

The Chevron Championship

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

The Woodlands, Texas, USA

The Club at Carlton Woods

Jennifer Kupcho

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back inside the online media center here at The Chevron Championship, and I am pleased to be joined by defending champion Jennifer Kupcho. What is it like to be back at a new place but the same major you claimed victory at last year?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, it's definitely a little bit different coming from a new state, new course, a little bit different preparation, but it's awesome to kind of see my face everywhere. It's really special.

THE MODERATOR: 2022 was quite the season for you and really jump started at this major championship. When you think about that week, what stands out the most?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think really just my hard work coming into it. I wasn't hitting the ball or putting very good the week before and weeks coming up to it I didn't have a solid start to the season, so I was really just trying to go into the tournament last year and try and figure it out, and I started hitting the ball really well, probably the best I've ever hit it, and came out on top.

Q. What were some of the emotions you felt? How much did that kind of jump start, like I said, jump start the rest of the season that was last year?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think it was just like a relief. I had come so close in multiple tournaments the couple of years before. To finally get the job done and win a tournament, let alone a major, it was really special. It jump started the really good rest of the season.

Q. Last night was the Champions Dinner, of course, semi-prepared by your influence. Take us through what last night was like for you. I know we talked a little bit off camera about the mac and cheese portion.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, that was my request, mac and cheese, my favorite food. Yeah, it was absolutely awesome. Thomas Keller did a great job, great food. Absolutely amazing. I think just the way that Chevron puts that on for us, it's really special for all the champions, and

it's definitely something to look forward to every year.

Q. What was it like seeing some of those past champions from multiple years back?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I mean, I hadn't met some of them, so to be able to see the history of this tournament, it was pretty exciting to get to talk to them and see where their heads were at, too.

Q. What is the difference in this golf course from where you were in the desert?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think the biggest thing is probably the length of the golf course. It's really long, I would say. In the desert we were hitting pretty short clubs in. All of the par-5s were reachable. Most of them are reachable out here, but I think we're going to have a lot of long irons into the par-4s, and the greens are definitely a lot trickier versus in the desert they were pretty flat and pretty easy.

Q. Were you able to reach 18?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Not from the back tee. Hopefully they move it up like they did in the desert. But it's definitely a really long hole, as well.

Q. Conditions-wise, obviously you're in the desert, there's a lot of dry heat. What do you anticipate being the conditions out here?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I mean, I think it's going to be a lot windier. Texas is generally windy, though, so you kind of expect that. Obviously the humidity, the ball doesn't quite go as far here as I feel like in the desert, so that also contributes to the length.

Q. This is the first week you've come back where you're defending somewhere. What has that experience been like?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Pretty different. It's been different for me, as well, because usually I play before the week of a major, and I took last week off, came here early, so I think that's kind of helped with the transition of trying to figure



out everything that I need to do before I can step foot on the golf course.

That's probably the biggest change for me.

Q. When did you arrive here?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Saturday night.

Q. What kind of things did you do to acclimate?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think just giving myself that extra day on Sunday, when really nobody was out here, to just focus on my game and focus on trying to get to know the golf course. That was a big thing for me on Sunday.

Q. A quiet day?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah.

Q. What was your first impression of the dock, and since you've done the leap before, would you do it here?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I guess we'll see what comes down to it. I'm not really sure. I think there might be snakes in the water here, so might be a little interesting.

Q. You've been excelling this year on greens in regulation, and I know you got four eagles and you were talking about hitting long irons. Does this course kind of suit your game?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think I'm one of the longer players on Tour. I hit my long irons and hybrids pretty well. I think that's kind of a normal thing for the LPGA, though, is we all hit our long clubs really good and have really good short games.

I think it'll be a really good test of golf, just a lot different than the desert.

Q. You kind of touched on this as far as being the defending champion, but what's it like, you're the defending champion but it's like, wait a minute, this is a whole different course. Everything is different.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think it's definitely different. Obviously it's the first thing for this championship, but it's also normal for the British Open, KPMG and the U.S. Open, they change every year. You're defending at a different course every year. Obviously I haven't won those, but it's the same process as that kind of thing.

You just kind of take it and try and prepare the best you

can on this golf course.

Q. You took a few weeks off. Is there anything specifically you were working on?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Not really. I took a little bit of the first week off, I had a cold in LA, so tried to recover from that and really just get my body ready working out and just getting ready for this week on and off the golf course.

Q. Could you compare yourself as a player the Tuesday before last Chevron Championship to today?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think I was in a bit of a panic last year, actually. I was struggling hitting the ball, so I had a little bit of a panic, calling my swing coach, working with the Ping rep, trying to figure out what was going wrong with my swing and hitting the ball, and I would say I'm a little bit more relaxed this year. Feel like I have my feet under me and ready to go.

Q. Do you remember when those calls were about trying to fix your swing before last year's tournament?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: It was actually on Wednesday morning when that all happened. Miraculously turned around really good.

Q. One of the things you mentioned last year was it was nice to hear your name being chanted. Do you feel like you've gotten more of that in the year since, and if so, what does that feel like?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think so a little bit. I think just in general, people -- people from Colorado, I have a really good support system, and that was one of the biggest things at Mission Hills was everybody was calling my name as well as calling "Go, Colorado." That's just really special to me, and I think that's kind of continued throughout last year and through this year.

Q. I want to ask a couple dinner questions. For the menu, you basically get to make one request?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, you just make one request, and then he's a famous chef, so he kind of goes around that.

Q. What's your favorite mac and cheese like from back in the day, and how did the famous chef do it differently?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Actually my favorite mac and cheese is the blue box Kraft mac and cheese still to this day. It's amazing.

But I would say most of the time like fancy mac and cheese is a little bit too rich for me, but he did an amazing job. It was not too rich. It was obviously not Kraft mac and cheese, but it was amazing. It was really good.

Q. What was your second favorite thing on the menu?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I can't remember what it was called, but it was the appetizer, it was like a little bit of potato and then something on top with some cream on it. It was -- I probably would never think to order it, but it was absolutely amazing.

Q. Just curious, on paper, it looked like obviously last year's major win you finally took one across the finish line, got over the hump and it looked like it opened the flood gates for you. Is that an accurate way of describing what that win meant for you?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, I think after the win at Chevron, I think it really just made me comfortable that I could actually do it. I think I was a little bit -- I had taken second a couple of times in the years prior, and a little bit discouraged on actually reaching the finish line. To come through and actually win was amazing.

Q. Just one quick follow-up, I'm curious as well about kind of the historical significance of the win last year and everything that happened. I know you talked a few minutes ago about how time moves on, and just like the other majors on the schedule, sometimes you go to different venues, but as you're looking farther and farther in the rear view of that big win, given the ending of it all at that particular golf course, does that still mean something to you, to be the last champion there?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, absolutely. To have that is really special to me. Obviously growing up I always wanted to be able to take that leap into Poppies Pond, and I loved Mission Hills, being able to play there the couple of years before, as well. It was just a really cool place for me and where I felt really comfortable. So to be able to say that I won there and be the last champion there is really special.

Q. I would like to know who your favorite person to talk to last night at the Champions Dinner was if there was maybe a new story or a past tradition that you heard of for the first time that stuck out to you.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I mean, I'm not really sure. Going into it, like I obviously know who the people are, so I didn't necessarily talk to them about their experiences, but I think

one of the biggest conversations I had actually was with Pat Hurst, the Solheim Cup captain last year, just catching up on life. It's really great to hear from her and see her again.

Q. I know that was so special to you to be on that team. What was it like kind of seeing a lot of those past champions that we don't necessarily see out here as much as we see at big events like this?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: It's really special, and obviously it was my first time last night, but to hear from them, Juli Inkster spoke and talked about how it was so special to see everybody again after every year because they get to see each other, and that's pretty much when they get to see each other. So I'm looking forward to that in the future, just being able to catch up every year like that. It's really special.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jennifer, and best of luck this week.

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