

HSBC Women's World Championship

Tuesday, 27 April 2021

Republic of Singapore

Sentosa Golf Club

Inbee Park

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the HSBC Women's World Championship.

INBEE PARK: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Getting started and looking through your 2021, you've just come off a performance in L.A., T-15. What's very remarkable is through those four performances you already have a win. 15th is technically your worst performance of the 2021 season. How confident are you feeling in your play and what did you take away from the week in L.A.?

INBEE PARK: Well, I mean, the weather in L.A. was great. I mean, I didn't feel any hot. It was about 18, 19 degrees all week. A lot of the players say it was maybe too cold, but I really love the cold weather.

So I really enjoyed that week, and obviously L.A. is a very tough golf course. I think it was good practice coming up to this week, and the course in Singapore is in great shape. I just played nine holes this morning, and they are in very good condition.

So really excited to play here in Singapore again and obviously I got off to a very good start of the season with the win and second-place finish. Overall, play has been very good this year.

So really looking forward to this year. Definitely the first win gave me a lot of confidence coming into this season. Very, very important season, 2021, for women's golf. Very excited for the year and very excited to be here in Singapore.

THE MODERATOR: How you are playing now compared to the last time we saw you at the top of the Rolex Rankings.

INBEE PARK: I didn't know how I got to No. 2. I mean, I just played good golf for a little bit, and then I am almost to the top. You know, I've been to the No. 1 spot before, and I mean, that's not something that I play for. That's just the one thing that I can say. And obviously this year is a very important year for me with the Olympics in



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August, and my main goal is trying to qualify for the team. The Korean team is not the easiest team to make.

I'm just trying to play good golf; everything just comes with it when I play good golf, and I'm just trying to play week-by-week. It's a long season. I'm just trying not to get too quick with the season. Just trying to control my body conditions a little bit so I can have good conditions in the middle, later in the year.

THE MODERATOR: Adjusting to Singapore, it's quite the flight getting over here. How was it getting over here?

INBEE PARK: Life is different with COVID. We had a 17-and-a-half hour's flight from L.A. to here. After that we were sent to hotel and got tested and then another probably 12 to 14 hours in the room quarantined. Probably we spent about 30, 40 hours just indoors.

You know, I came out this morning as early as I can. I just wanted to get out of the room and get some fresh air and see the golf course. So life definitely has changed in a couple of years. There is a lot of procedures that we need to do, safety protocols that we need to in order to play the golf tournament. It's really tough but I'm grateful for the opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: You are a two-time winner here in Singapore. What are the memories of those tournament wins?

INBEE PARK: Singapore is definitely a special spot for me and I really love the country, and being here, I really love being here. Even if we are just stuck in the room for all week this week, I am still going to enjoy the very good food with the very good delivery system.

So, yeah, really excited to be here in Singapore. It has been very tough call for a tournament to make the decision, but I'm really thankful that they made the decision for us so that we can come here and play. I'm really, really happy to be back here again in Singapore with really great memories here.

THE MODERATOR: I remember at ANA, I think a specific quote was, "I am not a heat person."

How do you prepare yourself for the conditions ahead of



you this week?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think myself might not be the biggest problem this week because my husband is on the bag this week. So I mean, in the heat conditions, I'm not sure how he's going to do. Maybe if I don't play after two rounds, maybe just my husband probably passed out.

THE MODERATOR: Do you think he picked up a couple pointers after his wonderful time as a caddie in Scotland?

INBEE PARK: He caddied for me once last year in Scotland. He did great. We really enjoyed it but obviously it's totally different weather to Scotland. I mean, Scotland was rainy but it was not hot. This week is going to be definitely a fight with the heat, and you know, we are going to have to rest really well this week.

Q. You spoke about the Olympics earlier. I just wanted to get your thoughts, obviously raising COVID concerns, and your thoughts on the developments there and defending your Gold Medal?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think -- I heard the Olympics was going to go on and obviously there is a lot of people who are still very worried that the Olympic is going on. Same with me, and probably same with a lot of people. But as an athlete point of view, I just think it is a great thing that the Olympics is going on because athletes has been waiting for this event to come for four years -- now it's five years.

I'm just grateful for the opportunity and obviously if I get to go, I think it just going to be another great experience, once-in-a-lifetime experience for me. You know, going to Olympics twice in my career is nothing to be compared with.

Q. Talking about the vaccination, are you going to take a vaccination before you go to Tokyo?

INBEE PARK: I am vaccinated.

Q. You talked about the flight and how long it was. What mindset change is it like? This is your first international tournament in a long time. How are things different? How is your prep different? You can't go out and practice as much as you might want to; you're stuck in the room. Does that kind of equalize things for everyone that you might be in form but when you come here, the conditions aren't perfect and you know, everyone is stuck in the room, so do you sort of have to -- it's a very different tournament than what it was like a year ago and also does it help in terms of preparation for Tokyo? You guys won't be able to go for a lot of international tournaments. So the more you're used to this environment, it might be better for you when you go to Tokyo.

INBEE PARK: I think the last international tournament I played was the British last year. So I mean, that's the last time we played -- last summer. So it's been probably seven, eight months, since we've travel overseas to play golf. Singapore is very strict with their protocol. We are trying our best to follow with their protocols. I mean, nobody is complaining. We are trying to keep everyone safe and we are doing our best to keep everyone safe.

I know it is sometimes tough when you are just stuck in the room and just you know, there's nothing you can do but just move around in your room, just very limited space but obviously we are doing it for everyone's safety and that's what we need to do. We have to have the response bit because we are traveling all over the world. It's just something that we need to do in order to play golf tournaments.

Obviously it is different because you get a little less practice time but after a 17-and-a-half-hour flight, I probably was not going to go out anyway yesterday. I'm lucky to my husband in the room together, at least, to maybe have somebody to talk to and somebody to eat together with but I'm definitely disappointed that I don't get to experience Singapore as much as I did the last few years and go out and see this beautiful city.

Q. Are the Rolex rankings away, Jin Young is close to tying you. How difficult is it to be atop the rankings for that long?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think you definitely have to follow up with good golf to be on the top for that long time, and obviously she has been playing very good golf for the last few years. That's why she's No. 1. I mean, she definitely -- I'm sure she definitely feels the pressure as well but I think it's better to be there than not being there.

Q. What kind of pressure came with being a top player in the world for you?

INBEE PARK: You know, when I first became No. 1, I just thought that I need to perform well every week. I mean, that was kind of the first thought and first pressure that I felt. But second time that I was there, I was feeling like, you know, even if you're No. 1, that doesn't mean you have to be winning every week. I mean, this is golf and we're humans. You can't compete like that every week. I mean, you've just got to know that you're not going to be perfect every week, and I just kind of learned the second time and third time, I learned that I need to take some pressure off of me and just try to enjoy while you're there.

Q. You lightly mentioned this but what does it mean that Jin Young was able to accomplish this, in her fourth year as a member of the LPGA?

INBEE PARK: She had a great foundation in the KLPGA and she played good, competitive golf in Korea and that got here in a good spot to come over here on the LPGA so they can get used to the Tour so quickly. I mean, they call her rookie when she came over here four years ago but I find she's definitely a lot more than a rookie when she came over here. She was always a great player when she was playing KLPGA as well and it's not surprising she became No. 1 over here with the consistent game that she has.

Q. In your career, is there a person or a moment that you think was game-changing for you?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think there was two moments in my career.

One was 2012 Evian Championship when I won Evian, I won Evian in four years after winning U.S. Open in my second year on Tour, so I haven't won a tournament in four years, so I started working with my husband for a year and a half after that moment and I finally won Evian and starting then, I won 20 events plus six majors and a Gold Medal. So that week has been definitely the big game-changer in my career.

And the second would be the 2016 Rio Olympics. That has been definitely my second game-changer of my career. Definitely I am different golfer than I was before the Olympics and after the Olympics.

Q. What about a person, who would you say has been a game-changer in your life perhaps not so much career?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think if you just talk about golf, I've got to say it's my husband because he definitely let me know about this game much more. He changed my swing. He definitely helped me get through a lot of tough moments and he definitely up graded my game by far.

Q. You said earlier that you were able to play nine holes today and that you're impressed with the conditions of the course. With the recent span of play and the way that you've been playing lately, how do you think this course is going to set up well for your game this week?

INBEE PARK: Well, this is definitely a great golf course. It's in really good conditions. Once you are rolling the ball really well, you can make a lot of birdies, but at the same time, if you don't be careful you can definitely lose shots over here. My main goal this week is trying to read the greens correctly and have the good speed around the greens.

So putting is going to be definitely the big key this week. I've got to hit the second shots obviously close. That's definitely one thing that we need to do. But I'm really

concentrating on the shortest club of my bag.

Q. You mentioned how it's really tough trying to qualify for the South Korean team and the Olympics. Do you think in some sense what you did in Rio has made the team more competitive than it already was before?

INBEE PARK: You know, I think definitely Olympics gives Korean players good motivation. I mean, the Korean players have been performing very well last few years, but probably the years that it comes too close to the Olympics, a lot of the players are really wanting to qualify for the games. So I think it definitely gives a lot of players a good motivation to something extra to motivate on, and obviously countries probably -- I'm guessing they are probably expecting gold or probably even gold, silver and the bronze.

Yeah, I think it's very exciting that we get a lot of good expectations from the people and we get great support from the people. So I think if I get to go to Tokyo, I think it's just going to be a fantastic experience.

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