

# The LPGA Drive On Championship

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Greensboro, Georgia, USA

Reynolds Lake Oconee

## Ally McDonald

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right thank you for joining us inside the virtual interview room here at LPGA Drive On Championship.

We've waited far long enough. Congratulations Ally McDonald. What are some of your immediate thoughts as you sit here with the trophy beside you?

ALLY MCDONALD: Relieved I think I can say is the No. 1 word. It just feels like a long time coming kind of knowing that I feel like I've had the potential to win out here. But it's been four years and I've just kind of stayed patient knowing that the work that I put in every day is hopefully going to yield that win.

But as I said in another interview, it's really hard to win out here. I'm just super thankful and grateful that I was able to get the win today.

THE MODERATOR: Let's take a look at the final round. You had that birdie on No.4, first one of the day. You were playing alongside Daniell Kang and Bianca Pagdanganan. What did it mean to come away with that birdie on No.4?

ALLY MCDONALD: It was a good settler. I felt like I started fine, a little bit more steady than yesterday, so to roll that birdie in was good to gain some momentum for the rest of the day.

THE MODERATOR: The momentum certainly was there on Nos. 10, 11 and 12. You had a 15-footer and I believe a 35foot putt I saw there. How important was it just to keep calm and keep your patience during those couple birdie chances?

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah, unfortunately I didn't hit that great of a shot on 11. I feel like I executed my game plan, but we didn't carry it far enough for it to take that slope down.

That was definitely not a putt that I was looking to make. It was just one that I was trying to nestle down to the hole,



but executed great speed, great line, and just so happened to go in.

**Q. As you were gaining momentum Danielle Kang started birdieing a couple there. I know you said on the green it kind of felt like match play. You had to make it. Solheim Cup is the first thing I think of in your experience last year. Did that certainly creep into the back of your mind?**

ALLY MCDONALD: It did as far as a little bit of pressure. Just that's probably one the most pressure-packed moments I've been a part of. Danielle is one of the best players in the world. I knew she was not going to just hand it over.

I obviously didn't really keep an eye on the leaderboards or anything all day to know if anyone had posted or anything like that, so after I had the my tee shot on 18, I did ask Dan, my caddie, where we stood, kind of what we needed.

As I kind of expected, Danielle was the one that I needed to keep an eye on, so it was really settling that all I needed to do was lay up. But then she almost made the eagle, as you kind of expect, like you said, with match play.

So yeah, it is great battling it out on the golf course. I know everyone played their best today, so it was fun playing alongside her for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Going back to No. 17, you did have that unfortunate bogey there. What was going through your mind as you walked to the he 18th tee?

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah, I didn't really panic just because I knew -- I thought I hit a really good putt on my first putt. Just carried a little bit too much speed and kind of power lipped out.

Yeah, like I said, I didn't really know where I stood, but I thought I might have had a couple clear. So I just went back to my game plan with executing my routine and sticking with one shot at a time, being in the present moment.

THE MODERATOR: We talked about 18. Danielle had the eagle look there for that split second. What were some of the emotions you had?



ALLY MCDONALD: Well, I knew she was going to hit a great shot, and it almost went in obviously. But in that situation I still had a great look for birdie so I wasn't necessarily -- you can tell yourself all day that you expect the other person to make it, but when they actually get that close you're like, whoa.

Yeah, it was a great shot, great birdie by her on the last hole.

THE MODERATOR: As we were talking on the green it was very emotional once the final putts went in. What was it like for you just to see those putts go in and let it sink in that you are now a winner on the LPGA Tour?

ALLY MCDONALD: Just a huge sigh of relief. It's very fulfilling for me to finally get that victory. I won't say over the hump or anything like that because it's really hard to win out here.

So I'm just going to continue working really hard and try to even get No. 2 after this one. But I'll definitely soak this in. I'm just really grateful and blessed that I play on the LPGA Tour and am able to do what I love to do every single day.

Yeah, I'm just going to continue to soak it in and just enjoy this.

THE MODERATOR: You had your parents here following you this weekend. First time in a long time since you've been playing that they've been able to follow you. How much more does it mean to you to know that you won with your parents watching you?

ALLY MCDONALD: It means the world to me obviously that they're here. This is the closest golf tournament that we have, and commish just added it to our schedule with COVID happening and canceling some events, having them here was just amazing.

To be able to share with them and them being such huge supporters of me since I was young and taking me to golf tournaments, reminding me to do my drills, telling me that I need to act better on the golf course, all those things just all just coming around and them being here to savor this moment just means so much.

THE MODERATOR: Would you say this is the best birthday present you've ever received?

ALLY MCDONALD: Probably so. Yeah, I would put it pretty high up there. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: All right, with that, we will open it up

for questions.

**Q. We talked yesterday about finding comfort in being uncomfortable. How did you do that today?**

ALLY MCDONALD: I just remained super patient, took some deep breaths, one shot at a time type mentality.

I just tried to enjoy my walk and appreciate the beauty of this golf course and the beauty of God's creation.

So, yeah, just stayed very patient with myself. I was super happy that I was able to get it done.

**Q. Couple times during the round it could have gone sideways. Two-shot swing at 13 and Danielle makes the birdie at 14. Looked as though you never panicked during any of that. What was going on mentally and emotionally that allowed you to work through those times?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Well, I can tell that you we can probably look at my Whoop and it would show a significant heart rate rise. I definitely was -- I wouldn't say thrown off -- but I had to resettle myself after holes 13 and 14 and just pump the brakes and not get ahead of myself, only control what I can control.

And that was just executing shots coming in, which after 14 I was really able to calm my heart rate and then just kind of mentally be able to put more focus in there to finish out the round.

**Q. The pressure today must have been kind of unlike anything that you've experienced in your career to date. Wondering if there were any moments that you were pulling from in the past to kind of help you through? I imagine Solheim Cup may have been the second most pressure experience in your career.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah. I would definitely say as far as people watching, just most stressful pressure situation. That's definitely something that I leaned on, especially as I was noting some match play kind of mentality when you just expect your opponent and who you're playing against to make putts and execute the shots.

So I tried to stay in my routine, because it would've obviously been very easy to get distracted and kind of thrown off when you see Danielle make birdies on 13 and 14. I had just made bogey on 13, so I was just able to really stay in the moment.

I also just leaned on what I had done the entire week, and that was make putts and execute shots and drive the ball

really well. So I didn't really have to look too far back. It's just a couple bad holes or couple of great holes in Danielle's favor. Just lean on what I been doing all week.

**Q. That makes sense. Why do you think this was the week that you broke through?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Well, I was given some great advice, and she told me that God already knows the outcome, so just go play. So it was, you know, in terms of things already happening, regardless of whether I played my best today I could have come out and still lost.

Just knowing it's out of my control, I was just going to go execute my game plan and know that the outcome is going to be the outcome. Just kind of trust in my process and my faith.

**Q. Congratulations, Ally, well done.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Thank you.

**Q. I got a couple. First of all, who gave that you great advice?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Angela Stanford.

**Q. Okay. And then have you eaten any of that cake your mom brought? Did you have a celebration?**

ALLY MCDONALD: I did. Probably had a small piece last night, too. I have had a couple of pieces since we cut it. Don't tell my (indiscernible).

**Q. All right. I'm wondering, your husband, obviously a golfer himself; been through the trenches. Any advice that he has given you this week that has been helpful?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah. He's just been a huge advocate since we started dating. He joked that he would never date a golfer, and now here we are married.

But just being alongside me since we were dating and he has seen my golf game, he has just constantly told me how great I am. Just tried to get me to believe that even more than I already did.

And this week just reinforcing that, telling me that what I have is good enough, that I don't have to be more, but also just acknowledging that I'm in a pressure situation and that eyes are on me.

If I were to try to just neglect and say, Oh, people aren't watching or, Oh, this isn't really that much pressure, then it would probably have been more of a struggle for me.

So he just really talks through things with me and just had me acknowledge and embrace the opportunity.

**Q. And I have one more, because you seemed hesitant to say this is absolutely the best birthday present you've ever had. What is rivaling this?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Okay, it's the best birthday present ever.

**Q. All right. All right. Just checking. Thank you.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Thanks, Beth Ann.

**Q. I was just going to ask you, you got a new house. What are you going to do with the trophy?**

ALLY MCDONALD: We'll have to make a really good spot for it near the deer. I don't know. We'll have to find a really good place. It's not going all the way back in the man cave, that's for sure. We'll have to find a good place to display it.

**Q. First off, congratulations.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Thank you.

**Q. So this week has been pretty special at Drive On celebrating all different parts of the LPGA entity and family. You were able to compete with the Symetra Tour and you are a 2016 grad. We're coming to the last few weeks here. What advice you have to for the members out here competing?**

ALLY MCDONALD: That's a good question. I would just say that to work really hard obviously. Everybody that is playing professional golf knows it takes a lot to play out here and compete with the best in the world, but I would just remind everyone to just stay patient.

I know with Symetra Tour it's so much of a grind because everybody wants to get to the LPGA Tour. Everybody that's finishing out the year, stay patient. Know that everything is going to be okay. Take a deep breath, but go execute your game plan. You never know, you might win.

**Q. Thank you so much, and happy birthday.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: If you have in any more questions for Ally, the other Ally...

I know Beth Ann has another one.



**Q. I couldn't let the deer thing go. Who shot the deer?  
Talk about the deer?**

ALLY MCDONALD: Okay, Charlie is a really big hunter, so goes back in his family. That's fully his thing.

So I don't know. Eventually we might get one of mine to put on the wall, but we'll see.

**Q. So that's his trophy. Got it.**

ALLY MCDONALD: That's his.

**Q. Thank you.**

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: As we begin to wrap up here, it's been about an hour since you've been able to sink the final putt. As you walked in here and got to sit down and check your phone, how many messages did you have and how cool of a feeling is that to know that that many people are reaching out?

ALLY MCDONALD: It's super special. I think I had about 105-ish when I looked a second ago. That just goes to show how many people have just been a part of so many things in my life and have just contributed to wishing me luck.

Just friends, family, people out here on tour, some great friends that I've been able to get on the LPGA Tour. It means a lot. I'm going to try to get back to everyone but, yeah, it's really special.

THE MODERATOR: We have a three-week break before Tampa. What are some of the things you think you're going to do, especially to celebrate not only a victory, but be able to keep the competitive juices flowing?

ALLY MCDONALD: Yeah, I'll get some rest. These last few days were unlike anything I've experienced, so I know it's going to be important for me to get some rest. I get to go see my grandparents tomorrow which I'm really excited about, so I'll see them and get some good rest and obviously keep the game sharp.

Try to work with my coaches. My husband will be in town after they finish their golf tournament on Tuesday in Nashville, so we'll be rooting on the Bulldogs the next few days.

Then get to spend some time together with the family and some friends, and, yeah, just get to soak it in and enjoy it

with some people and then be ready to go in Tampa.

THE MODERATOR: With that, thank you everyone for joining us, and thank you, Ally, and congratulations.

ALLY MCDONALD: Thanks, Megan.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports