

LIV Golf Promotions

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Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Abu Dhabi Golf Club

Karandeep Kochhar

Max Kennedy

Sampson-Yunhe Zheng

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Karandeep Kochhar from India, Max Kennedy from Ireland and Sampson-Yunhe Zheng from China. Welcome, guys.

Sampson, I'll start with you. Can you share some insights into the course this week in Abu Dhabi, and how are you feeling about your game entering the first LIV Golf Promotions event?

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, my game is feeling good. I think the golf course is playing really fair. The only way you're going to make big scores is if you kind of make mistakes on your own, just play out of it. The greens are pretty receptive. The greens aren't too fast. It's probably running around 10 and a half, 11 right now. A few scoring opportunities, just got to watch out for where to miss your shots.

THE MODERATOR: Karandeep, you're entering LIV Golf Promotions in really strong form. You've had good finishes in recent outings, including second place in the Indonesia Masters and fifth place in the China Open. Can you give us some insights into how your game feels at the moment and your approach this week in Abu Dhabi?

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: Yeah, I think last month has been pretty good for me, especially a couple weeks ago in Indonesia, missed well, so I think confidence is quite high, but overall I think the game has been pretty well over the past six months. It was just a matter of me getting one low round, so I think that has kick-started things for me.

I'm really excited for this event. The golf course is in great shape. I think it's a great opportunity for all of us players to get on a bigger tour and play with some of the best players in the world. Really excited at this opportunity, and hopefully have a good week.

THE MODERATOR: Max, as one of our emerging talents



PROMOTIONS 2023

competing this week, what was your impression of LIV Golf in 2023? Did you closely follow it, and what were your overall thoughts on the league?

MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, well, first of all, thank you very much for having me this week. LIV Golf seems to be a very exciting new thing that's happened in the game of golf, and this is my first obviously time being in a LIV Tour kind of event, and it seems like a very exciting way to play the game of golf.

I feel like golf in the past has been quite -- a little boring, so lightening that up and letting the players go and seeing what they do is a good way to play golf, and I'm all for that.

Being here this week, I'm very excited for the challenge that's ahead. I think it's a great format, and I'm looking forward to the challenge this week of competing and trying to get on to a very good tour.

Q. I just wanted to ask each of you, in terms of how much you follow LIV Golf, are there any players currently on the LIV Golf League that you kind of identify with and maybe hope to follow a similar path that they've already achieved in LIV Golf?

MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, there's obviously a lot of big names in LIV Golf. You talk about Brooks Koepka, Bryson DeChambeau, Cameron Smith, all of these guys have done great things in the game of golf, and to follow in their footsteps and do something just like they do would be phenomenal.

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, my personal favorite player is Brooks Koepka. I feel like I personally identify with him a lot. He has a great attitude on and off the course. He doesn't really care too much about what other people think or the chatter that's going on off the course.

Yeah, I've been following him a lot, and obviously him winning the PGA Championship just shows a lot this year.

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think personally coming from India, Anirban having such a great year last year, helping Crushers obviously win the title at the end of the season, and me being personally quite close with him, as well, and having played a lot of golf with him, he's a person I really look up to, so to have a chance to play with him and I've



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spoken to him quite a bit about the tour and all the stuff going around it.

It's been quite fun, and yeah, I would love to play with him and hopefully be on the same team or something like that. That would be a really exciting thing for me.

Q. All three of you guys are pretty young in your careers. How about going through a different route through LIV Golf versus maybe more the traditional routes? What's your mindset from that, your perspective in terms of being able to do something a little bit different than the norm?

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think as a player, you're always trying to get on to a bigger tour, so for me personally, I play on the Asian Tour, so to get on to the LIV Tour would be a big step up, so that's what my mindset is, just try to play with better competition. I think that's the biggest thing for me. If I can get on from the Asian Tour to the LIV Golf Tour, that would be amazing.

I know it's not the traditional route, but as a player if I get more opportunities to play with a better field, that's it for me. I don't want anything more than that.

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, for me as an amateur, I personally just look for whatever opportunity that's available to me, whether it's -- LIV has a great tour with a lot of great players, so that's definitely one of the options for me, and I want to be able to play with some of the world's best.

MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, I'm the exact same as the guys. If there's an opportunity that arises, I'm going to take it. As golfers we only get very few opportunities when we go from amateur to pro, and you're going to take everything you get once you have the opportunity, so this is another great week and another great opportunity to move on to the professional ranks.

Q. I assume if you guys got one of the top three spots you'd turn pro?

MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, I mean, I'm not going to answer that question directly because it's a very hard one to answer right now, but I'd definitely consider it.

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: What he said, yeah.

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I'm a pro already, so...

Q. Karandeep, you tend to play pretty well at the end of the year, what you call the business end of the season. What is it about the end of the year that you

feel like you come into your own?

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think I've done it a couple of seasons now where I think Jan until October or November has been pretty mediocre for me, and then I think November and December I've ended up playing pretty well. I think it's just about being patient and staying at it for as long as possible, and I think I've done that.

I think middle of the season or before December, I think I was playing really good golf, but I think things were just not panning out for me. But I was patient out there, so I think that patience has really helped me. Once I knew that I would get these opportunities, I would do well.

I think it's part playing your best golf at the business end of the season I would like to call it, so I think I've been able to do that well. I think I've been playing really well under pressure these last couple events, so I think I just try to make the most out of these situations and just try to stay calm and be in the moment. I think that's what's really helped me play well in these big events.

Q. Sampson, how much of an advantage do you have being able to not play until Saturday? You have that first round, I think, that you don't have to compete in?

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, I think it definitely gives you a little bit of advantage. On Friday I can kind of see how the course plays, how the conditions change, how the scores unfold a little bit. So yeah, definitely an advantage to that.

Q. Will you change your practice schedule at all in the lead-up to Saturday?

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Tomorrow just as usual I think I'm going to play the course. Maybe not 18 holes but probably most of it, and Friday it's more of kind of an adjustment, kind of dial in some distances and dial in the speed on the green type of day, just a little more relaxed.

Q. Max, obviously you have another friend here that's in the field from Ireland. How much are you guys enjoying this week?

MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, the weather is certainly better than in Ireland right now, so certainly that's a big plus. And the whole camaraderie about the event is fantastic, and we're enjoying every minute of it right now, so yeah, really enjoying it.

Q. About the team concept, that's a big part of LIV. Obviously as younger players you're part of teams. How much does that appeal to each of you?

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MAX KENNEDY: Yeah, I'm in college in America, and that's obviously a team environment, so I'm well used to the team environment, and I love the team environment, having people around you that are fighting for -- to become the best is great, and I love it. I love the concept of LIV and the team environment about it.

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, I completely agree with what Max said. I'm also on a college team right now, and it's usually five-pick-four. I know LIV is usually four-pick-three, so it's a very similar format. I played with Max and Ryan over the summer at a team competition at the Arnold Palmer Cup, and that was really fun. Just to have these guys to compete with and get better with, it's a lot.

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think it's great. I think it adds a sense of fun and excitement to the sport, which I think no other league has done before, especially in pro golf. That sense of camaraderie between the players I think is really fun to see, and I think the audience kind of wants that, players playing for just more than themselves.

I think it's a really fun aspect, and I'm really looking forward to it if I got the opportunity. I think it should be amazing.

Q. If I could get your reflection on the format and your strategy going into this week.

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think it's a great format. Honestly, I think you really have to be -- there's no room for error I think from day one. I think you can afford to be maybe average or a little -- I think you can get through with being okay or maybe just being good the first two days, but I think the last day is kind of a shootout event because the way I look at it is if you're playing Sunday, it's 20, 25 players playing for three spots. There's always one or two guys which are going to go super low, so you're literally playing for a spot or maybe two spots.

I think it's fun. I think it's fun. No room for error, and you just have to be aggressive, and I think this golf course presents that kind of opportunities. The rough isn't that thick, and the greens are receptive, so I think with the way the course is set up, I think it's just the perfect format.

It's really going to be a test on Sunday. I think 36 holes, given the weather, I think it's going to be hot that afternoon, so I think it's a good test of not just your game, your skill, but also your endurance, mentally and physically both. I think whoever gets those three spots will have definitely -- he'll have worked for it for sure. Really excited to see how it all unfolds.

Q. (On playing 36 holes.)

KARANDEEP KOCHHAR: I think the last time I played 36 holes was probably six years ago, so it's been a while, so I don't know how my body is going to hold up. Just excited to see; let's see. Definitely some calls to my nutritionist and my team back home to see how I can be ready for that Sunday hopefully if I'm there.

Yeah, really interested and really excited to see how it all unfolds.

SAMPSON-YUNHE ZHENG: Yeah, I think it's a special format that nobody has ever seen before, two cuts and then 20 players on the last day. It really identifies, I think, the players who can play under pressure, making the cut on the first day and then again on the second day and three spots out of the 20 on the third day, on a 36-hole day, too.

I think on Sunday it's going to be a little different from the first two days. Like you said, it's going to be a shootout. You have to go very, very low and play aggressively, but yeah, that's what identifies the world's best, so I think it's a great format.

MAX KENNEDY: Just touching on what the guys said, I'm looking forward to the format. I think it's a very good test of your resilience and how you play out there. You've got to play well all the time. There's not a lot of room for mistakes.

But for the 36-hole day, I'm in college and we play 36-hole events -- well, 54, but 36-18 a lot, so we're kind of used to that 36-hole day feeling. I think that could help a lot going into the last day.

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