

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Wednesday, 28 July 2021
Saitama City, Saitama, Japan
Kasumigaseki Country Club

Sungjae Im

Siwoo Kim

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions. My first question for both players. How does it feel to be here at the Olympics representing Korea?

SIWOO KIM: This is my first time being an Olympian and I am very proud of myself and the honor to be part of this Olympic games. As a representative for my nation I'll always try to do my best.

SUNGJAE IM: It was my dream since I was a little kid, being an Olympian, and I can't believe this happened to me. And as a representative for my nation I'll do my best and show my best play to all people in Korea and my fans and all people supporting me.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open for questions.

Q. Did anything bother you with the time difference?

SIWOO KIM: No, not at all. I arrived in Korea a couple days ago and the time is the same in Korea and Japan, so there would be no problem at all.

Q. Can you talk about the condition of the grass?

SIWOO KIM: I think the condition of grass in Japan and Korea is similar, so that it would not be a big problem.

Q. Sungjae, do you have experience playing in Japan and how do you think the course will suit you?

SUNGJAE IM: Yes, I do have experience playing in Japan for two years in 2016 and 2017, if I'm correct, and because I have the experience, the condition of the fairway and condition of the green is so good in Japan, so when I am making iron shots that will be no problem to me and I feel so comfortable.

Q. For both players, there's been so much talk on the

outside about a medal to avoid military service. Is that anything you've thought about or is it easy for you to think strictly of playing this golf tournament?

SIWOO KIM: I know it's true that if we earn a medal the Korean government will exempt us from serving military, but I don't really, like, focus or think about the service in the military. My only goal is to win the championship and get medal and be honored.

SUNGJAE IM: Also, I only think focus and think about the winning games, not the military problem. So, yeah, that's it.

Q. Siwoo, could you kind of compare, what would be a bigger deal back home in South Korea and to the South Koreans, winning a major or winning a medal?

SIWOO KIM: As an athlete, a player, my opinion, I think I should do all the best for every game. Even though it's like PGA TOUR tournament or Olympic games, it doesn't matter to me. It's just same tournament to me. So as a player, the first priority is doing my best.

Q. For both players, how did you spend the week of the Open Championship and how did not playing help you prepare for this week?

SUNGJAE IM: I wanted to get used to the time difference between Japan and United States, so I went, I flew to Korea because the time difference, the time is the same here, so I made myself so comfortable and relaxed and prepared for the Olympic games.

Q. When did you arrive in Korea and then when did you arrive in Japan?

SUNGJAE IM: I arrived in Korea the 14th of July and I arrived in Japan on the 23rd of July.

Q. A question for each player. Siwoo, when the COVID shut down golf in 2020 you were pretty far down the ranking. Do you feel very fortunate to be here after winning American Express and being on the rise again?



SIWOO KIM: Because of the COVID situation, the COVID pandemic situation last year, I, my ranking was a little bit down, but I tried to keep myself so that I think that could make me join the team this year in the Olympic games.

Q. For Sungjae, when you turned pro and spent the two years in Japan before going to the whatever, the Korn Ferry TOUR, why did you choose that route and how much did those two years prepare you for the immediate success you had in America?

SUNGJAE IM: The reason I started the JGTO first was I thought that the environment, like, such as the facilities in JGTO are similar to the PGA TOUR in States, so I could get used to it first and then like that made, that was my chance to improve myself, so that was my chance to go to United States PGA TOUR.

Q. First, tell me about your goal and strategy to be a medalist.

SIWOO KIM: I thought instead of like practicing every day and make myself tired, I tried to make my physical, tried to make myself physical condition better, so I think I am ready for this tournament.

SUNGJAE IM: I've been practicing on the course for a couple of days here, since I arrived in Japan, so I think I pretty much know about the course now and that would help me to play well tomorrow.

Q. A couple months ago I know you were struggling with your iron shots, but now I think your iron shots are getting better.

SIWOO KIM: Yes, it is true. Two or three months ago I was struggling with my iron shots and now I've been talking with K.J. Choi, who is my team leader, and practicing iron shots and it is getting better and getting stable. And while I was on the course for the practice rounds, I tried to estimate the pin position on the corners, so I try to aim at the corners and that helped me.

THE MODERATOR: We have a question here via the chat just about having K.J. Choi as your director, having him here. How special or important is it to have K.J. here with you and any good advice he's given you as part of being team Korea?

SUNGJAE IM: When we were practicing on this golf course, K.J. Choi was with us all the time and he always used to tell us, When you make your iron shots, just look at the straight to the pin and you have to make your ball stop in 3 feet from the pin, so...

THE MODERATOR: Sounds easy.

SUNGJAE IM: But that kind of advice made us a little more comfortable and gave confidence and that was a lot of help for us.

Q. For both players, please. Do you have any particular memories of the Olympic games in general from growing up watching on the TV and any special moments that stick in your mind?

SIWOO KIM: Yes, I do have. It was 2012 in London Olympics when I was always watching. It was not golf, but I watched the football because I like football. When the Korean team won the bronze medal that really impressed me. But, yes.

SUNGJAE IM: Honestly, I don't have like memory about the Olympic games, but whenever Korean teams, it doesn't matter which sport it was, whenever the Korean team won gold medal, I was also happy about that.

THE MODERATOR: Final question from the chat is: How close or how good friends are you two? And if you could each say something you respect or admire about the other player.

SIWOO KIM: So even though we knew each other like a long time ago when Sungjae was in elementary school and Siwoo was in middle school and we used to know each other a long time. And when Sungjae was, because Siwoo is older, and he was like best player, another player in Korea, Sungjae and his friends were like admiring him, like, he said he was like a God in Korea.

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