

CME Group Tour Championship

Friday, November 18, 2022

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Here with Lydia Ko, shooting 65, 66. Here you are the Day 2 leader. Just take me through what was working so well today.

LYDIA KO: I think I stayed really patient out there today. Obviously not bogeying the first was a better start than yesterday. But, you know, with the wind direction being pretty similar and the strength being similar, I felt like I knew -- I already knew going into the day that it could be tricky, but at the same time because I played really solid in the back nine, I knew that if I did make any mistakes, there were birdieable holes coming in.

That's kind of the goal for me this week is not let one hole or one shot phase me. You know, this is the last tournament of the season. It's my ninth year on tour, so I want to finish the season well and also just want to finish it without any regrets. You know, just playing really freely out there. I think that's a big key for me.

THE MODERATOR: You said over there with Golf Channel playing more freely and what that takes for you and what that means for you. What does that mean for you?

LYDIA KO: I think when I play freely, I'm not being tentative. I want controlling how the shot is going to go. I think that way it's just a little bit stress-free.

If I do miss it, hey, like, I'm going to miss one here and there. So it's just a better place for me to be at. And obviously when the nerves kick in, that bit is a lot harder, but I think when I was struggling, I got more and more tentative and trying to control the ball and trying to make it work.

But sometimes all I can do is just put an aggressive swing, and if it goes where I want it to go, that's great. If not, I just have to deal with the next shot.

So I feel like I've been doing a better job of that this year, and it's a progress for me. Sometimes if I don't have good



weeks, you know, that kind of subconscious kicks in, but if I do better at that, I feel like the other things are going to take care of itself.

Q. Does confidence with your putter allow you to swing more freely?

LYDIA KO: I think during the times when I wasn't hitting it as good, my short game improved. So it's good and bad, but I don't feel like I'm the best putter in the world. I feel like there is so much room for improvement.

You know, I'm just like anybody. Everybody talks about the stats and everything, but I know a bunch of players that I would say are better putters than me.

You know, when I'm out there, I'm just trying to put a good read on it and have the right speed, and I think that's why it's super important to trust my speed work and training prior to going out there.

When I am putting well, I just know that, hey, I can make up-and-down from here and there, but at the same time I don't want to put too much stress on it because then that just puts a lot of pressure. Then it's like a revolving circle of pressure over pressure, and that's not where I want to be.

I think when your short game is -- when I do feel more confident in my short game, that makes me a little bit more aggressive, maybe go at pins a little bit more so just if I am short-sided or just off the green, it won't be a difficult up-and-down.

Q. One of the things that won't show up in the stats is the fact that you hit so many shots either pin-high or left it in the right location so that you had a very easy putt or an easy up-and-down. How do you do that?

LYDIA KO: We all just have those days some days. I feel like I hit my number, and I'm not even close. And some days, you know, I don't -- I just miss it and it's, like, good. I feel like a lot of it is sometimes your condition, and some of it is luck.

Especially when it's windy out there. Sometimes it picks up, and you hit a great shot, and you've got a 40-footer, and sometimes it just lays down as well. So it's just getting



the right combination and also, like, using wind to your favor. I still haven't learned how to do that yet, but I think it's about not fighting it and just playing with the conditions and with what's in front of me. I think that way it's more of, like, solving an equation and not trying to fight that problem.

Q. One more. We talked before about the competition out here having improved over the years. Are you better now than when you were No. 1 in the world?

LYDIA KO: I hope so (laughing). I hope so because it's seven years from then.

But my mom does joke to me at times. She's, like, You played so much better when you were, like, 15.

I was, like, Thanks, Mom (laughing). Okay, what am I meant to do with that information.

I don't know about better. I do know that I am more experienced now. Me playing as an amateur on the LPGA, I wanted to make the cut, and it was such a cool experience to play alongside these ladies that I had watched on TV or I would open the Golf Magazine, and they were right there.

It was a very different perspective. I played less than, like, a full schedule, so it's just different. I do feel a little bit experienced. Wiser? I don't know about that either, but I am playing differently. I hit it a little bit further than then.

I'm sure there were parts then when I was younger and even in 2015 that I was better at both, so some parts that I have improved over that time. But it's just trying to bring it all together.

I think everybody has improved, or it's hard to even keep your card because the level of play is just so good. To win it's a whole new level.

Yeah, I do hope I'm better, and I do hope my mom is joking when she says I played better when I was 15, yeah.

Q. You have such beautiful touch and imagination and creativity around the greens. Is most of that innate, or is there something that you did when you were really, really small that you think set the stage for that?

LYDIA KO: I think I just got used to it and got used to the environment. When I first came over to Florida from New Zealand, I had never heard of Bermuda before.

Like, I came, and I was flubbing pretty much every chip shot. I was, like, what grass is this? It was like a foreign

language.

And I think the great thing about our tour is that we play at so many different countries, so many different cities, and we go from Bermuda to Paspalum to rye and bent and so many different grasses I can't even name. But that has helped me improve I think and become more creative because the kind of shot that I hit here might necessarily not be the shot that I hit in L.A. So it's just kind of adjusting.

I think that's why some of the players have played on tour for, like, 10, 20 years. They hit some shots, and they're just -- that experience is kind of like the 15th club. I think that's what happens naturally over time.

I don't think anyone is perfect when they first come on tour, but I think you just have to adjust, and that's the tricky thing about golf. We have to play all 14 clubs really well, and we have to play all different golf courses in different conditions really well.

That's why to bring it all together in that one week, it doesn't come very often, but I'm still learning to become more creative. I know that there is, like, a lot of room for me to do that.

I most of the time chip with only two clubs, and I would like to become more creative where I could hit, like, a 9-iron. Or I saw some girls off the green that hit their hybrid up and over slopes. I want to improve and kind of have that so that when the circumstances come, I feel comfortable to have another shot and not just be one way.

Q. (Off microphone.)

LYDIA KO: It's my 59 and 54, my sand wedge and lob wedge.

Q. I don't know whether you had much chance to look at it before the round started, but the Commissioner released the schedule for next year, and the biggest part on there is the total purse is over \$100 million for next year. When you hear that number, what do you think about it?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I'm one of the player directors, so I got a sneak peek before everyone. But when we sit in the board meeting and just everybody that's involved with the tour, like, it was super cool when I first saw it and how it was going to hit over 100. I think it was record-setting with \$92 million or \$93 million this year.

Just for it to keep improving it just shows, one, like how much our partners believe in us. And, two, also the level of

play on the LPGA. That's why people want to support us.

You know, we have so many bigger events, events that have been on our season calendar for a long time that has continued to grow. New events and just with the majors, also with CME, elevating the championships, it's really cool to see.

I obviously haven't been on tour for a really, really long time, but in my nine years to see how much the tour has grown and how much opportunity all of us players are getting, I think it's just great for not only us that are playing right now, but for the future generations.

I feel like the LPGA Tour is making a stance on not women's golf, but just in women's sports and how everybody should see female athletes.

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