

HSBC Women's World Championship

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Republic of Singapore

Sentosa Golf Club

Danielle Kang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the HSBC Women's World Championship. Welcome to Singapore. Happy to have you here.

DANIELLE KANG: I'm really happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Let's just take it back to last week. I know you withdrew from L.A. and we saw you on your Instagram that you went back home, got some coaching done. What went into that decision and what did you learn about your game to improve upon for this week?

DANIELLE KANG: A lot of people asked me if there was something wrong last week so I decided to put up on Instagram -- I always say no one cares, so I don't normally post those things. But I think people have the right -- some fans have the right to know why I'm not playing.

But I flew back home after Hawai'i, even in Hawai'i, I didn't really feel like playing unfortunately, and as a competitor, it's not fair to play when I don't really feel like it and that's not fair to me as a golfer and my team because we work hard and why I didn't really feel like it was because I wasn't in it 100 percent. To tune up the game, I saw Butch as soon as I landed.

So I went back home, I saw Butch as soon as possible on Sunday and we all decided that, you know, maybe just fine tuning my game, but I needed to work out and get my body prepared and to be able to swing the way I can with authority and things like that.

So it was a good work-in-progress. I worked with my trainers, Jimmy -- great physio and fitness center slept in every day. It was really good.

THE MODERATOR: We talked about the mental aspect of what you were battling and you were open about the on-course anxiety. What did you learn about your mental game as you played through L.A. and how do you hope to kind of regain that confidence inside your mental game this week in Singapore.

DANIELLE KANG: I didn't play well in Hawai'i. I didn't



HSBC Women's World Championship

play well for a few weeks, couple months now.

But I think this week -- you're asking me on a really weird day right now because I didn't hit it well. But Butch and I have been on the phone trying to figure it out.

I think trusting my game and trusting my short game, that's one part that I can trust, my wedges. And this golf course I think having the green speed and knowing the breaks on the greens and things like that, the golf course knowledge will be really helpful. I've been here years prior. They changed a couple holes. With all that said, I think just focusing on the present and trying to play the shot in front of me would be the most important for me.

THE MODERATOR: What's it like coming back to Singapore? This is our first Asian event since 2019, the first time back in Singapore since then. I know it's a little different with those protocols and such, but what is it like to come back to this tournament.

DANIELLE KANG: I honestly really wanted to come to Singapore. I love it here. It's one of my favorite cities in the world. I am staring at the Marina Bay Sands view, which is really great and a little sad at the same time because I won't get out.

But with all that said, I think the government and all the people at IMG and everyone is making it super safe and effective for us to compete out here with the Pro-Ams and the bubble and all that. So I love how Singapore is known for its rules and enforcing them and I like how people are really respecting the rules and that's how it should be anywhere and everywhere.

So coming back out here and eating different foods you can get delivered, I found this new thing called Food Panda, that was pretty cool. Yeah, it's a different vibe. So coming back out here was really nice. I forgot how long it took to come out here, 17-and-a-half-hour flight. I had to Google it. Somebody told me and I didn't believe that.

It's nice to be out of just your safe environment that I've been in for the last year.

THE MODERATOR: You said you noticed the changes of Sentosa and this course. How do you think your game will fit against some of those changes this week?



DANIELLE KANG: This golf course is normally firm and the greens are fast but I notice it's very receptive and I think it's the rainy season and the fairways are softer. No. 3 hole, they redesigned it and it's a very interesting concept. I think on that one, I will trust my ball-striking and leave myself a really long iron in.

I might have to play that as a par 5 and see where I end up instead of a par 4. It's a very funky hole. A couple other ones, they added a couple bunkers. The golf course is playing different. We just have to adjust to how it's playing. I think the weather is going to be a big factor. Playing four rounds of 18 holes is going to be really tough into these weather conditions. I think keeping up the energy is actually more important than the golf game.

THE MODERATOR: We were saying off-camera that Inbee has said she is not a fan of the heat; you have said that you are a fan of the heat. What is it like being in the scorching temperatures outside?

DANIELLE KANG: I love the heat. I prefer this over jacket weather any day, playing golf, I may say.

I love the cold if I'm not playing golf. But Inbee and I are complete opposites; she loves the cold, I hate the cold, playing in the cold.

The heat, I don't know, I think it slows me down. I can't run around like a headless chicken like I normally do. I can't get super -- you know, I can't get too emotional. It's too tiring. I can't walk that fast. Everything just I think slows down and I think that's a good thing. Gets you to breathe.

I prepare with different types of Vitamin C drinks and I drink a lot of Airborne on the golf course, nice energy, steady energy and knowing when you need sugar spikes and everything like that. Pretty aware of my body. I think that's one thing that I do have going for me in the heat.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say as someone who I don't want to say enjoys it, but do well in the heat, do you think that an advantage over players that it's their first time here experiencing this heat?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, probably. It is hot. It is really hot. I think last time it was this hot was the Alabama for the U.S. Open or something. I don't know, I really like Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia. Those are my go-to events, we are melting any time we have a little bit of chilly weather -- hopefully I just stay focused and stay -- I like to acclimate. I like to call it boat lizarding, I just sit out there. You should ask Butch, I do that in Vegas when it's 120 degrees outside, I layout in the sun just full -- getting all the heat so I can just be adjusted to the weather.

THE MODERATOR: Yeah, you practice in heat. You practice in the desert, basically. So that's got to raise the advantage for you.

DANIELLE KANG: A little bit. It's dry heat. This is humidity. You're just melting.

Q. Two months away from the Olympics being finalized. You mentioned it's a dream since you were a toddler. Why are they so important to you?

DANIELLE KANG: The Olympic Games are very important to me because it's one game where the entire world gets together. They are just there for one purpose is to compete. Sometimes it's really hard to find peace in this world with a lot of things going on everywhere and different countries, different issues, but Olympic Games, it's the truest games of all and I think any country and every country, in a sport they worked hard to qualify for their country, it's a dream for a lot of people -- to even watch and witness, and to compete as an athlete is a dream of mine.

Q. You're in position to make the team as of now. How do you think you'll feel should you make the team in two months?

DANIELLE KANG: How would I feel? It would feel as though I gave myself an opportunity to win gold, as simple as that. Give myself an opportunity to compete. I think for right now, making the Olympics is one dream, but going there and competing and being able to compete for gold is part two. Part one needs to be done first. With the qualifications delayed about 15 months last year because of the pandemic, I was pretty bummed out. It was pretty solid that I was in the field. But sometimes it happens, things happen, and I guess I'd be really proud to have a part one done for the part two.

THE MODERATOR: One of the themes this week is game-changers. For you in your career, is there a moment that you think of that was what you think of a game-changing moment while you've been on the LPGA Tour?

DANIELLE KANG: Game-changing moment was probably winning the U.S. Women's Amateur. I know it's not an LPGA Tour. I wasn't going to be a golfer until I won that back-to-back, and then that solidified me playing pro. I think winning the first one kick-started it. That was a game-changer, I would say and the second one solidified. I wouldn't really say -- yeah, those two are probably my big moments.

Tour big moment would be winning the Buick in 2018 would have been a game-changer because I missed I think seven out of nine cuts leading up to it. I switched coaches, went to Butch Harmon, worked with him for three weeks and finished third and finished first. So that

was kind of a game-changing moment where I knew that on the 18th hole, I had the driver yips and I had to hit it straight and there was water on the left and on the right and I had to make par. Things like that was really tough for me to pull off, and coming back, thinking about the shots that I hit, I was super proud I hit the fairway that hole. Yeah, that was a pretty big game-changing moment, knowing that I could do it.

I also remember the Hanna bay, 13, the dogleg left-to-right, I thought I was going to be in the OB. I didn't know how many golf balls -- but I stood there and I just took a little while but it was a game-changing moment and I knew I had to hit it straight and I did. I didn't feel it but I did it.

THE MODERATOR: With these game-changing moments and just for you when you say that you had some obstacles to overcome in your mind and when you look back on the last few events and you say, maybe I haven't been up to the standard, do you ever think back on those moments as kind of positives for any event, whether it be Singapore, Thailand or the next few events.

DANIELLE KANG: Every event that you play in could be the next moment where things shift towards your way. I always say that momentum is going that you create. Some people say that you can't ruin the momentum. Well, actually, you create your own momentum.

So if something is not right, you take a step back and re-analyze what's going on and then you step back into it and work hard and see what happens. Especially in golf, you never know when you're going to get your break, but consistency is key and I always say that when people realize that golf is a game -- it's a game, right, and you show up, and you don't know what you're going to get sometimes.

But that's something I'm not okay with. Kind of a control freak in that sense where I want to know how I'm going to feel every day. If I wake up and feel a certain way, I want to be able to perform a certain way; make my bad rounds into good rounds and make my good rounds into great rounds; having consistency to compete the best you can on this tour. That's all I work on and that's the momentum is being consistent and giving yourself opportunities to compete.

Q. You just mentioned that those two Women's Ams wins confirmed you would go on to professional golf. What do you think you would be doing if you weren't playing professional golf?

DANIELLE KANG: Opportunities are limitless. I don't know. I could be -- I really don't know. I could be a dolphin trainer working at a zoo to being a lawyer. Who knows? My passions outside of golf changes every second. I'm interested in a lot of things. I'm really good

at playing golf so I'm going to stick with this for now. It's not bad.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports