

Aramco Team Series - Singapore Round One

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Singapore

Laguna National Golf Resort Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Lydia, welcome.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: It's just first-ever Aramco Team Series event. How are you looking forward to the week.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, golf is an individual sport so I didn't have many chances since turning professional to be in kind of a team format. This one is a little bit more unique where this is still individual, every stroke counts, but at the same time, you're in a team format for the first couple days.

I'm really looking forward to it. I think it's going to be a little bit like weird to kind of grasp tomorrow, but it almost feels like a pro-am format. But it should be a lot of fun.

And I've never played this golf course, so it's nice to come to -- see something new and then just adjust to that.

THE MODERATOR: And the draft happened last night. Happy with how your team came out?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I was -- Aline was somebody that I was hoping I could be in the same group with, so when I was able to do the pick and then kind of get the present that I wanted, even though I was the last pick, I was excited.

But, yeah, we've got a great group, so I think we're going to have fun. That's the thing, it might sometimes depend more on the amateur, and I'm not sure how she or he -- like how he plays, but we're going to have a good time and I think that's the most important thing.

Yeah, so I'm excited. It's going to be very different, but I'm excited to get it started tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Good start for you. You touched on this your first time here. What's your impression so far?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, the greens are very small. I think if you



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hit it on the green you have got a pretty good chance for birdies. I think the front nine there is a little bit more water in play, so especially with the forecast of the wind being a little bit breezier like the last couple days, I think it could definitely be a factor.

But, yeah, I think if you drive it pretty well around here you can get a little bit aggressive with the pin positions, and I think if your iron play especially is good, I think that's going to be the big key for this week.

THE MODERATOR: Just one final one from me. You're playing for \$1 million prize fund this week. Obviously played Aramco Saudi Ladies International a few weeks ago and won, which was \$5 million. How important is that investment from companies like Aramco for growing the women's game around the world?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, even on our tour, on the LPGA, I think we've seen that kind of momentum, more partners supporting and believing in the women's game.

We've seen that especially the big purse jumps. You know, from Asia championship and even other ones as well. So when the ASLI was going to match the men's purse, I thought that was a very exciting momentum and change, dynamic for women's golf, and I hope that more and more partners will kind of get on this trend and see this more of equality.

But I get to play alongside the best female golfers week in, week out. Sometimes I get goosebumps seeing how good they are, so it's great that we do have these partners and are stepping forward and being with us and believing in women's empowerment.

THE MODERATOR: Open to the floor if anyone has got any questions.

Q. Welcome back. I think it was in 2012 that you played in the Queen Sirikit Cup here in Singapore. Can you tell us a little bit about your recollections of that? Also, at that stage, what were your thoughts about your own career development? Did you expect to go on and achieve what you have achieved?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I was 15, so I was just like probably any



... when all is said, we're done.®

other 15 year old: Excited to come all the way over from New Zealand to Singapore. I love being in that kind of team atmosphere. I'm very proud to wear the New Zealand fern and have our flag and to be able to represent New Zealand, so it was so much fun.

I think we played at Tanah Merah at that time. I turned professional pretty early, so I didn't get to play many Queen Sirikits. I think my first one was back home in New Zealand, and then the next two was like India and then here in Singapore.

So this was one of the I think best results that I had at those kind of events. But that tournament seems to have grown to becoming the, WAAP, is it? The had like I guess it's like -- it's great that more tournaments have -- like these players from Asia and the Pacific getting opportunities to play these kind of tournaments.

I saw some of the highlights from last week and it was super impressive that the girl that won, her drive 370 something on the last hole. Doesn't matter if it's a downhill whatever, I know for a fact my first number of is my drive not going to be in threes. So it's really cool to see that.

I think because of those kind of opportunities there are those girls are able to continue to grow, and I know that the first edition of this event I think Yuka Saso and I think Jeeno also played in that. They are multiple-time LPGA Tour winners or U.S. Women's Open champions, so it's really cool to see that.

I really enjoy playing my share of those kind of team events and World Am kind of stuff. I feel like those were like a gateway as an amateur to come and play professionally and travel all around the world.

Yeah, I don't remember a lot of it, but I remember going on the Singapore -- it's like almost the London Eye, the...

Q. Flyer.

LYDIA KO: Yeah. I remember it being very slow though. I was like, I think I've seen the whole country now but I'm still halfway to go.

But, yeah, those kind of memories were so much fun. Actually some of my best golf memories are being on the National Team. I'm sure those are the same memories that some of the other players are having right now as well.

Q. Can I just follow up? There are a few of the girls who played in the WAAP last week who are playing here this week, 15, 16 year olds. What advice would you have for them about turning professional? I know

some of them are thinking of it now.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think every player has different journeys and routes to turning professional. You see so many great players that finish, like do collegiate golf and become a professional. Some players, like Lexi, Brooke, myself, that turn professional early before going to college.

So I don't think there is one way is the right way. Just because somebody took that direction that doesn't necessary need to be the right one for you. So finding what's best for you and if you feel like you're ready, you are ready to like play on tour, go to different countries, go and be in different time zones and be kind of your independent self, I think, yeah, why not?

But I think it's hard to speak for somebody else. Sometimes I do think I wonder what it would've been like to be in that collegiate, like play collegiate golf, but I have obviously no regrets in my decisions.

Q. Obviously the team event this week and the Aramco has been going for a couple years; team golf seems to be coming more and more to the fore. Just wondering if you would like to see more of it within the professional game?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I hope that it's something that gets potentially incorporated in the Olympics. You know, just whether it's the same, like both, mixing male and female, we have that different change for us with the new event that's coming up at the end of the year for us with the PGA Tour that Grant Thornton is holding, which is super exciting.

So, yeah, I think mixed gender is -- or even same gender or team format like we have for Dow on our tour, the more the merrier. I think sometimes it is very different and team match play is very different.

For me, big picture because I don't get to play in the Solheim and New Zealand hasn't qualified in the International Crown as of yet, it would be really cool if there was something like the Presidents Cup. Something I've been whispering in the LPGA's ear.

So that's something that I would also like to be involved in.

Q. You were in Singapore just two weeks ago and now you're back. Could you just share maybe what you've done in the last two weeks or so? Did you stay on in Singapore? Did you go somewhere else?

LYDIA KO: I had some other work, so after the HSBC I left to go to Korea. Then had to do some other sponsorship

stuff. Then I went to Japan for some other stuff. Then I came here on Sunday.

A lot of traveling, but the good thing is at least I've been in similar time zones where it's only like an hour difference. I think the body clock is still in this kind of vicinity of time zone.

And, yeah, you know, normally I only play once a year here, so it's a cool opportunity to come here twice over a span of three weeks and playing different golf courses I feel like it's a new feel. You know, what we played a couple week ago we stay in the city but it's also really nice to stay kind of on site this week and have the convenience of rolling out of bed and the putting green is right there.

So, yeah, it's been great. Obviously couple weeks ago it was a very wet week, long times at the golf course with the delays, but I'm glad that we got 72 holes in.

And I think this week is -- touch wood -- meant to be really nice weather. You know, it would be great, because I think this golf course would thrive in sunny and like slightly breezy conditions.

So hopefully we can -- the weather gods have that planned the next few days.

THE MODERATOR: Anyone else? One last one.

Q. You mentioned about the hotel here. Do you get the opportunity at many events to stay on site like this? Can you tell us about the hotel a little bit? Your impressions?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, we don't have many opportunities where we can stay. There are a few domestic ones where you can literally roll out of bed and the driving range is right there.

But I like to have my curtains closed, so I have to -- even though the view is nice, I don't have to see a golf course 24/7. Yeah, the hotel is really nice. I think Dusit Thani itself is a Thai-originated hotel, so we got the warm Thai, Singaporean welcome here. Yeah, they've been treating us really well.

Because it is a resort, like all the facilities that come with, you know, there is the fitness center or the swimming pool. I've seen a lot of kids outside of the event, just people coming and having good holidays.

Yeah, I think this would be a very nice place for a holiday, so it's like a working holiday for me.

Yeah, I prefer to stay closer to the golf course as possible, but I'm very lucky that for most events either my mom or my sister or my mom and sister travels with me. And when especially my mom comes out, she is a great chef. She cooks a lot of Korean foods.

Sometimes we go to places where there is a kitchenette or something so they can make me a lot of delicious food. I say it's so good that she should own a restaurant, but then she's like it's hard enough feeding one person. She doesn't want to make it into a business.

So I feel very lucky that she like travels with me, and even when she's not here my sister is like my second mom, so she kind of helps me a lot with that. I think thanks to them it makes my life and my schedule a lot easier. I don't have to work, like think about another thing because I take my food very seriously.

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