

Aramco Team Series - Singapore Round One

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Singapore

Laguna National Golf Resort Club

Danielle Kang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Danielle, welcome. Early in the season, but obviously you were here a couple weeks ago. Finished top five there. How is the game feeling?

DANIELLE KANG: Game is feeling pretty solid. I love coming to Singapore and glad that I'm back. I was doing some ball testing earlier this year. It wasn't complementing me game, so I changed back to the golf ball that I used to play with last year, and it's been -- it was easier to control around the wind and stuff like that.

Showed at HSBC, so hopefully I'll showcase some good golf this week.

THE MODERATOR: And then impressions of the course here?

DANIELLE KANG: Unfortunately I haven't seen it yet. Hopefully there is no rain delay tomorrow. There is nothing in the forecast. I have to see tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: You're back at an Aramco Team Series event for the first time since New York in 2021, I believe.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: What are your thoughts on the format? Obviously different than the one with the team competition and individual as well. Do you enjoy that aspect?

DANIELLE KANG: I think it would be really cool -- I've always thought it would be really cool to have a team series in golf in general. I think the way they do the LIV golf with the teams is really special and interesting because then you have a team to root for.

So I love that there is a different format here as well. It's interesting to play with different players, and you get to go to the draft tonight. It's a bit different playing a competition



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with an amateur you don't know and two other players you're not really familiar with, but I'm excited to play this format.

Also an individual factor so I'm excited to play.

THE MODERATOR: You played Aramco Saudi Ladies International recently with the \$5 million prize fund. These events are \$1 million as well. How important is that for Aramco for kind of these events to grow the women's game?

DANIELLE KANG: Before I was weary about where I should or shouldn't play, and for me I'm more dominantly -- me schedule is dominantly decided by where I have to fly to.

I think to show support playing in Saudi Arabia when we have the \$5 million purse just a few weeks ago is a big statement, and it's because there aren't a lot of, you know, impacts where you can match that purse with the men's purse, what they also play for.

So showcasing that kind of change and that dramatic statement is important. Was very excited to see the payout of an event that I just played in, right, where you didn't win or you finished top 5, top 10, top 20, but saw the payout.

Every week in, week out I see the men's payout. That's all they post on social media, and that's not what golf is all about. But it's nice to see where we're headed, and responses like -- specifically Aramco showcasing that, even through LET, I think is very important.

THE MODERATOR: Great. We'll open it up to the floor now.

Q. You were talking at the beginning about coming back here and doing ball testing and going back to the ball you used last year. Have you seen the news this morning about the USGA and the RNA?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, I'm aware of it.

Q. Just wondering what your thoughts were on it.

DANIELLE KANG: It's hard to give you my thoughts on



that, and it's because there aren't a lot of rules set out with it yet. They're just announcing it and giving a heads up on what's going to be happening and affecting.

But -- you good?

What was I saying?

Q. Just there wasn't that much detail out there.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, like I don't know how it's going to affect women's golf specifically or my thoughts or opinions on what it should be like or shouldn't be like. I'm not in the R&D department off golf balls, right? Golf balls do matter, and I know that -- what I do know is guys do hit it really far. Like I watch it and I'm in awe of it sometimes.

So I don't know what that brings to the table. I'm not sure why people watch men's golf. Like in a general sense do they watch it for distance? Do they watch it because guys can do things that people can't?

Because a lot of times when I watch men's golf, it's to see men hit it that fast and see the ball travel and carry the ball 150 yards; it's pretty cool to see.

So an opinion on that rule change, like I really don't have any, if that makes sense.

Q. Sure.

DANIELLE KANG: Not rule change, like opinion on the announcement.

Q. Okay. It wouldn't just impact the distance. It's going to impact the putting, chipping, everything else.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, but I don't know how it -- like I can't give you an opinion, and it's because I don't know how that ball works. I haven't tried it. I don't know -- does it spin more? Does it spin less? Does it catch the downwind? Does it spin out of the air when it's into the wind?

Like that's what all these new generations of golf ball that comes out is improving on. So what exactly are they dialing back? I don't know yet, so I can't give you an answer for that.

Q. I just wanted to ask you you finished third in Singapore two weeks ago. And your last win was in it 2022?

DANIELLE KANG: Uh-huh.

Q. How do you feel about your form right now? I mean, I'm sure it's proved, but, you know.

DANIELLE KANG: What? What? What do I know? You said you know, but like what do I know? (Laughter.)

Like how do I feel about my form? It's okay, I guess. I mean, winning isn't everything, to be honest. Like I don't really understand the question. Do I feel better than did I in 2022?

Q. Yes.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. I'm so sorry. Yeah, I guess. I know what I want to work towards, where I want to be. The question itself was about my win in 2022 versus HSBC Singapore, and so those two don't correlate because it's been a year and more.

Q. Yeah. But what is it that was different from last year to this year that you managed to get a third place from your win? I'm sure in between --

DANIELLE KANG: What -- is it -- are you not satisfied -- do you think I'm not satisfied?

Q. Yeah. I mean, it's been (indiscernible).

DANIELLE KANG: I played 30 events this year, so the question is funny to me, because like I can't be this much of a critic. What is it, March? It's March, so I have a long season ahead. I'm not disappointed because I didn't win. I'm pretty happy with the way everything went.

That's about it actually.

Q. (Regarding picking players in the draft.)

DANIELLE KANG: In the draft? There is a bunch, but I don't want them stolen either, so I don't really know.

Lydia is picking last, I'm picking second to the last, and she's not telling me her player either, so we're going to keep that quiet. If all my players are taken, I'll just -- I don't know, man.

Q. Yeah, so many players.

DANIELLE KANG: There are so many players. My biggest thing was does the team money count towards like my -- it does? (Indiscernible.) Okay.

Maybe I'll just pick someone that just -- out of the field. Maybe I'll just pick a really, really young person. If it will be exciting to play, because I don't know, I don't play

European Tour often, so...

I do have specific players names, but I think they'll be taken. (Indiscernible.)

Q. You spoke about coming back to Singapore. What is so special about this country that makes you want to come back all the time? And next question is did you stay in Singapore after last week?

DANIELLE KANG: No, I went to Korea. My favorite city to visit is Korea, No. 1. Sorry. No. 2 is Singapore. Other than my home, this is my favorite place to visit, right?

So Singapore, simply put, it's a great city. It's nice. I like it. If I was a visitor I would love it. Everyone speaks English, which makes it easy for me. Food is great. What more would you want, right? Good food, culture, everything you need here.

That's what I love about it. Same thing with Korea. Food, culture, and people, everyone is really nice. Depending on where you're from everything is a little different. I don't have to get a car and drive super far and like -- you have like the island vibe here. Everyone is not too in a rush.

It's kind of nice. I like that there is like rules and it's clean.

Q. We have some of the Singapore amateur players in the field this week and they look up to you. Can you talk a little bit about how you decided what was the right age to turn pro and what kind of advice do you give now? We see so many young girls turning pro and 16, 15 even. What do you think is the right time?

DANIELLE KANG: I believe the right time is probably after college, maybe even a little bit after that. It's because I turned pro when I was 18 but also finished high school and went to college at around 16, and then 17, 18.

I wouldn't do anything different per se to my way because that's the life I already led, but I don't necessarily -- I mean, I'm going to be honest with you. I don't like that people promote a young age to be a pro. I think it's weird. You're supposed to be a kid.

You're 12, 13, 14, 15 years old. You should probably go hang out with your friends and go to school learn about team golf and fight with your friends and fight with your teammates and learn about having a coach and learn about what it's like playing for a college team.

It's part of growing up, part of life, and I don't think people should miss that opportunity, if you do have the opportunity. Professional golf will always be around.

I don't want people to feel that it's too late because they're 20 or 25. I'm 30 and I got called old since last year. I'm like, dude, I haven't even started yet. Chill.

That's how I feel about myself and that's all that matters. That's what I feel. When are you going to retire? I'm retiring? That's how I feel, because there are new 16 year olds coming up. Have you heard of so and so that's 12? It's great, but it's life.

Do you -- I've been doing this for 12 years. It's the same thing, but I love it now, like I love this. But I think I really push the fact that people should not -- I'm not going to sit here and tell you that education is the most important, but you should probably go and live that school life. Go to high school. Go to college. Go feel it out.

If you're one the best players, you should probably see how it's like winning for your college team, going to football games, going on dates. Like I don't know. Just live your life a little bit before you get a job and it's oh, my God, I three-putted again, and it's a whole thing week after week and just never ending. So that's my advice.

A lot of them don't listen. I just seen them right out here. I'm like hey, what's up? But I don't want parents to feel they have to be successful by the time they're 18 or 20 either. Doesn't mean anything. Just because you didn't set a record since you were 15 doesn't mean you're not going to be something big when you're 30.

Stacy Lewis became world No. 1 one after 30. Juli Inkster won her first U.S. Open in her 30s. You've got to think about the people that paved golf the way it's supposed to be and you're supposed to be -- find out who you are more than just a golfer.

Q. Just ask as well, do you get to play many tournaments where you have a hotel on site like this?

DANIELLE KANG: We do. I'm not a big stay-in-one-place kind of person so I have to leave. If I'm in a little bubble I will be exiting the bubble.

Like the place in Thailand, giving you an example. We stayed at this resort and it's a 25-minute walk to the nearest massage place. I don't want to walk 50 minutes a day, but I did.

So I don't like being in one place during the whole tournament week. That's just kind of how I found out about myself being on tour for that long. I want to go walk around, explore the city. I don't care if it's Arkansas or Singapore.

I'm not just stuck here to be in a hotel room. Like it here. I've never been here specifically, but I felt like I was in Thailand because the hotel is very Thai based and I didn't know that. Everything was straw hammock and mangoes and lychee. I'm like, Ooo, I'm in Thailand. Wait, I'm in Singapore.

I got in late last night. So it's nice if we don't have to drive far. That's definitely a plus.

Q. Last year wasn't the easiest year for you. You had to come back, work your way back to competing again. Would you be able to share what was the most challenging part of that process mentally and physically for you in terms of getting yourself ready to play and compete again?

DANIELLE KANG: This is going to be a long answer but I'm going to try and brief it for you. I'm still on my way of coming back. It's just a part of my life, and I think I came back earlier than I was supposed to, but then my scores showed, right, finishing second, going to playoffs, finishing third.

One thing the biggest lesson I learned is that I'm not trying to base myself as a golfer by the result of how I ended up. Like giving you an example. HSBC third round I played probably better than I played the second day and shot 9-under versus 1-under.

Things like that back in the day would bother me but it didn't because I played so well on the third day. So that's kind of the mentality that I had to relearn and I'm going to have to keep practicing week in and week out.

Probably the toughest lesson or thing I had to go through was maybe like admitting that there's just been a lot of the dramas in my 20s, and didn't want another factor to affect my journey to be the best that I can be, best in the world.

Accepting that challenge was rough for me.

I just kind of threw my hands up and said enough was enough. Just been so much shit in my life that I just didn't want to deal with, to be honest. Whether that is sickness, to family, like losing family members, just never ending.

Now this? Are you kidding me? That's how I felt, because it's battle after battle. But it's not something I can't overcome. And that's something that my mom said to me. If anybody can do it, it's you, and she's right. Sometimes it's hard to keep fighting, but if you find the joy of it and the result of it, I want people to know no matter what it might be, like it's relative, right? It could be any job. You could be homeless. Anything. You keep working towards what

you want to get to, and like you'll always make it out.

There will always be another challenge. I'm sure something else will hit me sooner or later. It's how I deal with it and handle it and learning through that process. I think last year was the biggest. I'm in a much better place because of it.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, everyone.

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