

LIV Golf Promotions

Thursday, 12 December, 2024

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Riyadh Golf Club

Taichi Kho

Press Conference

Q. We're here with Taichi Kho. Can you just talk us through your round?

TAICHI KHO: Yeah, the first round went very smoothly. I felt like I had an image in my mind at the end of the day I wanted to walk off the 18th green with a great round, and I feel like every step of the way I was able to chip away at that vision.

There was a couple holes middle of the round which got a bit shaky but I felt like I did a good job of composing myself out there and making sure that I don't get too emotional on the good end of the spectrum or the bad end, so I feel like I was able to just chip away with some good, good swings out there, and I was able to finish strong.

Q. You can sleep a bit easier tonight going into round 2. Obviously the field resets tomorrow. What's the mindset going into Friday here?

TAICHI KHO: Same thing as I did today. I want to go out there and really try to access my best stuff, not just an okay round or not just a good round but really aspire for a great round, and that's the mentality that I had going into today, and it doesn't change tomorrow.

The fact that the scores reset almost helps me focus a little bit better because usually in a tournament you have the things that you did in the previous round that affect your standings going forward, but this time it's a clean reset. That really gives me the motivation and the focus to have a good one out there tomorrow.

Q. It looks like 3-under is going to be the cut line today. Does that give you a bit of a goal for tomorrow, or do you not really go in thinking of a score?

TAICHI KHO: I think it's hard to tell because last year I remember I think 2-under got through the first round and it was I think 3-under the second round even though there was less people in the field. It's really hard for me to say what the cut is going to be. At the end of the day, I know if I play my good stuff out there, have a great round, the



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results or the cut line is just a distraction.

At the same time, yeah, it was good scoring conditions out there today. I think more or less the same tomorrow. I think guys are going to go out there and give their best stuff.

Q. As you mentioned, this is the second time in a row that you've advanced past the first round. Is there anything that you learned from last year between the first and second round that you might do differently or any different approach or anything like that?

TAICHI KHO: I think last year I couldn't get past the fact that it was a clean reset after round 1. I remember last year I had a great first round, as well, and I felt like I carried on some of those thoughts and feelings as I would do a regular tournament going into the second round.

But I feel like that was quite a big distraction for me, knowing that, oh, I might be 5-under par through 27 holes, and I'm out of the tournament going into the back nine. That was a bit demoralizing. I think going into tomorrow, it's important for me to just understand it's a completely new day. I can treat it as a completely different tournament and just go out there as if it was a first round or a last round or whatever it is, just focus on the golf and not really think about what I did today.

Q. Is it easy for you to block out everything that people are thinking about if you make it on to LIV Golf? Obviously with our tournament in Hong Kong, if you were in the field, that would be a huge thing for Hong Kong. Do you block that out or kind of accept that there are a lot of expectations and a bit of pressure on your shoulders to get that done?

TAICHI KHO: I wouldn't say it's pressure but I definitely embrace it because it's incredible opportunity to be a part of the LIV Golf roster, not just the LIV Golf Hong Kong events but the 14 events in the schedule playing against the best players in the world, that's something that really motivates me. I feel like the more I let that sink in and the more I understand what I'm playing for, the more it motivates me.

I think it's something that I might have blocked out a bit too much last year and I felt like it was a bit of pressure and it



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was a bit of expectations, but I think a year on now, I understand it's a great opportunity, and there's only one spot up for grabs, so might as well make the most of it.

Q. I'm curious, how many texts and well wishes do you get? How many would you get this week or maybe after today or something like that?

TAICHI KHO: I'm super fortunate to have so many people that support me from back home and all around the world. I give a lot of props to especially the members at Hong Kong Golf Club. They give me a lot of support. Usually right after my 18th putt drops, my parents text me as if they were there, so I really appreciate them.

My dad was here last week, as well, so it's nice for my parents to still be a big part of my journey. But I'm really blessed to have so many people around me.

Q. Just wanted to ask you about your experience at the Link Hong Kong Open this year and last year, as well, playing with some of the bigger marquee names in front of a home crowd. Does that help you in terms of your nerves or your confidence this week?

TAICHI KHO: I think playing in those marquee groups with LIV players and major champions, it helps me have a good sense of belonging out there. I think a lot of the times you go out there and you practice and you play, but it's hard to gauge or hard to envision yourself at the biggest stage before you're there. But playing with these guys gives me a lot of self-belief and gives me a lot of confidence that that is on my journey and that's very attainable for me.

For example, this year at the Link Hong Kong Open playing with Patrick Reed the first two round, he was nice enough to have dinner with myself and my family on Friday night, and just to talk to him, not really talk about golf too much but just to understand how he approaches his game and how he approaches being a professional golfer gives me a lot of insight into how he got to that level and how he's sustaining that level.

I might take one percent credit for the fact that he shot 59 the next day, so dinner must have been really good.

Q. You gave him a few tips?

TAICHI KHO: I gave him a few tips on how to eat Peking duck and things like that, but I think the golf was all him.

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