

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

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Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

Danielle Kang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, happy to be here with you at the CP Women's Open. Here to my left the woman of the hour, Danielle Kang, happy to be back on the LPGA Tour after an extended absence.

We missed you. Happy to have you back. Happy that you're here with us. I know right off the top you've got some words you want to say, so turn it over to you now.

DANIELLE KANG: Hi. I've been gone for a while, but I'm really excited to be back in Ottawa and playing the CP Women's Open as my first event back.

I know that I really appreciate all the patience that everyone has shown me, all the fans, all the get well wishes, and even my sponsors have taken a lot of patience on me opting out on a lot of the social posts to sponsor outings and things like that.

So really thankful for the people that I work with. I took some time to properly rehab and address the issue that I've been playing through, and of course I never want to be away from the LPGA Tour, as anyone that knows me knows, I'm a competitor, so always out here no matter what happens.

However, this was the best thing to do physically and mentally for me to play through, and I'm super thankful for my medical team and everybody that worked with me in Vegas that guided me through it, especially my family, friends. It's been a tough few months.

Also, this wasn't the easiest journey that I had to go through, and I am planning to keep the details and the process between myself and all the relevant people in my team. I know you'll respect that, but I appreciate you all wondering what wanting to know what happened anyway.

All the get well wishes have reached me. I read all the messages and I'm extremely grateful for all that.



With that being said, I'm happy to answer any other fun questions about golf. And supposedly I played here in 2017 and I don't remember anything, so I had to replay the entire 18 holes.

So I'm here and it's Canada. It's like my second home, so I'm excited.

THE MODERATOR: Canada, your second home. Going to bring me some of the hockey questions. Believe me, I have them for you you. This is your eighth time playing in the CP Women's Open, but I know you are coming here again off the leave, and of course understand the medical stuff will stay just that, private, but you and I were chatting yesterday just about your routine and how you've had to adjust a little bit to get yourself back and ready and raring to play.

What were the last couple months like? I know you said you got to know your dog a little more, you're much closer with the dog.

DANIELLE KANG: With everything being said, sitting here in front of you guys I'm ready to play. Excited to compete, excited to be back out here, feeling good.

You know, there has been days where I could only hit 20 golf balls and we made the max effort with that, and I would call Butch and say, I got cleared to hit drivers and I would run over and we would hit seven drivers for the day. Did a round trip of 45 minutes each way each day, but it was worth it.

All the people that I worked with were absolutely incredible. There are times I walked in just crying, times I couldn't move, but little by little I'm sitting in front of you guys. Didn't think I would be competing today, but I've missed some majors and I know that was -- it was heartbreaking for me, but I was watching some great golf.

I hope you guys enjoyed that as well. I talked to all the players that have won and it's pretty cool. It was a lot of competition coming down the stretch. A lot of going back and forth, which I enjoyed. So thank you to the girls for entertaining me while I was gone. Yeah.



THE MODERATOR: Well now we've got you back. You may not remember the golf course, but you've had a couple days to be out. You've seen The Rink. You've seen the hordes of fans out for Brooke and Lorie and yourself and everyone out here. How does the golf course look and how excited are you to get back to competition here?

DANIELLE KANG: The rink is a really cool concept. I know they got that from the RBC Open, but I love how they bang on the side of the walls and the banners. The Gretzky family sent me a bag of these Gretzky bracelets that I'm going to throw to fans on the 17th hole, so it will be really fun. I love when there is fan engagement at events, and they're not going to go unappreciated because I love the noise, as you guys know.

THE MODERATOR: As we know. Exactly. It's going to be like a little Solheim Cup moment. Are you going to be rasing the fans up?

DANIELLE KANG: Maybe.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe not come competition time. Thanks so much, Danielle. We're going to open it up for questions. If you have a question, raise your hand.

Q. I know you've spoken about keeping the medical side of things private and I will respect that, but I would like to know what is next for you? Are you going to be able to resume a full or almost full schedule? Are you going to have to restrict your play and practice?

DANIELLE KANG: I know what you're asking. So it's management, right? Before when I was a rookie I played 32 events out here. I don't play 32 weeks anymore because I've learned that playing nine weeks in a row doesn't do well on your body. Same thing. I know there are obstacles and hurdles that come my way, and I try to spin it as a positive because I never had this much time at home.

I got to enjoy home life, which was great. I learned to manage my practice better than I ever have. I've been able to readjust the way I approach golf a bit differently, and I kind of like it better.

So moving forward with my schedule it will just be management. I don't think I'll play five, six in a row. I don't think I've been doing that in the last three, four years anyway.

With that, I'm pretty good to go. I'm here. So far I'm

committed to playing this week, committed to playing Ohio; I think I'll be playing Arkansas. I think schedules come and go, so that's about as confident of an answer I can give you.

Q. This is sort of the obligatory question you have to answer every year you come here. Can you relate your relationship with Wayne and Janet and the Gretzky family and how that started?

DANIELLE KANG: They're like my family. Simply, they're my second family. I've known them since I was probably 12, 13. I think it's been 16 or 17 years since I've known Janet and Wayne and the kids. We met through -- actually it was like my brother knew Ty first and then I got introduced to Janet, and then I met Ty, then Trevor, so on, so forth.

We were so young that I just remember playing golf with Janet, and funny enough, eventually just kept charging things on Wayne's account. I remember that. I thought it was comped but it was getting charged. Eventually Wayne helped get me an honorary membership at Sherwood Country Club. That's where I grew up.

I have my own account to charge on now. Even the last off-season I practiced at The Grove with Wayne and been around some amazing greatest athletes, and, yeah, it's just where every they are, that's where I go.

That's just kind of --

Q. (Regarding the wedding.)

DANIELLE KANG: I think we were playing a tournament. Yeah, I don't remember which one it was. It was April; might have been Hawaii. It was a dark month for me. I don't really remember.

Q. With that time away comes an opportunity to find perspective. You touched on that a little bit. Curious, what perspective did you find on the sport of golf and your role in it in your time away?

DANIELLE KANG: Like it's not that big of a deal. Like nothing -- I guess health is the most important and being happy. My mom always says, be happy. I guess no matter how much money you have, success you have, and what's the next tournament to play, all in all you just have to be healthy and happy.

It's that simple. I think that's what I learned. Funny enough, while I was away I reached that blissfulness where I just felt healthy and happy. That's why I came back out.



I mean, my mom probably had to deal with a lot of my mood swings, and I would not leave her house, so I was just at her house the entire time, most of the time. And even that, I haven't been able to spend that kind of quality time with my family, my brother being down the road, doing things around my house, buying furniture. It's something that I haven't experienced because I haven't been home.

So it was kind of nice perspective to see that, hey, it's not everything. I've been so intense and desperate to play golf, and I love the game, but I don't really need to be that desperate. I think that's the difference from back then and now. I'm excited to compete. I will always be a competitor. But I don't feel like -- I'm just like urging to -- wanting that desperately. I think that's what's gone.

Q. You mentioned earlier you have sort of re-examined how you practice. Can you get into more detail about how the practice routine has changed?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, so I usually come out tournaments around 2:00 p.m., or 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., I come in and out afternoon and stay here until about 8:00 p.m.

I do putting drills for about two and a half hours. I do (indiscernible) drills for another hour, hike balls, I go play nine holes, come back, and do some more putting drills.

It's a lot. I realize that there is a limit that I can be focused on, and I've always learned quality over quantity. However, I've always thought if I put in quality and quantity I can rise on top.

Sometimes I think it does -- what's the word I'm looking for -- like an opposite effect. Now that I've learned -- before someone told me I could only practice for 30 minutes. What could I possibly get done in 30 minutes? I figured it out. What can I get done in 45 minutes?

As I kind of gotten bigger and later on the timings got -- the range has gotten wider, I had so much time to play with that I was able to play with my golf game a little bit better and smarter than I used to.

I think that comes with -- like I said, the word desperation is very important to me. It's because I'm not desperate to figure out how to hit a 3-wood. I'm not so fixated. It's like, okay, let's take a step back. I can go putt a little bit and chip and it'll be fine.

Like my mom always says, even if you top it, honey, you probably will not top it the next shot.

So that's kind of the mindset. Like it's okay. I came pretty -- yeah, I don't know. It took a lot of time.

Q. For two of your wins, Brooke was a runner-up for those. Do you have a bit of rivalry with her? How much can you relate playing on her home course like this?

DANIELLE KANG: I actually didn't hear the question. I'm sorry. Didn't want to cut you off but I missed it.

Q. Sorry. For two of your wins on the LPGA you beat Brooke Henderson, who was a runner-up. Do you have a bit of a rivalry going with her, and can you relate to her playing at home?

DANIELLE KANG: I don't believe I have a rivalry with Brooke. You can ask Brooke that. Which one is the other one that I finished?

THE MODERATOR: I don't know off the top of my head.

DANIELLE KANG: KPMG, I know that. She waited and congratulated me after that. No, I really adore Brooke. I've known her since she was 11 I think, and my dad was in awe of her actually. She knows the story.

She had these little ankle pants on with a belt and she just carried her Sunday bag and she was 11 or 10 and was just charging. My dad looked at her and said, she's going to be something big one day.

I'm still, what, like seven years older than her I think, and I remember that Brooke Henderson, and she hasn't changed a bit since then, that she's just a feisty, charging player. I really respect that.

I even talked to her yesterday and said congrats on winning Evian. It was amazing to watch. I don't think we have rivalry. I don't know.

Q. It was the Tournament of Champions earlier this year that she finished second to you?

DANIELLE KANG: Solo second?

Q. Yeah, yeah.

DANIELLE KANG: Oh. I didn't even know I won, so -- at the time, so...

Q. Curious, you talked about the competition and being competitive. Is that the thing that you missed the most about the LPGA Tour --

DANIELLE KANG: Yes.

Q. -- when you were away?

DANIELLE KANG: Simply, yes. I love competition. Back in the day I just loved to win. You know, playing martial arts -- competing in martial arts for over a decade when I was younger, it's a one-on-one match -- everybody is panicking about that fan. It feels good, though.

I just love to win, love to compete one-on-one. But golf game, you're not going to go very far by just loving to win, right? So I had to learn to lose, and I think that's kind of what I changed with, as hating to lose to loving to win. And that will never go away.

I couldn't watch half the LPGA so I didn't watch Thursday and Friday. It was because I wanted to be out there. So there was ways for me to step back and be happy and watch the players compete on their levels on how hard they worked to be in that position.

So I was able to relate, so I couldn't put myself in a situation and say, I wish I could be there. It was very a separated feeling. But I'm really -- the competition, like that's what I love, right? That's why I play.

Q. A quick follow up about this week in particular. When did you decide on, yes, this is the one I'm going to return to? Was it like I'm ready to give it a go or I had penciled it in? How do you decide this week was going to be the week you returned?

DANIELLE KANG: It was pretty last minute actually, but -- because we went day by day. I'm a very stubborn person. I'm not an easygoing person when it comes to golf, I wanted to come back out as fast as I could and my goals were not realistic. We had to keep pushing time but we had to feel that I will be back at any moment, any given time.

That was kind of our mindset, that maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day. Eventually I told them I felt good. We had a consistent two weeks showing up and working out and being able to play golf for consistently two hours a day, being able to hit golf balls, work on stuff with Butch, walk the golf course, and I just felt good and I didn't want to miss the Canadian Women's Open.

I thought this would be the perfect place to come back. I mean, Canadians are so chill, right? You come out here, everyone is just so -- I feel like I'm at home. Nice crowd, like a home crowd. I don't know why. It's just the vibe I always get.

So I wanted to come here.

Q. By the way, in 2017 when you played here you finished tied for 20th, 5-under par. You said you don't remember that.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you for reminding me.

Q. It was good. Good job.

DANIELLE KANG: Okay.

Q. My question to you, though, I just want to know about your Olympic experience. You played for the U.S. team at what turned out to be the 2021 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. On one hand you're playing in the Olympics and representing your country, and on the other hand it was probably super hot, a lot of COVID restrictions, and no fans. What was your experience like there?

DANIELLE KANG: My experience simply was that I'm an Olympian. I mean, sometimes I sit at home and think about my accomplishments, what I have done. You have to look it over, because there are moments in my life where I thought my career was done. Done meaning not being able to play at the apex, the level that I can play. That's how I compare my game to.

So I thought, you know, maybe this is the time. Maybe I don't have a choice. But then I think back and I go, could I have done more, won more majors? Wish I would've won the U.S. Open.

Then I look back, and one thing that sticks out is I'm an Olympian. I'm a United States Olympian. Not a lot of people can say that, especially golfers. I related the United States. It's pretty amazing.

I just tell myself whether you medalled or not, whoever comes out to the Olympic Games to represent their country is pretty incredible.

I was surrounded by the fastest, strongest. The world's best athletes around the world in the Olympic Village. That was pretty cool. I looked around and I go, wow, these are actually the best athletes in the world.

Q. You have spoken about the golf prep that you've done for this week. Previously you spoke about the physical prep you had to go through just to be able to play. Are you still having to do that, and what is that routine or regimen like?

DANIELLE KANG: Oh, man. You know, I used to just wake up and just roll out of bed and swing a driver. Yeah, I can't do that anymore. I got to do this whole full warmup

thing and make sure that my hips are activated, stretched. Yeah, it's like a full warmup session that has gotten longer, but it doesn't mean it's worse. It's just I have to be more cautious and more aware of how to activate your body and be ready to go swing at 90 to 100 miles per hour.

I can't just go up and start swinging like I used to when I was 15. I think that goes with a lot of athletes, that as you get older you just have to maintain your body as well as I can. Just reality.

Q. (Regarding age.)

DANIELLE KANG: I think it's just being an athlete for over a decade, right? I've been on tour for over ten years. I played golf for over, I don't know, now 15 years. Having the same motion, I mean, everyone is going to have wear and tear.

I don't believe I think there is a single player out here that doesn't warm up at this point unless they're rookies and just feel ready to go, fresh.

But it comes with age. It's inevitable. Not that I'm old, but...

THE MODERATOR: You're not old, believe me. We're glad to have you back. So happy to have you back. Good to see your smile and see you out there on the first tee tomorrow.

DANIELLE KANG: Thank you.

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