

BMW Ladies Championship

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Busan, South Korea

LPGA International Busan

Minjee Lee

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the media center here at the BMW Ladies Championship. I am pleased to be joined by Minjee Lee, the champion of this 2023 event.

You were going into the final round tied for the lead. What was the strategy and game plan going into today?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, obviously being tied for the lead, I knew I had to get a lot of birdies under my belt early, but I don't think I really did that so I had two on the front and another birdie on 9, so I know it was pretty close. Then I went on the back nine and just told myself, just make a few coming in and we'll see where we sit. I just did my absolute best that I put it out there. Came out on top, which was nice.

THE MODERATOR: What were some of those emotions going into those final few holes, and what were some of the thoughts that you had knowing that birdies were going to rule the day.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, going into the back nine, the first probably five holes, I wasn't quite as nervous. I was probably a bit more excited than nervous to be fair. These last few holes, I was quite excited to play, and you know, we always want to be putting ourselves in that position, in the contending position, week-in, week-out and I was lucky enough to do it this week. It's just really fun to play in those type of conditions and those situations, so I think I really had fun out there this week.

THE MODERATOR: You find yourself in a playoff after 72 holes. What were the thoughts going into that hole and what was the strategy that you had.

MINJEE LEE: Well, I think it was my fourth playoff this year, so you know, I'm becoming pretty used to those. Obviously I've known Alison quite a while. I actually played her in the final at the U.S. Girls' Junior, which I kind of thought back when I was on the tee there. I was like, this kind of feels familiar.

It's nice to be able to play against somebody that you know and especially with such great talent, and it's

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always fun to go head-to-head with the best. I mean, I just went out on the tee there and was like let's just hit the fairway and hit a good shot in and hit a good putt. That was pretty much my thought process for the playoff hole, and it was nice to be able to make a birdie there.

THE MODERATOR: And before I open it up, your 10th Tour win. You have a lot of family and friends here. I know this one is special, and that your grandma is out there cheering you on. How special is this moment for you?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, out of all the places, Korea was always at the top of my list because my parents are Korean and I have a heritage to Korea. This one is special, and especially having all of my family and extended family and friends coming out to cheer for me today, it was really cool to see them on the sidelines when I was walking down. It was great that I was able to win today.

Q. So congratulations first, and last week, your brother won as well. Did that motivate you in any way? In your family, it's two weeks of wins. What does that feel like?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, obviously it was great to see Min Woo win. I follow him every single event. I mean, I'd never say it to his face but he plays really well and I'm always really proud of him.

Sure, it was a little motivation, and I knew I was coming in with pretty good form coming off last week. Yeah, I feel like I've been working up to this one and really building ON this win.

Q. Congratulations first on your win. Before this event. You said that you were always curious what it would be like to win in Korea and you really wanted to be able to get an answer for that question that you had in your mind. So after your win, what was the first thought that came to your mind?

MINJEE LEE: Obviously I feel good. I feel the same. I'm still the same person, and winning is obviously extra special that I got to do it in Korea. But I mean, it's even more special that it's my 10th LPGA win, as well. So I think overall, I can say it was an even bigger honor and even more special.

Q. Like you just mentioned, this is your 10th win on the Tour, and you joined the Tour in 2015, so it's



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been eight or nine years. Ten wins, is that a milestone for you? Is there a particular significance to that? And I'm sure you have goals joining the LPGA for your career. How long do you think you've come in terms of the goals that you set for yourself when you joined?

MINJEE LEE: It's not particularly a milestone. Obviously I don't really think about how many I've had until I'm hold.

So I go into every tournament trying to obviously be contending on the weekend. Like that is my goal for every week. So in terms of that, it just shows me and what I reflect back, it's going to be that I've put in so much hard work, and all the time that I've put into it, that is such a reward. It's a rewarding feeling.

So I think that's more the meaning behind the 10th win.

And the second question?

Q. You would have had goals you set for yourself as a rookie and it's been eight or nine years since you've been on tour, so how far do you think you've come in terms of achieving your career goals?

MINJEE LEE: I mean, I still haven't been able to reach world No. 1 yet. So that is the goal for me and that is where I want to reach. So I think I've got to put in a little bit more work to get there.

Golf, you never know what's going to happen. So I'm going to try and do it in the years that I can, so hopefully I can do it in the next few.

Q. You mentioned that your grandma was here. Did you get a chance to talk to her, and what did she say to you? You also mentioned your parents are Korean. So when you play in Korea, do they make any special demands that they would not if they were not in Korea?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, she gave me a cuddle and just said, "You did so well," that's about it, because everything was a bit hectic.

The second question was?

Q. Your parents.

MINJEE LEE: Not really. Just some extra tickets, but other than that, no.

Q. Do you think it's different to play in an event like this as a sponsor's invite versus just a tour member?

MINJEE LEE: Yes, so from Hana Bank, I'm hobbled a sponsored invite. It's very different. It's LPGA rules and of course all the girls are from the Korean tour. In terms of that, it's quite different.

But other than that, competing is the same. We're still hitting a white ball around the course. I don't really feel too much of a difference when I play the LPGA or the KLPGA events. I like competing in both.

Q. Congratulations. You got this win with your caddie, Brad. My question is: Will you continue on with him?

MINJEE LEE: I think so. Yeah, Brad and I have been working together since maybe June or July, so it's quite recent. We get on really well because we are both Aussies, so I'm just really happy that I could win here in Korea with him.

Q. So I think last month at the Kroger Queen City Championship, it seemed like you were ready to win and it slipped away. I think that sort of loss would have sort of a psychological impact on a player, and then you come here and on 17, you made it on the green in one but then you three-putted and you had to go to a playoff, so it looked for a second so it might not be so easy for you to garner your next win. But then you had a playoff and you hit the ball really close to the hole and you won. My question is, do you think that being able to overcome that mental aspect of the game, do you think it's thanks to mental training? Do you think you were just born that way or do you think that that's just part of your personality that you find it easy to get over those sort of psychological humps?

MINJEE LEE: I think as a golfer, we have a lot more losses than wins. So I feel like over the course of my career, I've had a lot of experiences that have helped me to overcome these situations, and obviously I'm a little more acclimated now than I used to be to these situations, too. My personality is very -- I'm quite calm, and I think I'd say happy-go-lucky. I am able to forget quickly and then move on and focus on the next shot at hand.

But you know, I try to, if I do have a lot like that, I try to make it as more motivation and I work extra hard to not be in the same situation again. Yeah, I hope that answers your question.

Q. So you turned pro very early on and now you've reached ten wins on the LPGA. I think that for you right now having your goal as becoming the No. 1 player in the world, it seems that golf would really dominate your life. So do you have any specific thoughts on golf as part of your life, as a professional golfer and golf you see yourself playing in the future, and/or do you have specific thoughts on, like, you as a person as a woman?

MINJEE LEE: Obviously early on it was mostly about

golf. I was trying to keep my heart. Everybody goes through that as a rookie. You play a lot of tournaments for the first three years and then after that when you're a little more settled down, I personally was able to take a little bit more time for myself, do the things that I like to do.

Now nine years down the road, I actually have a really great balance now because now I sort of know what I like and the routine that I do at the golf course which works for me and my body. So I don't just go out to the golf course to hit a hundred putts or do practise that is not worthy of time.

So I think in that aspect, I'm much better at managing my time and my routine. But in terms of the person that I want to be, I've always had this motto, I want to leave the LPGA Tour or the game of golf better than I found it, so that is my goal after I retire.

So if it is on golf course or how I am as a role model on TV or if I'm doing clinics or anything that I can do to give back to Australian golf or LPGA girls' golf or any junior who comes out to watch us, I'm going to try and do that.

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