

Cognizant Founders Cup

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Clifton, New Jersey, USA

Upper Montclair Country Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone to the Cognizant Founders Cup media center.

Pleased to be joined by Nelly Korda. Where do we start? You've had quite the weekend. We'll get started with what is it like being here at Upper Montclair Country Club? How does the game feel having the week off since JM Eagle?

NELLY KORDA: I didn't play JM Eagle, so I had two weeks off, which was really nice. Yeah, just got here on Saturday, so played Sunday, played early morning on Monday, and then played yesterday.

The golf course is really nice. Obviously with the weather they've had it's a little bit more wet compared to last year. Last year was my first year playing and it was super firm, so a little different from last year. I think you can be bit more aggressive this year.

My track record isn't great in New Jersey, so I'm hoping to change that this year.

Q. Want to talk about your AJGA event, The Nelly. What was that like going from player to put on your tournament hosting hat?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, that was such a neat experience obviously. I feel like just yesterday I was playing AJGAs, playing in The ANNIKA Invitational. Having her out and seeing someone who has done so much for the game was very inspirational.

It was great to see all the girls out, all my sponsors supporting the event. Which was absolutely amazing. I hope they had fun to the golf course. I was very grateful that Concession hosted it and they were very gracious to give us the golf course for a few days.

Q. Have to talk about The Met. What was that experience like? How did that come together? Who was your favorite outfit, or who you were a little starstruck by?

NELLY KORDA: Gosh, it was so, so crazy. You're standing in line ready to get on the carpet and you're like seeing all these people you usually watch in TV shows or movies and they're like famous singers and you're starstruck the entire time. It's the best people watching for me. I was just silent looking at everyone's dresses.

I would say like I saw Shakira and I just love Shakira. She's so beautiful. Then Jaden Smith was really, really nice. He was the first person to say hello to me and introduce himself.

Everyone was really amazing. I can't just point out one person. The dresses were unbelievable and the whole evening was just a dream come true.

Q. We know you have a really good fashion eye. To be in that setting, wear Oscar de la Renta, can you put into words how cool it was for you with that hobby, be in that environment?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it was just a dream come true. I got a couple dresses to try on from Oscar de la Renta, and they were all so stunning. It was so hard to decide. I actually switched it up last minute, probably like 20 minutes before I started to get ready, and I had to completely change my entire look. I was going to go with a long sleeve gown so I was going to have my hair up.

Then I saw this amazing red dress and I just changed my entire look probably 20 minutes before I started to get ready. Switched it up on everyone.

It's just, I mean, this is me. This is me, visor on wearing golf clothes. This is my comfort zone. It was really, really neat to step outside of my comfort zone and do something like that. That was my first time ever walking a red carpet and went out with a bang. I think it's just downhill from here.

But it was such a neat experience and I'm just so grateful that I had the opportunity to do that.

Q. I know you keep things on the golf course as far as your accomplishments go outside of your bubble. To



have an AJGA event that you have really embraced and being the host of that to going to the Met Gala, have you let yourself soak in those achievements off the golf course and think about them a little bit more?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I was looking through the photos of just my past week it, and it was amazing having my junior am and supporting Satchels, you know, that's a local shelter in my area, and then coming out and also having the Boys & Girls Club and spending time with all the people that did donate to all those charities was a lot of fun.

And then seeing all the girls embrace the event and trying to make it as fun as possible for them too was really fun. I got to do something completely different and get a spray tan for the first time ever. I couldn't show everyone my lovely permanent sock tan. Just doing something outside of my comfort zone is definitely really cool.

I thought, you know, I would never ever think that I would ever be able to attend the Met Gala. As a girl I watched it growing up and just in awe of all the dresses. To be on the red carpet or green carpet was a dream come true.

Q. Congrats on that honor, by the way.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

Q. In terms of golf, you mentioned in the last couple weeks that just to kind of keep yourself locked in you want to keep the golf simple. What does that look like for you?

NELLY KORDA: Well, there is two sides to it. Obviously when I'm home I'm definitely practicing a lot more and trying to work on technique. When I'm out here, the way I keep it simple is by not overdoing it too much. Going out, seeing the golf course, doing my work with my caddie, picking a game plan, and then that's it.

I think I've got in the past too caught up in coming out here and thinking I need to do a little extra when I've already done my work going into this event, and it's time to just see my shots and execute them. That's how I've tried to simplify it.

Q. The Met Gala, was that something that had been on your radar for a while or was that just something, a last-minute invitations?

NELLY KORDA: No, it was more spur of the moment for sure. I got the invite and obviously could never say no to that. It was a dream come true. Very grateful to Casey Wasserman for inviting me. It was just a dream come true, yeah.

Q. Was that an unexpected bonus of winning five in a row?

NELLY KORDA: For sure. As I said, I never thought I would be able to walk the red carpet there. I feel like I lived out a little girl dream of mine.

Q. The final question I had is: With two weeks off, I mean, do you sit down and just relax? I mean, I heard you worked on your game. What else are you doing just to get away from everything?

NELLY KORDA: No, I definitely spent a good bit of time with my couch the first couple days. Turned on the TV. Just it was more about sleep the first couple days. I just felt like I just mentally really needed it. I was so mentally tired going through all those situations and high pressure moments.

And then that's one the reasons why I really needed two weeks. I feel like when you get one week you kind of -- not that you feel guilty to take more days off than you're training, but I just needed to work my game as well.

Two weeks really helped me mentally rest up. I started kind of training the -- more intensely training the second week. I also had the junior event so wanted to spend time then and I had obviously some stuff to do there.

So just to kind of spend time with family, relax, and trained.

Q. Curious, you said you recognized Shakira. Did anyone say, hey, there is Nelly Korda? Were you spotted?

NELLY KORDA: No, I think I'm just a grain of sand in such a big, big room. I thought it was incredible that you get all these people in one room. I was just in awe the entire night.

I was sitting at my table but I was looking around at everyone the entire night. I just thought it was incredible that you get so many people from so many different industries in one room, one night.

Q. I'm sure you noticed that women's sports is having a moment with the women's basketball tournament and some of the other achievements lately. Curious if you see what's happening with you as an opportunity to make this a moment for women's golf as well? Do you look at it that way?

NELLY KORDA: No. I say, I mean, I'm just out here doing what I love and hopefully that's what grows the game

naturally. I'm not trying to push anything. I hope that people see me for who I am and I love this game and doing it naturally.

Q. As you have success, is there a responsibility that goes with that as well? Biggest media market in the world. Being on the Met Gala red carpet does help the sport. Do you see it that way, that you can grow the game through this other stuff?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, as I said, hopefully I'm doing it naturally. At the end of the day I think if you perform well in your sport that's what grabs people's attention. I'm not the type of person that tries to push anything or does anything I'm not really comfortable with.

So I hope that I just do it naturally and that catches people's attention.

Q. In talking about your junior tournament, do you have like a favorite moment from the tournament? Anything that happened that gave you good energy for your own game?

NELLY KORDA: I think during the Junior Am when I had a dog out from Satchels and everyone was greeting him. He was up for adoption. I hope he got adopted. I did volunteer at the shelter/sanctuary a couple days before that on Monday and got to walk him. He's such a sweet, sweet boy.

Seeing everyone interact with him on the first tee was very, very wholesome. I hope he got adopted. That always gives me really good energy. You're your most genuine self when you see a puppy. That really gave me a lot of positive energy.

Q. And seeing the junior players, how did their games compare to what you remember from playing junior golf?

NELLY KORDA: Gosh. What was crazy to me is there was this one girl that was warming up on the range with a TrackMan. I was like, I don't remember any of this in junior golf.

But they're just -- like it's a different ballgame nowadays. Everyone is so invested in it when it comes from the technology standpoint to how hard everyone is working and the talent that's out there.

It's pretty incredible and amazing to see how dedicated the girls are at a really, really young age as well.

Q. They were doing more like stat tracking?

NELLY KORDA: I guess so. I looked at that TrackMan and I was like, dang, that was definitely not it when I was playing junior golf.

Q. I was wondering when you came down the stretch at The Chevron you talked about how nervous you felt and you hit some incredible shots on the last two holes. What did that tell you about yourself in that moment with so much on the line? Have you been able to reflect a little bit on what you were able to do?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I would say that I'm so grateful for Jason. After I hit it into the water coming down the stretch he gave me a pep talk. He made sure that I stayed really in the moment, that I was taking it shot by shot. Having a teammate like him just makes my really, really grateful for him.

And other than that, like I've been in situations where I've needed to play well coming down the stretch to keep a lead or maybe push to get into a tie for a lead.

I feel like every time I do learn more about myself and I can lean on what I've practiced on and I can lean on the situations that I've been through to help me through that and to really take it a shot at a time.

Getting ahead of yourself is just going to lead you down a bad, bad rabbit hole. We made sure we were very, very present coming down the stretch. Even if I had a five-shot lead I was still going to be very nervous.

To be very present during that time really helped me to soak in the entire moment as well.

Q. And one more: We talked a lot about rest and recovery in Houston. How much did you sleep when you got home? Like what would an average night sleep be like for you as you're recovering from that stretch?

NELLY KORDA: First night, Sunday, I really didn't sleep much at all. The adrenaline, you actually feel really sick. You can't sleep. The adrenaline wears off and the body starts to ache a little bit. You're like, okay.

My first couple nights at home I slept nine to ten hours. That's standard for me when I'm home. I really try to sleep a lot. I'm doing more, training in the gym, so trying to make my body recover.

The best recovery is sleep, so naps and -- I don't love to nap because I feel like when I wake up I don't know where I am, what hotel or where I am.



So I just make sure that I go to sleep early and try to get the best amount of rest in.

Q. You've had a couple weeks here to sleep on the possibility of winning six in a row the first time on tour. Have you thought about that at all and what will it take to get to six in a row here?

NELLY KORDA: If I'm being honest, I have not thought about it at all because I've had so much going on those two weeks. Then obviously yesterday -- or Monday I had The Met, so haven't had too much time to think about it.

My track record hasn't been the greatest in New Jersey. Last year missed the cut and we played KPMG here last year too and that was a nice missed cut as well.

I'm really just trying to keep it one shot at time, see how it goes. This golf course is tough. It's very, very narrow off the tee. The rough is very penalizing. And it's wet this year, so it's even worse.

So just not getting too ahead of myself and taking it a shot at a time. As boring as it sounds or as many times as you're going to hear me say it, that's the motto and I'm going to stick to it.

Q. We're here at the Founders Cup. We are celebrating Pat Bradley, Beth Daniel. What have those two and the Founders and just anyone that's carried the legacy of women's golf meant to you and how do you hope to carry on that torch?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, they're such amazing people. I got to see them yesterday. We had a Solheim Cup dinner and they walked into the room. Even Meg Mallon was there. They are just so positive and so fun to talk to.

I just hope that when I'm in their position girls my age will think that about me, too. So they're amazing ambassadors for the game and I always love spending time with them. It's going to be a big week for them and I'm so excited for them.

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