

Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Wednesday, 4 August 2021

Saitama City, Saitama, Japan

Kasumigaseki Country Club

Lydia Ko

Quick Quotes

Q. How do you assess your opening round?

LYDIA KO: There were some good and there was some bad as well, but I think when I was out of position for the most part I was able to recover really well and there was a lot of golf ahead of you, so even though that's the case you don't want to be making clumsy mistakes. So I think for the most part I was able to kind of tidy that up. Hopefully I'll be able to tidy up the game a little bit better overall and just give myself more opportunities the next few days.

Q. It looked like you had a hard time on the back nine. An up-and-down on 13 to stay even. How important were those couple little moments where you were fighting to get a couple strokes back?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, starting from 11 like what could have gone wrong I pretty much hit one bad shot after another and after another. So when that kind of happens and you were playing well it takes that, it kills the gas on the momentum. But making that putt definitely helped and then with the next being a par-5 I think I tried to take advantage of that. But if you're out of position with some of the lies you can get in the rough it's tough. So you have to be patient and just play smart. But at the same time I think it can affect your mind. I'm trying to play aggressive because there's only three people that's going to medal at the end of the week and you're hoping that you would be one of them.

Q. Conditions something else. I know you played all around the world in all sorts of heat. How does this stack up? Is there an optimal time to tee off this week?

LYDIA KO: The optimal time to tee off is very early, but then that also means I'm playing very bad, so I would rather play late and have to survive this heat. This is the summer Olympics, we're getting full summer right in our face, but everyone's playing in the same conditions, so you, it's not like it plays to an advantage to someone that's



playing a little earlier. I personally don't think it makes a huge difference, but, yeah, when I'm out there I'm just trying stay cool, stay hydrated and I think that really connects to being focused. So that's a really important part of actually the technical stand points.

Q. I know that you stand on the tee week in week out and they say, On the tee from New Zealand, Lydia Ko. What is it like at the Olympics? Is it a different feel?

LYDIA KO: I'm very proud to represent New Zealand on a daily basis, playing on Tour. Representing New Zealand in 2016 was probably one of the biggest highlights of my life, not as a golfer but as a person as well. So I cherish those moments, I even got the Olympic rings tattoo with the fern. So I feel like New Zealand is just always there and even though I don't get to go back home a lot, people always support me and I feel the love, so I'm just trying to hopefully do everyone back at home all the Kiwi's proud and even if things don't go well smile and just have a good time because it a huge honor to be able to represent your country.

Q. Team having some great success as well. Are you enjoying seek all the other athletes succeed?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think yesterday there were a couple gold, silver. 15 medals I had seen before I teed off today. So it's pretty amazing and it's all different type of sports from boxing to water sports and athletics and it's just really cool to be a part of a group of such talented athletes and we're all just trying to do New Zealand proud. So, yeah, I feel like it's a whole big family when we're out here playing.

Q. You play golf in hot conditions all the time. How does this compare?

LYDIA KO: Normally this time of the year in Florida is pretty warm, in Orlando and no matter where I go it's cooler than Florida. But I feel like this is pretty on point similar. So you would think at that point I would be pretty climatized to this kind of temperature, but it's up there, I was talking to In Bee and we're like, I don't know if it's hotter here or if it's hotter in Thailand and Singapore. And that's a big statement, because that is probably one of the warm he's

tournaments we play. But yeah just trying to stay cool. Obviously when you're playing well it makes you feel cooler, like hotter, but cooler, but, yeah everyone's just playing under the same conditions, so using, being under the umbrella, in the shade or having the ice pack is super important. But we knew it was super hot when I think Derek, he put ice in my ice pack on the tee and by the time I was on the green the ice was all melted on that same hole. So that's how hot it is for everyone out there wondering why we're sweating so much.

Q. (No Microphone.)

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I saw, I think, the fan in the media center and I was and then on number, like 2, when we were practicing and I told Derek, I was like, Derek, you wouldn't mind like carrying this fan, will you? And he's like, No. But there are some of those bottle fans. Christina has one. But I think when you're over there playing and you can feel the drips of sweat, it's warm. But I'm trying to tell myself -- I'm trying to not think about how hot it is and just focus on my shots and I think it's for golf we're out there for five hours so being focused is so important and I think when you keep thinking to yourself, Oh my God, it's so hot. Like, oh my God, oh my God. I think it disbursts where you should be focusing on. So I'm just trying to focus on my shot and obviously the less amount of shots I take, the less amount of time out I'm on the golf course, so I'm trying to put that kind of into a good combination.

Q. Your thumb.

LYDIA KO: No, it's honestly, it's just, I put this like this cushion under my thumb, I just always like because we're always in the same like grip position, it just gives me a little bit of cushioning. It's those foot corn things, yeah. Who knew it would be so hopeful. But no, it's not an injury, I always just have it.

Q. Olympics-wise, have you -- New Zealand did pretty well here and there. Have you been following that, the 7s and stuff like that?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think it was pretty awesome that I think the women's rugby 7s they got silver last or in 2016 and then winning the gold, they changed their color, they went up. The men's, they ended up getting the silver, I think. But they didn't medal in 2016, so it was pretty cool. I mean Lisa Carrington is probably one of the best New Zealand athletes and athletes in general and she medalled two gold medals yesterday. And I think before I teed off today it said 15 on the tally, so hopefully it will be really cool if I could join that tally of medals. But I think that's the great thing about the Olympics, there are some sports that I had never heard of and then I turn on the TV and I'm like, wow,

that's so cool, like how they point it and rate it. And I think being a sports fan this is such an awesome couple weeks to just turn on and you can see so many variety of sports and like the different athletes that play and all the different of a seeks as well, it's a pretty surreal kind of atmosphere.

Q. I think the top 14 women are here this week off the rankings, compared to the men. Why do you think it seems to be a little bit more of a priority to play in these games for the women than it does for the men?

LYDIA KO: I'm not really sure. I think at the end of the day like just being at the Olympics it's not about money and everything. I think it's, I think the really cool thing here is that you're very proud to represent your country. I know some players skipped in Rio because of the Zika virus and this year due to COVID, travel restrictions and this isn't the easiest place to go from France to Japan to Scotland. So travel must have been some of the things. I'm not really sure why all of the top players on the ladies are here and the men a few decided to skip, but at the end of the day this is a stop on the schedule or on the calendar, right, so it's got to fit the athlete and no matter who you ask I'm pretty sure every single person is honored to represent their country, even when we're playing on our selective tours. But I think just being here at the Olympics and do you think that takes it to a whole new level. I'm very, I was very proud to represent New Zealand in 2016. I got tattoo to remember that with the silver fern. So it's something that was such a monumental moment not only as a golfer but as a person, so as many opportunities I can get to be able to represent New Zealand at the Olympics I want to play in as many as I can.

Q. How soon after 2016 did you get the tattoo, were you thinking about it during the event?

LYDIA KO: I got it in 2019. It looks pretty cool.

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