

Cognizant Founders Cup

Sunday, May 14, 2023

Clifton, New Jersey, USA

Upper Montclair Country Club

Jin Young Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with our Cognizant Founders Cup champion, Jin Young Ko. Take us through your day today. It was one of your best rounds of the week. How was the golf course playing? How did you manage to shoot a 5-under?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I play really, really good today. It's too windy, was too windy out there, so I thought if I play really well I could chance to win.

So I really focus myself and focus on my like shot by shot every holes and don't look the scoreboard and just think -- just do it what I can do. Just don't think about the other players.

Last night, this morning I watch something highlight that was Sung-jae Im, he's PGA Tour player. He's Korean. He played Korea tournament this week and he won. He was five shot behind the lead and he made it to win, so that was inspire me.

Yeah, I was four shot behind lead, but if I really play well like Sung-jae I could chance to win, so I really focus myself, yeah.

And, yeah, this golf course is not easy. Fairways are narrow and greens are firm and windy. But I shoot really, really good and, yeah I feel really good and it's honor to get third trophy Cognizant Founders Cup.

Yeah. (Smiling.) Can't wait to play next year.

Q. Amazing. That last putt on 18 to force a playoff...

JIN YOUNG KO: Before the playoff?

Q. Before the playoff. What did you feel when it went in? I know you are tired, but...

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I thought I would make it like because I had three birdies at 18 hole the last three days, so, yeah, I felt, yeah, I can make it, and I made it.

Q. Uh-huh. And through the playoff, on the playoff hole, can you talk us through some of your thoughts and processes there to get the win?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I didn't warm up so my body was little chilly. The tee shot was I had 4-iron, but the distance like shorter than 18 holes, maybe 20 meters, shorter than usual.

So I got 8-iron. It was tough to play. The pin was left. If hit really well I thought through -- in the bunker.

So, yeah, I did best myself. Yeah, and Minjee, Minjee has chance to make birdie, but, yeah, I was little luckier than her.

Q. Yesterday you talked about how you had so much time before the round. You still had a god amount of time today. Were you able to fill that time a little bit better today?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I thought, one more day to go and I will leave to Texas. So, yeah.

Well I slept really well. Like before yesterday I couldn't sleep well because, I don't know, if body feels really tired sometimes couldn't get sleep well.

Last night I sleep well, so I felt -- yeah, my body feels okay and just little less practice before the tee off and just eat well. That's it.

Q. And this is the third different course where you won this event. What does that mean to you, to just keep destroying all these courses and figuring it out and surviving in the toughest conditions?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, that's interesting, because 2019 was Phoenix; 2021 was the other course. I played this course last year, but I played -- wasn't good.

So I thought, yeah, this golf course really tough. Just I thought before this week I thought, oh, just make the cut and just finish top 10 or 20.



But I made it. Surprise.

Q. And you had a good amount of people following you throughout the final round. What does it mean to have all that support behind you?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I always thank to all my fans out there, and especially in New Jersey. Lots of Koreans lives here so a lot of Koreans out there. They always saying, you're so pretty. You can do it. Like this.

So, yeah, they make me cheer up for the four days so I really thank to all my fans.

Q. How important was your iron play today? Left yourself a lot of makable putts and obviously made a bunch. How important was it to leave yourself makable putts?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, was too windy so I thought -- I really focus my iron shot because the greens are firm and it's really hard to judge distance on the green.

I putt very well the last three days, in the last two weeks or three weeks, so, yeah, it was hard to focus my game, but my irons always getting better and better.

So, yeah.

Q. Were the greens a little faster today because the wind drying them out?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I think -- the first hole I chipped behind the green and I thought it would landing like ten meter short of the hole, but I land it like 15 meter short but it like release a lot.

So I felt, yeah, today greens are really fast, so just think about the speed on the putting on the green. I made very well today.

Q. I loved your celebration on 18 the first time around for the playoff. I want to ask, you know, we're coming into the heart of the season with a bunch of majors rolling in. What will be your schedule leading up to the majors? What do you plan to play on in the next few weeks before KPMG?

JIN YOUNG KO: I'm going to skip to play match play and I will play Mizuho and ShopRite, and then no Meijer and KPMG.

Q. Got you. What are you most pleased with in your game right now heading into major season?

JIN YOUNG KO: My shot was fine this week but I didn't feel comfortable, and so my coach will coming to Texas maybe next Saturday and we are going to practice together, and he will make me better than the last three weeks.

But not today. Yeah, he's coming to Texas, so, yeah. That's my plan.

Q. So you're going to focus on ball striking with him? That what you mean?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah. Always, yeah.

Q. Always, okay. Thank you.

JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you.

Q. Jin Young, you mentioned earlier that you won 2019, 2021, 2023. Could you compare yourself as a golfer between all three of those victories?

JIN YOUNG KO: I didn't compare to last few years as me. I think I'm better play than 2019 and 2021, but, yeah, 2019 was my career-high season. Yeah, I want to make more like 2019.

Q. And this is your 20th LPGA Hall of Fame point. Only a handful of active players that have reached that number. What does it mean to you to have gotten to this point?

JIN YOUNG KO: I didn't know that. Well, yeah, my big goal is getting the Hall of Fame. Long time ago -- I planned getting Hall of Fame long time ago when I was 10 or 11 years old, so, yeah.

But I have still -- how many points, seven? So, yeah, I will do my best in my future and I will practice hard, harder than this. We'll see.

Q. All right, last question: This event you won three times. Obviously lots of girls out there today. We have pioneers. What does it mean to you to see the past of the game and the future of the game come together and you get to be the winner of all of that?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I hopefully get more wins in this year, and I will do my best. I will focus myself again and I know the golf is really hard, hardest sport, but, yeah, it's worth it and it's really fun.

I play really well.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. Thank you so much.



JIN YOUNG KO: Thank you.

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