

The LPGA Drive On Championship

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Bradenton, Florida, USA

Bradenton Country Club

Auston Kim

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All righty, joined by Auston Kim at the LPGA Drive On Championship. Welcome. Obviously not your first start on the LPGA Tour; first start as a rookie, official member.

What are some thoughts and feelings and emotions you got going on this week?

AUSTON KIM: I'm very excited. I know that the competition is pretty elevated here. The courses will be tougher. I'm really excited to push for my best and try my best and play my best golf every single week.

Q. What have you been working on since the Epson season ended? I know you were in The ANNIKA field. What are some you have been working on since last season to prepare you for week?

AUSTON KIM: I wanted to play in the Monday Q for The ANNIKA just to get my feet wet and have some playing experience. I had a lot of fun there, but it left a little to be desired personally.

During the off-season I really wanted to focus on my weaker spots and keep strengthening my game, especially with points that felt a little bit weaker during my year on the Epson Tour.

And I just didn't want to feel like I had to reinvent the wheel. I focused on my strengths and also practiced my weak points a lot.

Q. Anything specific during your rounds at The ANNIKA that you really took away stuff with you and really tried to hone in over the off-season?

AUSTON KIM: Yeah, it was a lot of eye-opening moments about my mental game. Felt pretty strong, but I knew there were a lot of things I could improve on. My ball striking, accuracy, really foreseeing shots that are going to come up and thinking one step ahead every time.



I really wanted to hone that part of my game in.

Q. You had an incredible season-ending flourish to get your card. Talk about your mentality going into that Tour Championship and how you were able to get it done when like everything was on the line.

AUSTON KIM: Right. I knew I had to get a good finish, and of course we're always told not to focus on what we have to do. I knew I wanted to make some noise at the end of the year. I knew what was on the line. I did my best to prepare, and I didn't have that great of a first round in Daytona, but after I walked off -- I spent some time putting because that was definitely the weak point.

After I walked off the putting green I didn't feel worried at all. I knew that whatever was going to happen would happen. The only thing I could do was try my best. I just really got into a groove that week and it worked out.

Q. I know after you won I heard you got to share that special moment with your sister. Talk about the emotions of that.

AUSTON KIM: Yeah, after the final round, after I made the last putt, she was on FaceTime with my mom and I got to FaceTime her. We were both crying. It was very emotional because I finally felt like what I had worked on basically my entire life, I was able to achieve a really major goal of mine and something that I really worked hard to strive for the entire year.

Just felt like everything, all the effort that I put into it, finally paid off.

Q. Two questions. First one: Where do you think that peace came from after you left the putting green?

AUSTON KIM: That peace?

Q. Yeah.

AUSTON KIM: All the effort that I put in throughout the year. I know that I was grinding really hard and all the hours this I put in. I didn't want to put any extra pressure on myself. Worry about the cut. If you worry about the cut it rarely ever works out.



So I looked back at all the hard work I put in throughout the year, and I felt really -- for the first time in my life I felt complete trust in myself and my ability to execute. I really wanted to focus on one shot at a time. I just knew if I took it one shot at a time and wasn't worried about being in another place throughout the round, I knew I was going to be 100% fine.

Q. Your sister who is of course now in med school, I know she's played a huge role in your life. Can you talk about how she continues to inspire you as you continue doing what she set out to do?

AUSTON KIM: Right. Growing up I always want to beat her. She was always the better putter, so that really motivated me to get better at putting throughout my entire life.

Now she's off in her next chapter, I'm so, so proud of her. Her head is in a book every single day and she's very busy.

Just knowing that I have someone that I can count on even though she's not with me, it's very special. We're very, very close and I can always talk to her. She'll always have advice for me.

I love her so much. She'll always listen to me and I'm very fortunate to have her.

Q. Is there anyone either in the off-season, today, yesterday, that's taken you under their wing, member of the tour already given you some advice? If they have, what is some of that advice?

AUSTON KIM: Yeah, I got to play couple practice rounds with some members out here, and I've spoken with Sei Young Kim through the years. Met her at the Open a couple years back and she's given me valuable advice throughout the years.

I got meet a couple of LPGA members on the practice green and whatnot, so they've been very, very helpful.

Q. And what's the game plan this week?

AUSTON KIM: Doing my best. I know that greens here are very demanding, but just having reasonable expectations facing those demands, and if I take it one shot at a time and understand that the conditions will be pretty tough because of how windy it is here, if I just hit the best shots that I can and do my best to execute, then I'll get the job done.

Q. What was Sei Young's advice, the best of?

AUSTON KIM: She told me this a few years back. She just told me to relax, and that's been very, very helpful. Whether it's mentally or physically on the course, especially when you want to execute and you want to hit the best shots that you possibly can, it's always best to not feel like have to do anything, but just feel like you can trust yourself and, with that relaxed mentality and that relaxed physical state, you can definitely do it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

AUSTON KIM: Thank you, guys.

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