

Mizuho Americas Open

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center at the Mizuho Americas Open. I am joined by Lydia Ko. Let's just talk a little bit looking forward to this week what you're most excited about being at Liberty National, seeing Michelle around as tournament host.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I played this event last year and obviously that was our inaugural event. I really enjoyed it. Got to play all four days, and especially on the weekend playing with the AJGA players, I think I was out there with them, they're playing better than me.

But it's such a fun event. We get to stay in New York. It's not often you say you ferry over to the golf course. And we're at a championship golf course here.

So, yeah, it's been a fun week so far. I really enjoyed to last year. Especially now that Michelle is officially retired it's great to be able to have these opportunities to run into her.

It's awesome to see how she's giving back to the game of golf and really bringing generations together.

Q. Michelle talked a little bit about it yesterday, but the importance of having juniors in the field and getting them the experience to play with professionals, is that the same way you feel about it, and how excited are you to see some of the juniors?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I totally agree. I think when I was an amateur playing a couple of these LPGA events as sponsor invites or being able to qualify in, it was such a cool experience just to be inside the ropes with them. And not only in the tournament rounds, but also in the practice rounds, because I feel like it's a little bit more relaxed and you can kind of pick their brains on few things that you're curious about.

I think when you do make that transition to turning pro, whether it's after collegiate golf or beforehand, to know a few of the faces and not feel like you're completely in the dark is always such a -- like a little bit more comforting.

You know, I've been lucky enough to play in I think a few generations within my years on tour, and to be able to see the next generations. And I'm sure a few of them, they may turn pro early and we may be on tour at the same time, so it's just a really cool environment here, and I think we can all kind of learn from each other.

I played with AJGA player, Nikki Oh, the past couple days and she was great and she played so good. And especially because I know her father, Ted as well. So, yeah, it's a lot of fun. I think it just great to have these kind of events where it's a little bit different to our normal week in, week out.

Q. When Nelly was just in here she said she wasn't thinking about the streak; she was focusing on her game. With you, do you think about the Hall of Fame or is that when it comes it comes?

LYDIA KO: Honestly I think I thought about it a little bit more last year. I said in other interviews being in this the Hall of Fame was never really a goal of mine because I thought it was so far out there that I probably was never going to be like the group that's in the Hall of Fame.

So after having a great year in '22 obviously that opportunity came real quick and something that had never really been in my mind like came very apparent.

I think last year my goal was, okay, I just want to get in the Hall of Fame because you're only two points away. At the same time it's easier said than done. I've had streaks where I haven't won for three years or more, and Nelly may make it look easy winning five times in a row, but I'm sure internally it's not easy.

That's why it's so impressive how consistently she's been playing. Now I think especially winning the first tournament this year at my home club at Lake Nona, it's a little bit less pressure, and I feel like if I keep working on the right things and progressing, then the opportunities are going to come.

Sometimes I'm going to be able to follow through; sometimes I'm not. But that's just the nature of it. I'm playing alongside the best female golfers every week. To



contend at a high level week in, week out is very difficult.

So I'm just going to keep working on the things with my coach and my team, and I feel like if it's meant to happen it's going to happen. But I'm not trying to set my end goal to just be in the Hall of Fame.

As long as I'm competitively playing I want to win as many times as I can and kind of surpass that and not only just look at, okay, I'm just one point away.

Q. This course with the rain, how do you play it? Is there certain things you need to do?

LYDIA KO: I've never played the course in the rain, so today is going to be a great opportunity for that. Last year I remember the course being very firm and fast. I think we played a couple weeks later, more towards the end of May last year. Maybe that's what is making the course play a little bit differently.

The good thing is we've had some crazy weather conditions this year, from 45 mile an hour winds, not even gusts, to rain, and I was joking that we haven't really had a perfect 75 degree like five mile an hour wind kind of day.

I think because we played in all sorts of different and difficult conditions I'm just out there, oh, it's just raining today, not making it a big deal. Everybody is playing in the same conditions.

In some ways I'm sure the holes are going to play a little bit easier where you could normally run out, and some ways it's going to be a little bit more difficult.

I'm just going to play with what I get. I'm playing the pro-am in an hour or so, so be a good opportunity to get a look at the golf course before tomorrow.

Q. You just were talking about keeping your head down and working on what you're working on, doing the right things. When was the last time you saw Si Woo? What are you working on?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, probably the week before the last time I saw you, which was I think the week before Chevron. It was the last time he's been over. We've had a couple FaceTime sessions and I'll always send him swings every day I'm out practicing.

Honestly the same things. And sometimes when things aren't going your way you feel like there may be new solutions to those problems. Most of the time it's really same kind of tendencies.

He's coming over for the U.S. Women's Open, so be definitely nice to see him in person. Always great to be able to do stuff I think face to face. Even though it's great we have the option to do it through video calls.

Yeah, I think we're working on the same things, trying to hit the fairways and make it into the hole in the least amount of strokes.

Q. You mentioned the U.S. Women's Open. The crowds at Lancaster were really, really good in 2015, and it sounds like they're going to be similar this year. From just a player's perspective, how much fun is it when there is a gallery like that? How important do you think fan presence is in the healthy of the tour?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I honestly can't remember a lot about that week when I was there. I was having dinner with In Gee, the champion who won at Lancaster last time we were there. I heard it was some of highest TV ratings as well that week. Yeah, I'm excited to see them. We don't really get the opportunity to play in that kind of Pennsylvania area often, so I hope the local people and the people in the area are going to be excited to see us.

I think when I was younger I honestly didn't love playing in front of the crowds. I don't think it's something that you were ever used to or felt comfortable. But during COVID when we had the span of events where there was no spectators or only my mom or another player's parent or family, they're just clapping, that's when I got to really appreciate how different it is.

The people out there are really there to support us and watch us play some good golf, so I think that was kind of the turning point for me. I was like, it's is awesome to have these people come out and watch us play.

Sometimes people with the New Zealand flag will come out and watch or have tee shirts with my name or face on it. My face on it is a little bit weird, but those are things you take for granted until it's taken from you.

I'm excited that it seems like there is going to be a great turnout in Lancaster. I was joking that now I've played on tour long enough that I'm playing all these majors at courses that I was at in my teens.

So excited to go back there, especially with like what In Gee has done with her foundation there. I think they've really cherished and loved having us there and the Women's Open there, so it's great to go back to a location like that as well.

Q. What will you do next week in the leadup?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

LYDIA KO: I'm going Florida. Just in time for the afternoon thunder storms. You know, so go back and take a couple days off, practice, and then go to Lancaster on the weekend and start working with my coach.

He has a few players there that's playing the week of the U.S. Women's Open, so be a bunch of us. It'll be nice to just play and practice with other pros. Yeah, just have a good week and I think we all know that U.S. Women's Open week, even though it's the same seven days, it just feels a little bit longer.

So making sure I'm getting plenty of rest and recovery in between.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Lydia. Appreciate it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports