

# LIV Golf Promotions

Sunday, 10 December, 2023

Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Abu Dhabi Golf Club

**Kalle Samooja**

**Kieran Vincent**

**Jinichiro Kozuma**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome the three newest members of the LIV Golf League, Kalle Samooja from Finland, Jinichiro Kozuma from Japan, and Kieran Vincent from Zimbabwe. Welcome to LIV Golf, guys.

Kalle, I'll start with our champion this week. It's fair to say you've flown under the radar a bit but made it happen on Sunday when it counts, winning the LIV Golf Promotions at 8-under par to seal your place in the LIV Golf League. Tell us a bit what this moment means to you.

KALLE SAMOOJA: Obviously it means a lot. That's why we're all here. We all knew there's three spots available, three cards, and everyone was after those cards. My only mission was to make it to Sunday and then give it all I have, and we're standing here.

THE MODERATOR: You're the first Finn to qualify for LIV Golf. What do you think the reaction is going to be like back at home?

KALLE SAMOOJA: It's going to be massive, I think. Golf is booming back home in Finland. We have guys, one guy on PGA TOUR, European Tour, now LIV Golf, so it's going to be massive for Finnish golf.

**Q. Kieran, you've strung together three great rounds to join the LIV Golf League in 2024. How does it feel to be joining your brother Scott next year?**

KIERAN VINCENT: I think it's awesome. Obviously he's a great player and someone I've looked up to for pretty much my whole life. To be playing alongside him again is going to be awesome, but just to learn from the rest of the guys I think is something I'm looking forward to the most.

**Q. It was a pretty tense afternoon; top 3 was changing all day. Talk us through your emotions during the day and especially during that playoff.**



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KIERAN VINCENT: Yeah, I think obviously playing with a great guy like Kalle, it's just an awesome afternoon/day just being out there. I think just being able to put your best shots forward when they're needed, I think Kalle had an unbelievable putt there on 17 and then on 18. You just kind of are trying to tag along, have some fun out there, and I think we did that.

Obviously it's a stressful sport at times, but at the end of the day you're just hitting a white ball and hopefully making the fewest number of strokes out there.

It can get complicated, but the most you can try to dumb it down the best, I think that's the easiest to play out there. It was fun, though.

**Q. Jinichiro, congratulations on your play this week at LIV Golf Promotions. You're the only Japanese player on LIV Golf next year. What does this mean to you, and how do you anticipate the reaction back home in Japan to your success this week?**

JINICHIRO KOZUMA: Last year when I went as a spot tournament to LIV Golf, I said that I wanted to come back again for sure, and to be real now, it's like a dream.

**Q. We're about eight weeks out from the first event of the 2024 season, LIV Golf Mayakoba in Mexico. What's the plan now, guys, leading up until that point?**

KALLE SAMOOJA: Just try to get home as soon as possible and enjoy Christmas with friends and family and get ready for next year.

KIERAN VINCENT: Yeah, much of the same. Obviously got some good time to get some reps in, practice, try and get better, but at the end of the day I think it's just some good, much-needed rest, and yeah, go from there.

JINICHIRO KOZUMA: Nothing will change. As a pro golfer I'm going to start again training, work out, practicing, and happy to be at Mayakoba in the LIV Golf season.

**Q. Kalle, can you take us through your day? Obviously we talked after you shot 65. You mentioned then how tough it is to follow it up with another low round. You seemed to be drifting a little bit until you**



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**got to 17. Can you talk us through the second round and what was going on, your strategy at that point?**

KALLE SAMOOJA: Yeah, well, obviously I started with a great round this morning, and it kind of opened up the door for me to get one of the three spots.

Didn't really get off to any sort of a good start in the afternoon, but we had good talks with my caddie John and we said, just hang in there. We saw the leaderboard the whole time, so we thought, just keep making pars. Once we get chances, try to make those, and yeah, like Kieran said, one of my best putts ever on 17. To get inside, and then once we played 18, I said, let's make one more and get the job done.

Anything can happen on 18. We saw it afterwards. Yeah, just hit a couple good shots and one great putt, probably the best shot all week.

Yeah, the margins are small, but it went my way today.

**Q. Did you feel like your patience was tested that second round?**

KALLE SAMOOJA: It was tested a lot today. Kieran played I think better golf than I did, honestly, in the afternoon. Tee to green he was very solid. Didn't really hole many putts -- well, me neither. But it comes down to the last few holes.

I said to John, it always will come down to the last three holes. We need to play those well. That's where I pulled it off.

**Q. How long was the putt, and can you take us through it, the one on 17?**

KALLE SAMOOJA: I don't know, 50, 60 feet maybe. I just told John, go and tend the flag; I can't even see the hole. Keep the flag up, and I'll bang it in. That's what I told him.

Same on 18. I was even further away. I said, just hold the flag. I know it's a double breaker up the hill. I said, just hold the flag and hopefully we get it somewhere close. Even better putt I think than on 17.

**Q. Kieran, can you take us through the playoff a little bit more; obviously Laurie seemed to have the advantage right off the tee in the first playoff hole, and all three of you guys ended up with a par. Can you take us through your mindset those two holes?**

KIERAN VINCENT: Yeah, obviously credit to Laurie. He's an unbelievable player and obviously got a fair taste of LIV

Golf last year, and I hope this isn't the end for him for LIV Golf. He really deserves to be out here. He's a strong competitor. Yeah, I really hope that he is out there again next year.

But yeah, obviously golf, as Greg said earlier, golf is a fickle game. It ebbs and flows, as anyone and anything can happen. Kozuma looked like he was out of it and you make a putt and all of a sudden you're back in it.

Credit to him, credit to Laurie. It's obviously just a painful game, and obviously we're lucky to be on this side of it, but obviously it's heartbreak for Laurie.

It's just one of those things that you just try and execute the game plan that you have in front of you, take the situations that are in front of you, and just put the best shot you can forward, and I think all three of us tried the best to do that.

**Q. Jinichiro, can you talk us through the playoff, obviously finding the water with your tee shot but you were able to overcome that and get a par?**

JINICHIRO KOZUMA: I was just a little bit in a give-up mood after I missed my tee shot, but just thinking hard that never give up is something which could be a good result. When I made the par putt on the first playoff hole, I thought that it could be okay for me.

**Q. You were the only player of the three here that played all three days. Can you talk about the week in general, how grueling it was?**

JINICHIRO KOZUMA: I was in good shape with my golf, so I knew that I had a chance to make it if I made good three rounds. But it's just a dream come true. I didn't try to be in the best three, but I made it. It's just a dream.

**Q. Kieran, the contribution of Scotty to where you are is something that -- it's like written in books. He secretly paid for your affiliate membership and you didn't know about it on the Asian Tour, which was probably one of the main reasons why you are standing over here, and then he lent his caddie, Jacob, to you, as well. Can you talk to us about Scotty's contribution and how much would you love to be a part of Iron Heads if that is possible?**

KIERAN VINCENT: I'm not too sure if it's Scott's caddie anymore. We'll let Jacob decide that. (Laughter.)

But no, obviously my brother and the rest of my family have just been huge, I guess, role models to say -- without them, without my brother doing the things that he did, I wouldn't be standing here. I wouldn't be anywhere close. I

don't know what I would be doing right now.

Just to have him pave the way and see what golf is like, how you can take it to great lengths, see what hard work is like. He's probably one of the hardest working players you'll ever meet.

That was all instilled in him from my family. So credit to them and credit to -- I guess the support system that I had around me. Without that, I wouldn't be anywhere close to where I am today.

Yeah, he's huge, but there's definitely a lot of other people that have made the same contribution if not more. I'm just grateful to so many different people.

**Q. Kalle, can I ask you, coming from a Scandinavian country, are you close to Henrik, and did you have a word with him before entering the promotions, and would you like to see a Scandinavian team in LIV Golf?**

KALLE SAMOOJA: I've played with Henrik a few times, practice rounds, but I didn't get a message from him. I'm more connected to Kaymer with my management group. I know him a bit better.

But it's been a great journey this week. Actually we talked today, I've had my Asian Tour career before I went to DP World Tour. It made me to understand these kind of conditions and grass better, and it was one of those steps, I think, in my career that helped me to get where I am, and a new chapter turning.

It's a good future ahead of us.

**Q. Jinichiro, if I can ask you, you seemed to be smiling all the way through. Just a great attitude on the golf course. You were not smiling during the playoff holes, but otherwise you were always smiling. Is that something that you've always done, and does that help you?**

JINICHIRO KOZUMA: Yeah, just trying not to think too serious and just trying to hang on and have fun with my caddie. That's why I got a lot of smile.

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