

CME Group Tour Championship

Saturday, November 19, 2022

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Here with Lydia Ko. A little bit of an up-and-down day today. You ground out a 2-under. Just evaluate your round.

LYDIA KO: Yeah. I made a bogey early on 2, but it could have been a double, so I knew that I walked away with almost, like, a shot that could have gone away.

But yeah, you know, the front nine I don't think I took advantage of the holes that were a little shorter as well as I did the last couple of days, but overall I still played really solid. I hit the ball really solid.

It was a little windier out there. When it's so windy, I think when you hit little missed shots, it just gets emphasized a little bit more. So it doesn't take much from you being, like, 15 feet to now, like, 40 feet.

So, yeah, I don't think I putted as well, but seeing that it was solid golf. It's really hard to back a 7-under and a 6-under, but still to shoot a couple under I think gives good momentum going into tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: What does it mean to you to grind that kind of round out? You have a lot of pars, a lot of up-and-downs for par and some bogeys on the card, a couple of birdies to make up for the bogeys. What does it mean to grind that out?

LYDIA KO: After a couple of bogeys on the front nine to birdie the 8 and make a good up-and-down on 9 to kind of turn even, I knew that I played the back nine well the last couple of days, so I knew the birdie opportunities were there. And even if things don't go my way, I just wanted to stay patient and know that I can make hard holes into easy holes by just staying in that kind of mindset.

I think that's what you've got to do. Sometimes an easy hole can easily get away from you as much as a hard hole. You can take advantage of that as well. I'm just trying to stick to my game plan.



I feel like every year, you know, every day there's a couple of players that shoot a really low scores so the leaderboard keeps changing, but I just want to play steady golf and have fun out there. Obviously it's great to be in contention at the last event of the year, especially with so many things, I guess, coming down the line until tomorrow.

But, yeah, I think honestly I'm happy with the way I played the last few days, and hopefully I'll be able to play solid tomorrow and give myself good opportunities and see what happens at the end of the day.

Q. Lydia, this morning I want to take you back to this morning during warmups. You were out on the range. You had balls, sticks, and all kinds of gadgets going on. With a five-shot lead, what were you working on?

LYDIA KO: I really wasn't thinking much. Like, having the ball between my hands is something I always do in my routine every day no matter if I've shot 66 the day before or a 76. That's just part of my routine. Obviously I can't put the stick behind my butt because I don't have a third arm, but Ted is here this week, so he has been doing that for me.

But it's just more, like, awareness rather than me working on anything. I don't think we've worked on anything new coming into this week, but it's definitely nice to have Derek and Ted out there to kind of just keep an eye on it. Yeah, we didn't do anything new. It was the same routine as any other day.

Q. Do you feel like your ball flight in the wind -- are you able to flight it down and take the spin off of it?

LYDIA KO: I've been trying to hit more, like, teed-down, like, more punchier drives, which is also needed around here. Last week I kind of played it just straight into the wind. Some drives went shockingly short, so I tried to practice a little bit of that these last couple days leading up to the tournament. But yeah, I think you do have to be creative.

Even if it's not something that I may be totally comfortable about, it's something that I just have to keep doing more practice, but I feel like I've done a solid job of that. So, yeah, continue to do that tomorrow.



Q. And every 72-hole event there's that stretch where you feel like it goes away from you a little bit. Do you feel like that may have been today and you can say, woo, I got that behind me?

LYDIA KO: I honestly think yesterday to today is probably not that much of a difference with how I played the golf course. You know, maybe a couple of up-and-downs or a couple of birdie opportunities that -- that's almond butter (laughing). A couple of birdie opportunities may have gone in the last couple of days that didn't, but it's kind of, like, I feel like I've been hitting it really solid and putting it solid.

Sometimes they're going to fall, and some days they're not. It's not like -- I don't think anybody has a perfect four days or perfect 54-hole event if it's a three-day event. You just have got to be aware that you might hit a bad shot or a bad putt or a misread, but you just kind of walk away from that, and I think I've done that a lot better.

Obviously sometimes it is frustrating when you can't take advantage of the par-5s when you have hit it close, but I know that I still played solid. So I feel like I'm just going to put my 100% intention into whatever shot I have in front of me. Then if it goes my way, great. If not, I just have to move on to the next one.

Q. This is your second stint with Ted. I'm wondering if you could kind of describe the style and compare it to Sean and just in terms of how his approach is different?

LYDIA KO: I think every coach is different. Even coaches in the same academy are different. Even if people have the same philosophy, you know, just by the way you word it, it can sound different.

I had a period of time where I was working with Sean and Ted kind of together this year as well, so I don't think they're on completely opposite sides of the spectrum. You know, having worked with Ted before a few years ago obviously makes it a little bit, like, easier transition where I'm not having -- I don't need to get used to the person and the style of coaching.

I think both Sean and Ted wanted me to, like, swing as most naturally to how I should be swinging, not to try and make a picture-perfect swing. I think those are probably some of the common things and differences.

But yeah, I think sometimes you hear things and depending on how they word it, it can, like, connect better. Then sometimes it's like, A, C, B compared to A, B, C, and it doesn't sound as right. They're not totally different. I think they're both not, like, super technical.

I think there are things that I learned from Ted that I may not have gotten from Sean, and there is a lot of things that I learned from Sean that maybe is not the same for Ted. I think it's just very different, so it's really hard to say the pros and cons because they're two different people, two different coaches.

So, yeah, but I don't feel like that transition was difficult because I had work with Ted before.

Q. Just last one. When did you start working with Ted again?

LYDIA KO: We just kind of -- I was in the period of time where I was working with Sean and Ted just before the European swing.

Q. Were you aware of Leona, what she was doing today while you were out there?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I mean, every time I looked, it looked like she made another birdie. But, you know, she's such a clutch player. She won her first LPGA event the week after I did at our Drive On event and then obviously the play that she put on at Solheim last year was absolutely incredible. She had such an amazing amateur career as well.

Yeah, she's a world class player. We have the top 60 players on the LPGA Tour playing this week, so you know that everyone is going to give it a run for it. You know, she obviously did that today.

I'm excited for our, I guess -- I guess it's not like a match, though, because obviously she wasn't the -- she wasn't second coming into today. It was she was more shots behind and then she caught up. I feel like that could totally be the case tomorrow where somebody takes advantage and plays really well on the holes that are playing in two and then takes advantage of the shorter holes. Then they're right up there as well. So I don't think you can take anybody out of it, but I'm excited to play with her in the final group tomorrow.

Q. There's easily a world where you could have a five-shot lead on everybody today. After you have a solid round and two spectacular rounds to start, is there any mental adjustment where you have to go, okay, now we're in a dogfight tomorrow rather than we're protecting a huge lead?

LYDIA KO: I honestly just stuck to the same game plan. I don't think I took, like, a club less than yesterday or more because of what position I am in. That might be the case if I had, like, a five-shot lead coming down with three, four

holes to go. Then I think your strategies could change, but I know that 36 holes, it's a lot of golf. A lot of things can happen in 18 holes.

It's never over until that last putt drops for every single player, and I don't think you can count anybody out. Clearly the last three days have shown that somebody has shot a really low score. So who knows how far back you are for still be in contention.

I'm just going to go out there playing my game. That's what I tried the last three days, so none of that is going to change. Obviously there's a little bit of rain in the forecast tomorrow, so that will make the course a little bit longer, but other than that, I'm just going to stick to my same game plan and hopefully play some good golf.

Q. Something you might have just answered this, but do you relish a head-to-head battle, or do you prefer more neutral like this is just me on the course playing a round of golf?

LYDIA KO: I think it's hard enough battling myself than thinking I am battling against Leona or I don't know who is behind. But I think, like, if I think of it as match-play, I think that's just so difficult, and I don't think that is the case anyway.

So I just want to play golf that I don't regret, golf that I feel confident and come at the end of tomorrow and say, hey, you know, I did my best, and this is where I finish.

So that's going to be my mindset. I don't think I'm going to think in particularly, oh, I have to be aware of what she makes. I don't think it's going to be like that.

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