

LOTTE Championship presented by Hoakalei

Monday, November 4, 2024
Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, USA
Hoakalei Country Club

Grace Kim Brooke Henderson Malia Nam Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome back to the media center here at the LOTTE Championship. Pleased to be joined by the defending champion, Grace Kim, Brooke Henderson, and Hawai'i native Malia Nam. I am pleased to be joined by them.

First, Grace, welcome back to the site of your first Tour win.

GRACE KIM: Thank you.

Q. When you think about last year's event, what sticks out obviously the most to you? What was most memorable about capturing your first LPGA title here?

GRACE KIM: Yeah, still is a little bit of a blur. Like I can't believe it's probably over a year now. Definitely came back yesterday to put my golf clubs in the locker room, and, yeah, trying to look back to the 18th green and going over that twice on the Saturday was, yeah, pretty cool. Just surreal.

Q. Brooke, a two-time champion of the LOTTE Championship. Just in your career, where do those memories stick out?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I love Hawai'i and love coming back here. Those two victories were truly amazing, and I would love to be able to do it again sometime soon here. Just I've always enjoyed the people here; so nice; the beautiful landscape.

You know, yesterday we drove around on the east side of the island and just really enjoyed the mountains and the ocean views. It was really cool.

I think here in Hawai'i there is such great vibes. I'm just



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always trying to take those vibes and use them with my golf game when I'm playing out here.

Q. You've been to all the courses I want to say we've had the LOTTE Championship at. What do you think of Hoakalei, especially this year now that's it's the first time being contested in November?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, really interested to see if it'll play any differently in November compared to spring time. This golf course gets very windy, so I'll try to channel some my inner Grace and play really well in the winds out here this year.

Q. Malia, welcome to participating in your hometown event. Not necessarily hometown, but home state event. What does it mean to be here teeing up this week?

MALIA NAM: Definitely a full circle moment. I remember growing up here, coming out to watch this event, so it's definitely just a really cool and kind of one of those moments where you think back to yourself, wow, I'm really here. I'm actually playing in the event instead of watching it.

So really looking forward to this week.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of the LOTTE Championship?

MALIA NAM: Well, I remember Brooke winning it a few years ago honestly. Again, it's so cool just to be sitting here and playing the same event as her and a lot of other great players I've looked up to over the years.

But, yeah, it was just so cool. As a young girl, especially from Hawai'i, you always feel a little bit outcasted because you don't get to see a lot of LPGA events and PGA events.

So whenever the girls would come to Hawai'i I know it's always a big deal for the golf community here.

Q. And how many tickets have you given out this week?

MALIA NAM: Oh, my gosh. My phone is blowing up about

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the tickets. I have to ask how many tickets I can get. Hopefully it's not an issue. (Laughter.)

Q. Malia, welcome back.

MALIA NAM: Thank you.

Q. How would you describe the journey of your rookie season thus far?

MALIA NAM: Definitely a lot of learning experiences. I've had a great time honestly traveling the country playing really great courses, meeting a bunch of great people, making friends on Tour.

I've really been enjoying my rookie year. With that there has been definitely a lot of learning experiences. I think that's all part of the process of having a great career out here.

Q. How many times before have you played this course?

MALIA NAM: Actually I haven't played out here a whole bunch compared to most of the courses on Oahu. I did play in a few HSJGA junior events out here when the course was still relatively pretty new. It's been a while.

I like it. I think it suits well for all of us out here. The wind is definitely going to be a factor. I think that's just a testament to playing well in Hawai'i. It's learning how to navigate the wind here.

Q. Is there any pressure? Never been a three-time champion. A little bit of a motivation to want to try and get that third?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. It would be pretty cool to add my name to the record books and be that three-time champion here. I would love that for sure.

It's been a little while since my last two victories here. Hopefully this week. Just going out and trying to battle the conditions the wind as best I can and see if I can put myself in contention.

Q. What is it about this course that really suits your game?

BROOKE HENDERSON: My previous two victories are at Ko Olina. I really love that course there. This course I believe I finished top 12 last year, so right there. I feel like this course is really beautiful, and I think if you can ball strike really well you can give yourself a lot of good opportunities. That's what I'm hoping to do here this week.

Q. For Grace, we've seen you in contention a few times this season. We've talked about how much that victory has helped you in those moments. How often do you think about the pressure and what you felt going through this final day here at LOTTE Championship last year?

GRACE KIM: Honestly, I was probably very comfortable with my caddie back then and obviously was still fresh into my rookie season, so you know, very low expectations. So no pressure, no additional pressure was added.

I think I had more pressure this year when I was in the two contending days. Yeah, that's just a learning experience itself. I probably got a little bit too ahead of myself or getting to the golf course a little bit too early or little things like that that can affect maybe not so good of a weekend.

But I mean, last year, yeah, it was more so that I was probably very comfortable in my skin. Like it was just the numbers that the caddie gave me and I just hit them. It's obviously easier said than done.

Yeah, just kind of all worked and clicked. I still sometimes think when I'm down like might have been a fluke, but obviously it wasn't, so try to use that as momentum into the rest of my career for sure.

Q. Has there been excitement within about coming back to defend your first title here? Did you come on to Hoakalei and see your face everywhere and say, wow?

GRACE KIM: Yeah, I mean, they probably chose a very terrible photo of me up the banner, but that's fine. My face is still up there. I came yesterday and took a photo of that little champion area over there. Someone said, welcome home, so that's really cool.

Hopefully we can all play well this week and see what happens.

Q. Brooke, you talked about how much you love coming back to Hawai'i. In general what are some of your favorite things to do in this community and maybe a restaurant or two that sticks out that you and your sister get to experience together?

BROOKE HENDERSON: We love to swim in the ocean. We try to do that at least once every year. My sister loves to swim so she's out there for a really long time. I get a little worried about his her. We love enjoying that.

As I said, yesterday we just drove around and really

enjoyed all the amazing views and different things that this island has to offer. So we just try to make the most of it every time we're here. At the end of the week, hopefully playing good golf, too.

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Q. We are in the home stretch of events here. What does it mean to be to the finish line of the 2024 season and what are your goals for finishing this season strong?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, so only two events on the LPGA Tour left this year. Really excited for the opportunity to hopefully finish off the year on a high note. It's been a little bit of an up and down year for me. I would love to finish the year strong and then get ready for 2025.

Q. Malia, you talked a little bit about it, but being able to represent Hawai'i when there is not as many players on the LPGA Tour from Hawai'i, when you've been getting ready for this event, how long was it circled on your calendar to be able to represent Hawai'i here?

MALIA NAM: Yeah, I know the event was originally in the spring so it was a little bit of a bummer that they moved it back. It's okay. I was still just fully looking forward to playing this week.

I knew it was just going to be -- besides the golf it was going to be a great week to reconnect with a bunch of old friends and golf friends that I made and have seen me grow up over the years. It's been just so fun. And busy, really busy.

But I'm really enjoying this week. I feel like when I come back here there is just like a level of like all the stress just melts off, yeah.

Q. When you say the stress melts off, I think some people might say that it's a little bit more pressure, kind of your hometown event. Do you feel that at all or have you kind of looked at this more as an exciting time in your career to do something you dreamed about?

MALIA NAM: Yeah, it's definitely a little nerve-wracking. I want to obviously play as well as I can in front of my friends and family. They've all said to me, we are all so proud of you and just looking forward to this being a fun week watching you play.

Yeah, I mean, not overwhelmingly nervous about this week. Just a little bit obviously. Want to play well, so...

THE MODERATOR: All right, with that, thank you, ladies for joining me, and best of luck this week.

