

BMW Ladies Championship

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Busan, South Korea

LPGA International Busan

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's get started here. Welcome inside the media center here at the BMW Ladies Championship with our 2022 champion, Lydia Ko.

I've been joking all week you do Lydia Ko things. 7-under today to close out. You had been telling me all week you had not seen a number like that out there. What did you see today that didn't change?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think I was able to feed off of good momentum. I had a couple of stretches where I made consecutive birdies.

I think for me the big turnaround was my birdie on 10. To be honest, I think if it didn't go in, I had a pretty hefty par putt coming back. I was able to feed off from that.

I normally don't do first pumps, and I did a couple of first pumps in my back nine because I knew how much that every single of those putts would count.

I played the back nine really well in all four of my rounds, and I think that was the big key for me and just knowing that there are holes out there that we can be aggressive even though there are some tougher ones. I think I was just able to strategically just keep calm and be patient.

I think patience was such a big key. Especially on the second day for me where I wasn't able to get a lot of things going, but then I had an eagle and a birdie to finish at 4-under.

Obviously, this weekend I played really solid. I gave myself a lot of good looks. I had a couple of lucky breaks as well. But, yeah, it was just one of those weeks where I think I played solid all four rounds.

I think to be able to win these days, you've got to play well all four of these rounds because you're playing against the world's best players. One mediocre round, that puts you, I think, a few shots behind.

THE MODERATOR: We've talked about eight top-five of your last 11 starts. I knew that win was going to be special regardless after everything that you've

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accomplished this season. What does it mean to get it here in Republic of Korea? I know you have a lot of ties here. Your family is from here. You were born in Seoul. What were some of the emotions that I saw? All your family down there. What were some of the emotions?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think my backgrounds are something that I'm very proud of, something that really resembles me. I have these shoes that we collaborated with ECCO that shows who I am, which is a South Korean-born Kiwi, and I have the silver fern and the hibiscus flower.

I feel so proud to be born in Korea. I think because of that I really wanted to win here. It's not only just a place that I'm born, but a lot of my family is still here. This week my relatives are here, my direct family is here. And I wanted to win it for them as well. To be able to do that this year in front of a lot of them, it means a lot.

I think this week more than ever I said I really, really want to win in Korea, and I think maybe that was a good mindset or I was hypnotizing myself to try to get it done, but that's why it means so much to me.

Every time I come back to Korea, even though I play under the New Zealand flag, so many people support me, so many people go (Korean). I think that is such a boost.

Just to see all the high-fives and for them to, like, want it as much as I do, it's such an unreal setting, and we don't play in that many atmospheres like that. That's why I just wanted to do it for them.

Yes, this means so much to me because I'm born in South Korea, but I think it means so much more than that.

THE MODERATOR: Final one from me. There have been seasons you have been World No. 1 and seasons you've had multiple titles. This year it seems like you're a whole different player. Would you call this season one of your best? Some would argue it's your best season yet.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think this is probably the best I've played, the most consistently I've played.

I think when I was No. 1, I had just more wins in that season. I don't think I've had as many top tens and top ten percentage of the probability of how many times I play. But yeah, I think every season is really hard to compare because not only am I trying to improve, but

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every single player is, like, trying to improve, and I think that's why you can see it by the score.

At all of these championships, the score for the cut is getting lower, the score to win is getting lower, and that's why I said earlier if you have one okay round, that puts you so much further back compared to maybe before where that could have been okay and you could have still won.

So I think just the level of play and the level of women's golf right now is so high that it's just really, really difficult to win.

I mentioned it multiple times before that the year that Jin Young and Nelly had last year is absolutely incredible. Being alongside the best female golfers. Nelly winning the gold at the Tokyo Olympics as well. I think people underestimate what the level of the LPGA is and what the level of women's golf is right now.

Yeah, I think this is probably one of my best seasons or the best seasons I've had. I wanted to finish my season off strong, including this one, with only three events to go.

To be able to win this one it means a lot, and I think it gives me good motivation for my last couple of events in Florida.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions in the room.

Q. (Translated from Korean) First of all, congratulations on your winning, and we understand that you have a wedding in December, and I heard that you also gave wedding invitations to some of your fellow golf players. Was your fiance here to cheer you on or any future in-laws here to cheer you on? And if they did, did that help your game?

LYDIA KO: (Translated from Korean) I have to say, wherever my fiance is, he is always in my heart, so it's like he is near me.

I have a lot of people congratulate me and a lot of people are very much interested, and so I really thank them for their support and interest. I have a lot of fans coming up to me and congratulating me, so I'm very grateful for the attention and congratulations I'm getting.

However, this is the BMW Ladies Championship, and I don't want to take away from this event, so I hope you understand I would like to conclude my comments about my marriage with that.

And I always get a lot of support from my family and my fans. I would like to thank them all for their continued support and interest.

Q. (Translated from Korean) So in the front nine you carded 2-under, and that was when the leader board was really busy and competition was fierce. Then back nine you mentioned that the No. 10 was a turning point for you. Going into the back nine, did you have a specific plan in mind? What sort of mental conversation were you having with yourself?

LYDIA KO: (Translated from Korean) As I mentioned earlier, I scored lower score on the back nine the first, second, and third round. So I think going in, I had that confidence knowing that I could card lower scores in the back nine.

In the front nine I did make a couple of birdies, but I bogeyed a hole in the 3-putt. However, I birdied the 10th hole, and I was able to gain my momentum again at the 10th hole.

It was a downward putt. I thought I should just try to keep it or get the ball close to the hole and just par-save that hole. I think if I didn't make the birdie then, then I might have not been able to do par either because it was such a downward slope.

At the time I was thinking after that I can maybe look for opportunities, but having birdied No. 10, that really gave me a new momentum.

I think what I think what went well for my game today was that I did make a lot of mid-range putts, but those were No. 16 and No. 17. All the other putts I was able to get the ball within 1-yard, and they were a lot of short putts.

I've been putting really well this week, so that also boosted my confidence and that also gave me the opportunity to be a little bit bolder approaching the holes and be more aggressive.

For the past few years I've been really working on hitting well and to play consistent, solid golf, and I've been practicing to that end. To see the results, I think that I was able to be more open, free in terms of attacking the course.

Q. (Translating from Korean) When we saw you doing the interview earlier, we saw you tear up. What was going through your mind? That's the first question. The second question is, I think that you were motivated to reclaim your position as the top-ranking player. You've made it up to the third spot and haven't been able to climb up yet. So what are your thoughts or plans or goals regarding the world ranking?

LYDIA KO: (Translated from Korean) Although I play under the New Zealand flag, I was born in Korea. I'm proud of my Korean heritage. I also speak Korean. I

guess I always hoped for -- I didn't know if the day would come, but I would always hoped to win in Korea at least once, whether it was LPGA event or KLPGA event. So I guess that yearning was there.

Actually, I teared up right after I dropped the putt on the 18th hole. I really didn't have any time to cry. So my extended family, my parents, my sister, my brother-in-law, aunts, cousins were all here. We don't get a lot of opportunity to win in front of family, so it was very meaningful.

I really wanted to win for them too, and especially my dad. It was his first time to go to come to an LPGA event where I played since COVID. It's been two and a half years since he's seen me at an LPGA event. So even talking about it now, I think I will tear up.

Then the second part of your question was about my global ranking. Towards the middle of the season I went up to third, and now I'm at fifth. To be honest, I think there are a lot of great players now, as I mentioned earlier.

Even if you do really good golf and solid golf, it's really difficult to climb the ranks, and I think that just shows how much upward momentum there is in the LPGA core, and it's really just becoming harder to win because there are a lot of world class players.

On the flip side, that also makes it a bit more relaxed. I know that it's going to be hard to win, so I can just focus on my game and enjoy and just do my best. It actually makes it easier for me to do that.

Actually, I was going into the first hole this round and I was with my sister, and I actually felt butterflies in my stomach. I was quite nervous. That was when I realized I really wanted to win in Korea.

And my sister gave me some very wise advice. She told me that a little nerves is always a good thing, and I think that also.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Lydia. You're the 2022 BMW Ladies Champion.

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