

Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G

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Maineville, Ohio, USA

TPC River's Bend

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, very pleased to be joined by defending champion of the Queen City Championship presented by P&G, Lydia Ko. Lydia, welcome back to TPC River's Bend. When you think back on your win last year, what sticks out the most?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, you know, obviously had a great final round. I didn't even realize until I was watching the TV today that that was a course record here.

Yeah, you know, I think it's a great golf course. The course dried up a lot from Monday to Sunday just with the weather being really hot, so I feel like we got a little bit of everything.

It was I think extra special winning this one after the stretch I had in Europe, and it was my first tournament back after the Women's Open, so I kind of proved it to myself that I don't need to prove it to anybody else, that that wasn't just a lucky stretch of three weeks.

But, yeah, you know, I won the U.S. Women's Am in Ohio. I had multiple wins in Ohio state, so it was kind of nice to add to that collection.

Q. Has the course changed from year to year?

LYDIA KO: Obviously we played at I think Kenwood before we came to TPC River's Bend, and the two golf courses are very different. I do think this year the course is not as dry as what it got to on the weekend of last year.

I don't know if the team is planning to dry up the course as the week goes on. As of now it's not as dry, so definitely hitting longer clubs into the greens.

If it stays this way I wouldn't be surprised if the scores aren't as low as it was.

Q. This field is usually stacked. What is it about this



event and area that brings you and some of the bigger names on our Tour back here to Cincinnati?

LYDIA KO: This time of year I think it's a little bit easier with travel. We have a little bit of break until our fall Asia Swing. Playing here and then in Arkansas, it's not as difficult as going from maybe on the west coast to going somewhere in New Jersey.

So I think logistically it's easier for us. It's also the last few weeks leading up to our Asian swing again, so some people are trying to get into those stretch of events.

You know, each tournament counts going to CME, so it kind of goes both ways, where people, either if they're comfortably in CME might cruise and maybe only play a couple and no Asia. If you're trying to work your way in you're trying to get as many points as you can.

It's a great location. The golf course is great. The tournament organizers have always put on a good job. So it's great to come to an event where we feel like there is a lot of support. And whether it's the sponsors or the golf course or the local community they are just excited to have us.

I think that makes us more excited to put on a show. It is that time of the year where people do kind of -- there is a bit of a change in schedule just kind of seeing how the next couple months is going plan out.

Q. You touched on this a moment ago. The time you won here last year. You described it as a fairytale. How do you feel coming back and what the year has been like since then?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's been over a year since Paris and obviously St Andrews. It's gone by really quick. I honestly just got my Paris Olympic flags last week or a couple weeks ago. I was giving out to some of my team and the club reps that helped me out here. I was like I'm sorry it's like a year late.

But it's crazy to think it's been a year. It's crazy to think that even happened a year ago. Time goes by so fast and



maybe I wish I was playing more in that form then than now. But I think there is -- that's the thing about golf and the season. It's just so long and it's really hard to be consistent week in, week out.

But that's what we're thriving for. I had my first top 10 finish in a few months in Canada, and that's also a very special place for me in my career. So hopefully that will give me good momentum come into this week. I've got my sponsors event in Korea for Hana Bank next week as well.

Yeah, it would be a great time of the year to ramp it up again. I'm excited to play in Korea for the International Crown with three very new teammates.

Yeah, it's an exciting time. There is still -- I've still got six kind of events to go so still, so a lot of golf to be played. But I'm excited and I feel like my game is not far off and it's just about dialing it in.

That's the name of the game. It's a game of inches and a couple shots here and there that can make a huge difference. Yeah, hopefully be able to just keep building the momentum and see where that puts me at the end of the year.

Q. Your putter was red hot in Canada. What was difference or what did you find that you can carry into this week?

LYDIA KO: I have no idea, but I was so excited that my putting was so good. I've been -- like my driving has been decent. I've hit -- my driving is normally the thing that puts me down, if anything.

But even when I missed the cut at Evian or wasn't playing as well, I would hit between 9 to 11, 12 fairways out of 14, which is not bad; especially if you're in the double digits it's pretty good.

But then I was still missing cuts, so like my iron game has not been as sharp and my putting literally went out the window starting the week of Frisco. You know, that's a part of my game that I kind of bank on a lot. I just worked hard with my putting coach Chris and Paul out there and Holton.

But sometimes you do everything right and it doesn't fall. I honestly don't even know what the difference was in Canada, but I was so excited. I told like all my coaches and I called Paul at Scotty Cameron. I had the best putting week.

So, yeah, it's exciting. I have a new putter this week but it's the same putter. It's the same putter; it's just black instead of being brown.

So I tried so many putters in the off week during that time that I was struggling to see maybe just something new would just change it up a little bit for me.

But I realize that the gamer that I had was the one. My started lines and everything was good. I just wasn't holing as many putts. Yeah, I've got a new same putter. I said it's like I've got a hotter version of my old putter, yeah.

Q. When did you put the brown version in the bag?

LYDIA KO: I mean, I've had that model of putter since 2022 I think. Around actually the Arkansas week I think I remember I changed to that putter. I changed out of it in '23 for a couple months and then later came back to using it.

So it's been really good for me. I've had a couple variations of the same putter. That exact putter I put in my bag at Chevron last year. It's not like a magic wand where you put it in and it does its magic straightaway.

Obviously I've had good and bad weeks with it. This is on honestly the same, measuring the same, looks the same; it's just a different color.

I think this Scotty Cameron model has just worked really well for me.

Q. Was there a reason you had to make a change to the black?

LYDIA KO: The reason why I came up with the black was I tried so many different putters, so many different models of Scotty Camerons. Seems like my one is the best performing, so if I want to just kind of like have something different but have the same putter, I was like, why don't I just color it black?

There is no technical reason behind it. I know black is a slimming color, but that's about it. The putter head looks exactly the same. It's built the same. I trust the team there. I said, yeah, so how about we just color it black so it's something different.

They wanted me to have my gamer so that I didn't have two, three weeks where I didn't have my gamer because it takes a bit of time to build a new one. So that was a very one-way kind of thought process between going from brown to black.

I think I'm probably going to travel with both because I know they're exactly the same, too. Yeah.

Q. What are your thoughts about the course and the facilities and the hospitality compared to the rest of the Tour, especially with this being the second year at this facility?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's great. Obviously we have player dining and it's a great locker room. They did a great job with the pro-am party yesterday. There were so many different varieties of food, which is obviously great because a lot of our sponsors, not only Kroger and P&G, whether it's the golf club or other local sponsors, they're just having a good time.

The golf course is in good shape. Like I said before, the golf course seems to be a little bit -- it's less dry so there is a bit more moisture on the fairways, especially compared to what it was last year.

But I don't know if the -- if that's how they're planning for it to play out or if the weather will affect that a little bit.

Yeah, I think it's great. I think as part of our Tour we're very grateful we get to go to these great locations and play all over the U.S. and even overseas.

You know, I think 99.9% of the time it's to a very high caliber and we get a lot of things for free just by being here. So I think as players we are grateful for the hospitality and for them just putting in countless hours for us the whole week.

Q. I'll do the obligatory Cincinnati question. With winning here last year, outside of TPC River's Bend, the area, is there things in the Cincinnati area that you have enjoyed during your time here?

LYDIA KO: For me, my number one interest outside of my family and my dog, who is my family, is food. So I would say we went to -- my sister and I ate out a lot and our favorite restaurant or are the two Korean ones. A little biased. I think one is called Torsote (phonetic) and a lot of other players were there too. And then the other one was Sushi'O's, so shoutout to them.

But I know there is a huge like amusement park here so my physios were trying to go there at some point between last weekend and this week. I'm more after Netflix and chill kind of person when it comes to like my off time during the week.

Going to good restaurants a probably one of my favorite things to do and those two are my favorite as of now.

Q. With all you accomplished in the game of golf, Hall of Fame, defending champion, you've been world No.

1, what do you use as motivation and what still drives you to compete at the highest level?

LYDIA KO: Golf is a pretty crazy game and I don't know if we're crazy or the sport itself is crazy. There is no perfect score. I think -- I don't know how many shots I won by -in the end last year, but you come off that and go, oh, maybe if I did this better I could have shot an even better score.

It's almost like you can take yourself down a rabbit hole as well because there is no perfect. Because of that, doesn't matter if you're the number one ranked player like Jeeno or the 100th on the CME list, you're just striving to be better because you have to. If you stay in the same spot you're not really going to be in the same spot when time goes by. So, yeah, it's just I think I know that there is parts of my game that needs to be better, and sometimes having the perfect stats doesn't correlate to me winning more. Obviously it increases my chances, but just to be more and more consistent is probably my goal.

Just enjoying my time out here and I know -- I don't really know when the end is going to be, but I feel like when I do step away I'm definitely going miss it. So just enjoy it as much as I can when I'm still around.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Lydia.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.

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