

Women's Olympic Golf Competition

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Le Golf National

Yuka Saso

Miyu Yamashita

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Team Japan to the 2024 Paris Olympics Women's Golf Competition. We have Miyu Yamashita and Yuka Saso. Thank you for joining us.

You mentioned that you practised yesterday and you played 18 holes. What was your first impression of the golf course?

YUKA SASO: I think the golf course is in very about shape. It looks very beautiful. I watched the men's last week and you know, they played really well and on the golf course, it's very challenging, especially off the tee, it's very narrow. Yeah, I'm really looking forward to the challenge this week.

THE MODERATOR: You've already experienced an Olympics in Tokyo but Miyu, this is your first Olympics. What's your first impresses of being here?

MIYU YAMASHITA: It's an honour to be here for my first time in the Olympics and looking forward to playing in this event.

Q. The last Tokyo Olympics, you were representing Philippines and this time you are representing Japan. How do you think differently?

YUKA SASO: Nothing much different but obviously playing in Tokyo, I was there to help my mother's country and now my dad's country. I don't think I'll be able to experience -- not a lot of people can experience this, what I'm experiencing right now. So I'm really grateful and very excited to be part of it again.

Q. I know you're also a big Rory McIlroy fan. So who are you hearing for most and following out there?

YUKA SASO: Well, I was cheering for everyone. I wasn't really choosing any other player. But yeah, he I think in



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general, it's really fun to watch the guys because of how different they play compared to us. Yeah, I watched Hideki, as well, tee off the last day, first tee.

But there was too many people. It was hard to see the guys playing. But yeah, I think I played -- no, I watched three holes or four of Rory playing on second day, Friday. I think I watched him three or four holes and it was really good to be able to see him because it was less people on Friday.

Q. What about their game really pulls you in, really is impressive to you?

YUKA SASO: Just in general, they hit it longer than us and the clubs that they have, second shots, they only have wedges compared to us. They only have like 7-, 8-iron in. And just how impressive their with the sound of their shots, something we rarely hear on the women's side.

Q. How did you play 18?

YUKA SASO: On 18? Yesterday I had 5-iron in, I think. It's a par 5 for us.

Q. Did you know that? Nelly didn't.

YUKA SASO: It says on the board on 18. It's a bit easier for us compared to the guys.

Q. And Miyu, Japan has been rising, we saw that at the Women's Open, how many great players are coming forward. How was it to make the team?

MIYU YAMASHITA: It was very challenging for me to secure this second spot for team in a January but my people really cheer for me to play my best. So I was able to focus on what's in front of me and play shot-by-shot, and then here I am playing for Team Japan, so I'm so grateful.

Q. You saw Hideki winning Bronze Medal, so what's your impression of that and also the impression of the golf course?

YUKA SASO: I was hear early but I wasn't able to watch



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Matsuyamasan's finishing holes. I was already playing ready, looking at the course. I'm happy that he got the medal and I'm pretty sure he is, too. He worked hard to get that. Hopefully I can continue that.

MIYU YAMASHITA: It was first time to watch Matsuyamasan on the golf course. I've only been watching Hideki on the TV but watching him, I saw his passion, hard work and motivation for him winning a medal. After him winning the Bronze Medal, I talked to Hideki, congrats him and he text back to me, the women's Japan team, it's the goal, get the Gold Medal. I'll do my best this week and try my hardest?

Q. What's it like watching Hideki on TV when he drops the club or swings with one arm and the ball goes eight feet?

MIYU YAMASHITA: I've seen and it's showing how high his self-expectations are and showing his professionalism, I think. It's very unique to see. But it's showing his high expectations to himself.

Q. What are your strongest memories from your Olympic experience?

YUKA SASO: Strongest memory, I think no galleries. It was COVID year and we can't really go out. What we can do is very limited on the golf course.

This time I get to experience the Olympics itself. I'm meeting a lot of people and no restrictions on where we're going. So it's more fulfilling this time around.

Q. On the golf course, you got off to a bad start last year. Do you recall on the last day trying to finish third, which you probably rarely do other tournaments?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, it wasn't a good start last time. I was able to play well on the last day. I think I finished top 10. Yeah, not too bad first tournament but not good enough to get a medal. Hopefully this year I can start pretty good and give myself a chance to get a medal.

Q. Two questions. What's your favourite sport other than golf in this Paris Olympics, and the second question was, did you get to see much of Paris or the Eiffel Tower or anything like that?

MIYU YAMASHITA: I haven't been to any other sports. I haven't seen it in person. I was trying to but the sports that I wanted to watch, finished early so I wasn't able to go see. But I watched them online.

No, I haven't gone to see any -- I haven't done any sightseeing here in Paris. I've been on the golf course with Team Japan.

YUKA SASO: I don't have particular athletes to watch on TV but I watched gymnastics and athletics on the Internet this week. Been to sightseeing and watched the Eiffel Tower before Evian, but this week I haven't done that much sightseeing yet.

Q. You both went through Japan's LPGA Q-School professional year, same age, what's your impression of each other and specifically, Miyu, you represented Japan at the World Junior, so what's your impression of Team Japan this week?

YUKA SASO: I think we are pretty good friends. We played team events in Japan a few times. She is obviously a very lovely person. She has a good personality on and off the golf course and I think everybody knows how good she is. She won the JLPGA twice, that's very impressive. I've never done it. We are the same age and we qualified at the same time but I relate to her on those particular stuff.

Outside golf, we are really good friends, so I'm happy that I was able to share the stage with her.

MIYU YAMASHITA: We went through same JLPGA test and we passed that test back then. By then, I respect her and got really good stimulation from her, spending time together.

Seeing her win majors is very impressive, of course. This is pretty much first time to play on the same event, same week, and fortunate enough it's going to be on the week of Olympics, I'm grateful.

Yesterday I played a practice round with her. I've seen her play on the golf course. She's won a couple majors and it's great to see her play on the golf course. This opportunity, it's fortunate to play with her for Team Japan in Paris.

Q. Scottie Scheffler on the podium was tearing up when he won. I think Olympics has different impression and different flavour, feeling to it. What's special about the Olympics to you?

MIYU YAMASHITA: The Olympics, of course we know it's only once in four years. It's been three years this time. So I think it's really different to us and different to Scottie Scheffler.

Q. Watching the men's competition, what's the atmosphere like to you?

MIYU YAMASHITA: It was the first time to see elite men's event on site and feeling how loud the fans and spectators are. I've only been watching TV and through the Internet, and this week I was able to watch elite players playing for the medal, so I was watching with great fascination. Knowing the Olympics is only once every four years and those players, representing their nations, it was great to see Hideki Matsuyama representing Japan and winning a medal.

YUKA SASO: Earlier, I struggled with my performance but I made it to the Olympics. I have been doing my best to prepare for this event and my form is coming back. So I'll do my best this week.

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