made you pick that?

JIN YOUNG KO: I don't know. Just, well, I went to the Titleist shop when I staying in Korea and I found the putter and I tried and I said, Can I get this, and they said, yeah, go for it. So I got this one, and I used this putter from four weeks ago to this week.

Q. So I want to ask you, speaking of being in Korea, can you take me through the decision of skipping a major at Carnoustie to take more time off after the Olympics to set yourself up for this stretch and maybe why that was important?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I needed to rest after the Olympics because I got a lot of pressure before the Olympics because, you know, Korean team is really difficult to get in the Olympics.

So I had a lot of stress and a lot of pressure, and I change the swing coach after the Olympics so I need to fix something of my swing and putting.

So I skip the major, AIG major tournament, and I was really sad. I really want to play British Open because I love to play British, but I need to take time with my swing coach and with this new putter.

Q. And is there one thing in particular that the swing coach helped you with that you feel has really put you on this phenomenal stretch of golf? One swing thought?

JIN YOUNG KO: I had a lot of problem of my swing so I can't pick just one thing. (Laughter.)

Well, just basic one. Just keep my spine or just don't move to right to left.

Q. So you were kind of swaying a little bit?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, before the Olympics. Yeah.

Q. Okay, my last question: How important are those records to you? You broke one of Tiger's records a couple years ago. What does it mean to you?

JIN YOUNG KO: I don't know. I just play -- I just focus by myself. The other, like Tiger's or Annika Sorenstam, I just play by myself and with those amazing professional girls. I don't know what happened to me. (Laughter.)

I don't know. I just have fun. I'm just trying to have fun on the course with my caddie and the other players. Yeah.

Q. Regarding Annika's record, have you ever had any interaction with her? Have you ever met, and was she someone whose game you looked up to?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I met her 2018 in Palm -- no, Naples, the ceremony.

The Rolex Awards?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, Rolex Awards, and she get me the trophy and watch, and we talk -- was talking just a little bit. Just few things, like you're amazing she said and. Me? I just tried my best.

And nothing else.

Yeah, she inspire me a lot and she has a lot of record. Even major, wins for major as well. I want to following her. Too many gaps between her and me.

Q. And out on the course today, I know you said before that you're just trying to have fun out there, but was that record on your mind or were you just trying to finish up and get the win?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, my goal was bogey-free round today and hit the greens a lot, 18 greens, and putter -- putting is under 30 average.

That was my goal. But I don't know I made. I don't know. I hit some drivers to rough, so I think I didn't.

THE MODERATOR: You had 27 putts today.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I made it, my goal. Yeah, I did.



THE MODERATOR: I wanted to note, while the record is certainly Annika at 14, we realized that So Yeon Ryu also had 14 consecutive rounds at 60. So you're joining your countrywoman there. You and Inbee and Jeongeun Lee6, so many strong players from Korea. How proud are you to be part of that group that's so well representing your country?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, yeah, I'm so proud of Korean professional golfers, even Se Ri and me, So Yeon, 6, or the other Korean players, Hyo Joo, Sei Young. So I want to just -- I want to like -- I want to just better, to be better with those girls, and I just want to following Inbee and So Yeon and be amazing.

So, yeah. They're a lot of inspire me, and when I grow up I watch Se Ri on the TV, and, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: One last question in English. I just want to say Cognizant has done so much for this event: made it the biggest purse outside of the majors and CME; brought us here to Mountain Ridge, which has some of the best food we've had all year. Overall, how big has this week been and how important is it to have a company like Cognizant supporting?

JIN YOUNG KO: I want to say just thanks for Cognizant for being a new sponsors in this tour. They made a lot of prize money for this week, and we really proud of playing Cognizant with the Founders Cup. And yeah, the food was amazing. I had a lot of cookies for this week. (Laughter.)

And brownies as well. And I love to eat corned beef. I had a lot of beef and turkey this week. Like salad was really good.

I'm hungry right now. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. Congratulations.

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