

HSBC Women's World Championship

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Republic of Singapore

Sentosa Golf Club

Inbee Park

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're welcome 2015 and 2017 HSBC Women's World Championship winner, Inbee Park, currently sixth in the Rolex Rankings.

Inbee, welcome back to Singapore. You've had so many good times here. What are some of your greatest memories that have happened here at Singapore in your two wins?

INBEE PARK: Remind me the year.

THE MODERATOR: 2015, 2017.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I remember 2015 where I believe I won with bogey-free or four days, either '15 or '17. But I remember the year when I won bogey-free on the Serapong Golf Course, which I thought the Serapong Golf Course was very challenging but I was able to have no bogeys for the 72 holes which I was really surprised, mostly remembered for this championship.

Every time I come to Singapore, I really enjoy being here and playing in Singapore. I love the food around here. I love the people around here. I love everything about it. This golf course is definitely one of the best golf courses I play all year and they are always so consistent every year. Nothing changes so dramatically. It really reminds me of the good years that I've played good.

Really happy to be playing in the HSBC Women's World Championship.

THE MODERATOR: You kind of answered this next question. This is your 14th year here at the HSBC, and it was 2015 when you went bogey-free. What is so special about this tournament, about this place, about this whole week that keeps you coming back year after year?

INBEE PARK: The first few years I've played here, I really didn't play that well and I thought that this golf course wasn't really matching so great for me.

So I didn't really enjoy so much but then the year 2015 was when it really hit me and I was able to tell myself; that I can overcome something that I didn't like to see.



HSBC Women's World Championship

Like the golf course, I thought it was just too challenging. I didn't think that I could play so well. But I was able to overcome that in 2015.

You know, just that moment, since that moment, I just thought that I can do anything, so it's something that I've really been learning from and that year has been the very special year for me as well.

So it's just, yeah, I mean, just the atmosphere and the field that we get in HSBC since the first year, I thought that this tournament is definitely -- everybody, the best women's golfers in the world is playing in this championship, and you know, when you win this championship, you truly feel like you're the best player in women's golf.

So I think that's definitely one of the reasons that I love to play this championship.

THE MODERATOR: So you come here having played the LPGA's first three events of the year in Florida. How do you feel you played over these three weeks, and what's the state of your game as you return to Singapore?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I played good, and I feel like I didn't play great, but I felt like I had a good warmup for those three weeks, and yeah, good start of the year.

You know, I kind of caught what I needed to work on and wanted to work on, and what's good and what's bad. I think that's the most to take from those three weeks, and I think the real season starts from this week.

Glad to be here with a lot of good memories this week. Always enjoyable.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me before we open it up for questions.

You mentioned what's working with your wedge game and what's always working with your game, as we know, is your putting and with our KPMG Performance Insights, we know that since tracking began in June of 2021, you have made 49.4 percent of your putts from 10 to 15 feet. To put that in context, the LPGA Tour's overall average is just shy of 30 percent.

INBEE PARK: Okay.

THE MODERATOR: And the PGA TOUR's is 30 percent. Is it possible to put into words what makes you such a good putter?

INBEE PARK: It is tough to put into words because I was surprised with the stats as well. I kind of see why it's happening because I actually feel more confident when I stand over a 10- to 15-footer than when I stand over a 3- to 6-footer. Maybe that's the -- that kind of mindset made me be good within 15 feet. I kind of think ten to 15-footer, you have nothing to lose. You just said, there's less than 30 percent for the best players in the world.

When I stand over it, when I feel confident with the line, I feel like even if this misses, it's probably very obvious that everyone misses this length of putt. That kind of mindset, no pressure mindset has been helping with me for that length of putting.

Maybe the mindset of I need to make this. That kind of mindset for 3- to 5-footers is putting so much pressure. That's why the percentage is probably lower than the other. I think that's the only thing I could really think of. Yeah, I can't say anything else. It's just a mindset.

THE MODERATOR: Is you have your husband back on the back this week?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, he caddied for me this week last year and we did great. Hopefully, you know, one more of that will be great.

It's just comfort level is great when I have him on the bag, even though the weather is so hot and it's tough to get around on this golf course. But I mean, I don't think we're going to have much of this experience. I don't think we're going to have a lot of this experience.

So trying to take this experience as a very special experience and enjoy while we can.

Q. Looking back five, six years ago, you won ten or 12 tournaments over the course of three years. The last three years you've won consistently but it's been a bit less. Talk about that and what's changed in terms of your game.

INBEE PARK: To be honest, nothing's really changed in my game. But the world is changing. And the new generations of golfers are emerging, and I have less spots to stand on. I think that's really what it is. I'm aging and there's a lot of young, competitive golfers are coming up and yeah, just like I said, it just less ground to stand on. It's a really, really natural thing. I'm 33 years old and my primetime when I was playing really good was like mid 20s, around that time, when I had my time.

There are so many players out there having their time, so I feel like I'm playing still very good golf but you know, even though I make less mistakes and I'm probably hitting it a lot shorter than a lot of the girls out on Tour, so that really makes it tougher to play better. And yeah, I mean, that's -- I really don't think there's anything changing in my game, but yeah.

Q. So does coming to somewhere like Singapore where you've won twice and you have an excellent record, does that in a way negate some of those factors that you mentioned and puts you in a very good position?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I think now, I really need to play the golf courses where it really fits me. You know, where the golf courses where it needs a long drive, that kind of golf course where I -- even though I don't can't make much mistakes, I can't really play that well.

But Sentosa is one of the golf courses where I can play well where it's set up fair for the long hitter or the short hitter. I feel like this golf course really suits my game, and you know, when you put good on these greens, you can score. So that's why that I have been playing good on this golf course.

Q. I asked the other two players this, as well: What's the biggest challenge playing golf over the last two years during the pandemic in terms of is it just the fact like for here you don't get a lot of spectators or no spectators or the travel restrictions?

INBEE PARK: You know, I really think the travel restrictions was a really tough thing for us. We were losing a lot of tournaments internationally. We were gaining tournaments domestically but international tournaments I really miss going to. Obviously there's so many travel restrictions and for the players, you know, their motivation to go on and play good for the weeks that they are out is to go home, and you know, enjoy their time off.

But it is tough to do when you have two-week quarantine when you go home and come back, and you've got to have about at least three to four weeks off to have some kind of bring and that's really tough to do during the season. It's tough for me because it's tough to do that one-week refresh when you play three weeks, and then you take a week off, but then I want to back home and refresh. But that's something that we couldn't do; couldn't go back home. That's definitely something that I really miss.

And definitely the fans, with the atmosphere that we used to have and everybody just gathering around and just hanging out, I definitely miss that.

Q. Following up on having galleries or not having galleries, do you prefer there to be large galleries are you the kind of player that feeds off the crowd?

INBEE PARK: You know, I wouldn't say feeds off the crowd. I can definitely do both. I definitely miss the fans out and the fans cheering for us. I think they definitely give us good energy, especially coming to overseas and traveling internationally, we see all different parts of the world and we see all different parts -- fans of golf. I definitely miss fans, yes.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me and we'll let you go. You mentioned that you're, quote, aging; 33 is not aging. But you've had such a fulfilling career, so much, and all of the majors, the Gold Medal, and you see this new generation coming. What keeps you coming back to the golf course week-in and week-out?

INBEE PARK: You know, just the belief that I can still win out here. I think when I feel like that I have no chance, I wouldn't be coming out. I think so many people say, as long as you enjoy the game, it doesn't matter what the result is but it really matters to me.

I think when you play, just not as good when you used to play, it is always hard to take the results, but I still have -- when I play at my best, I still feel like I have a good chance to win the golf championship and that's how -- that's why we are playing golf and that's why I am playing golf and coming back.

So yeah, it is -- it has become very tougher to win for me than when I was in 2013, 2015. Back then, I feel like I played -- made so many mistakes, but I still finished in the top 10. Sometimes I feel like I made a few mistakes but I still won.

Now, I feel like after 72 holes, I think I played so good and then I think I may be missed one or two, but I barely got inside top 10. But when you play perfect, I might be able to win. So I think that's kind of different than what I have before.

Before, my mistakes were forgiven but now my mistakes are not forgiven. I think it's tougher, getting tougher and tougher. The girls are hitting so much far to me and the golf course is so much easier to them than to me.

At first I think it was just tougher for me to take what the truth is, but now when I look back and think about it, I think that's just a natural thing. I think many of the older generations than me felt the same when I played good. I think that's just a natural thing and I'm really happy to see all these girls playing well and demonstrating great women's golf.

So yeah, great to see.

THE MODERATOR: The LPGA is in a good place, and you have a lot to say for that. Good luck this week and we'll see you out there.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports