

# HSBC Women's World Championship

Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Republic of Singapore

Sentosa Golf Club

## Lydia Ko

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center here at the 2023 HSBC Women's Championship. Looking at your results, this is and a place you like a lot and the weather is not so great right now, but talk about how great it is to be back at the Sentosa Golf Club.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I was able to get an early nine this morning. The golf course is in really good shape.

Yeah, unfortunate that the weather forecast doesn't look too good this week but yesterday was meant to be like really stormy and rainy but I think it was a lot better than it's forecasted and especially because of the water, the wind, I think there's chances for it to blow well and hopefully that will be the case.

I really like coming back to Singapore, it's one of the best and my favorite spots on tour. So looking forward to celebrating with HSBC, the 15 years of them having this championship.

THE MODERATOR: It's a golf course you've played well at, and I'm right you've never finished outside the Top-25 here. What is it about this golf course that suits your eye or suits your game?

LYDIA KO: I didn't know that I had the runner-up here or played that well. Yeah, the course is in really good shape. Obviously we played both the Tanjong and Serapong Course over the time I've been here. They are two very different style of golf courses.

But yeah, I was actually talking about it earlier how sometimes my ball-striking wasn't as good but I was able to put a good score together. It's kind of the big thing around these golf courses where it won't be -- even if it's not perfect, you know, you don't get too carried away and try and shoot the best score you can and I feel like there must may be tough holes but holes you know are more birdieable and gettable that you try to take advantage of them.

THE MODERATOR: Last week you played well in Thailand and had a couple blips in the scorecard but coming off the win at the Saudi Ladies International, were



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you tired coming to Thailand and how have you managed your energy over the last three weeks.

LYDIA KO: It was a fairly short flight from Jeddah. It wasn't too bad. I think by the time I was getting adjusted to the time zone in Jeddah, we had to change to a different time zone so that's probably one of the more tougher aspects.

But that's probably like being on tour and going to all these different countries that even from the East Coast, the West Coast of America, there's time changes so that's something that you've got to get pretty quickly accustomed to.

And yeah, I playing really solid last week. I just didn't putt as well as the week before and made a few clumsy mistakes but other than that it's probably one of my best finishes at the Honda LPGA. So hoping those two weeks give me good momentum for this week.

THE MODERATOR: We chatted in Thailand but to get that win on the LET so early in the year, and having taken a substantial amount of time off what does that tell you about your game and where it's at headed into the rest of the year?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think before the first event you're always nervous because you don't exactly know how it's going to go. It's been a long time since CME, and hey, just because you've finished well or you didn't play as well it doesn't necessarily carry on to the next season.

But I wanted to start just so that I could get a better feel of where my game is at. One of the things that I really need to work on and it was a really good learning curve and having been able to win that at a place I won before was definitely the best start that I could plan out for this season and I played solid last week.

It's a long year. You think only play 20-something events but with breaks in between and long stretches and multiple majors in a few-week stretch, it adds up but I'm excited for the season. Last year I couldn't have asked for anything more both on and off the golf course.

So yeah, it's kind of hard to beat but I'm trying to not compare it and start from new and start from a blank page.



**Q. That scene last year -- inaudible -- you've had since you began your career out here. How do you set your expectations and leave the past in the past and look forward?**

LYDIA KO: I think that's the thing with golf that one day, you feel like everything is going your way and then the next day, you don't have the feels as much.

So I don't think you can take anything for granted. I don't think anything comes easy and you're playing -- I'm playing alongside the best female golfers week-in, week-out, so it's not easy to be the one missing hoisting the trophy at the end of the week.

I've had my own up-and-downs so I think I realize now more so than maybe 2015 when I was Player of the Year that sometimes things may not go in my way but I think I'm able to deal with that better and just be okay with it and just keep working on things I need to and just move on.

**Q. What are some of your goals for 2023?**

LYDIA KO: I think fairways hit and greens in regulation were probably my biggest goals. Going into last year I realized when I played better, those aspects were better. So I try to focus more on performance goals and what I can do rather than like result-orientated stuff because I could play really good golf.

Like in Dallas last year, but Charlie and Janet they played better than me, so I think rather than think about, okay, how many times I want to win, yes, there's probably a number, and I would like to win but I try and focus on performance-related goals and which is -- have been higher fairways hit, percentage and greens in regulation.

**Q. (Talk about having your husband on the course with you.)**

LYDIA KO: I think there's only -- just to know that obviously putting somebody -- a boyfriend, fiancée, husband, it doesn't make a huge difference but in ways it makes a big difference and to know that there's somebody at the end of my round no matter what I shoot, to all support me and just think of me, not the golfer Lydia Ko but Bo-Gyung, my Korean name. It's taken me as who I am as a person. I think that's something that you're very thankful for and I think sometimes it can feel very lonely out there. You have your caddie and your team and your family but there are things that you kind of just put in and keep to yourself.

But my husband has been I think one of the biggest influences in my life, and I think after meeting him, I was able to enjoy golf more. Before, like I thought casual golf

was like I would rather do other things and play like fun golf because golf is my profession.

But now I like enjoy playing like nine holes with him on a Saturday during an off-week and like my job has become more fun and more enjoyable, and I think here again I was able to have a better perspective on life and differentiate that golf shouldn't dictate how I, like, see myself and know this is what I am -- this is my job and you shouldn't -- like the results shouldn't affect how I see myself and how I feel about myself off the golf course.

So yeah, I've got a lot to thank him for and he's I think my number -- I call him my No. 1 supporter but he said my mom and my sister, and like my direct family are my No. 1 supporter. But I think he changed my life and I'm very grateful for his support and for him understanding what I do.

**Q. (Do you see this event differently and maybe that's why you've played so well here?)**

LYDIA KO: I don't think any tournament should be seen a little differently. Obviously the world's best come here so the class of field is very strong every year that we come. Yeah, I love Singapore and I do want to play really well here. My cousin lives here, so it's one thing that I always felt like I got a lot of warm welcome.

But to believe today is very unique weather but it tends to be pretty hot and it's either, you know, the second or the first stretch of Asian Swing, so just keeping your good energy levels up is good, and I think you know putting well is obviously important at most events.

But especially here when you have those birdie opportunities or when you need to make up-and-down, I thought that was some of the biggest keys. And when I did play well, I thought I putted really well. So having put four rounds where that's a little bit more consistent is going to be a big key for me.

**Q. (Do you feel like you're the No. 1 player?)**

LYDIA KO: To be honest I don't even feel like the No. 1 player. I play alongside the best female golfers and I played with Nelly or like Jin Young or Minjee or Brooke and all of the players, you just play alongside them and you're like, wow, she's so good. And I think Jeeno, I saw her hit last week and she gave me goosebumps, it was some unbelievable shots.

I think you can never get too, I guess, cocky about like what ranked player you are because especially at the top, it is so tight and everyone is playing really well, and you can't say, I'm going to be there for ever. I think, yes, you should get the confidence and believe in yourself when you're playing but when I became No. 1 for the first time, I was -- I'm still young, I'd like to think.

But I was even younger and I felt like being No. 1 meant that I had to be winning or like contending week-in, week-out but that's not necessarily true. As somebody that plays consistently throughout the season or through multiple seasons, so everybody is going to have their up-and-downs but to kind of manage that, making sure those lows aren't super low and you don't get too high from the highs, I think just having kind of gone through a little bit of it, I'm just able to accept it a lot better.

THE MODERATOR: I mean, just how pleased with yourself that you have gotten to that conclusion? You and talked about it last year, the few years before last year were pretty challenging for you.

To come back and do what you did last season which is incredible to watch, and then to get to No. 1 in the world, to win CME and two other events and to win in Korea for the first time just how proud of are you -- how proud are you of yourself and how far you've come?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think when I go back to 2021, at lot tee championship I honestly didn't know if I would ever be back in that position again. Since the fall of 2020 I put myself more in contention, had a few more Top 10s and had for a few years, but being top 10 or coming second is different to winning.

You know it's there but you then wonder like is it actually going to happen, and winning there gave me a lot of confidence. I think I missed the cut the week after, so that confidence kind of derailed quite quickly.

But I think that I believed -- and I won on the LET tour later in the year but it's just, I think sometimes your biggest enemy is yourself and even you try to not get in the way of yourself, and I think sometimes I have a friend that talks over my shoulder and like tries to put me down but I try and not listen to it.

I did focus on what -- on what is in front of me and especially the fall of last year winning in Korea is so special. I always wanted to win in Korea whether it was a KLPGA event or a different special event and to have won our LPGA event there was so special, alongside my family and first time that fans could be there since COVID.

I think that gave me a lot of confidence and then that kind of continued up until CME so yeah, so many, like grateful things and having my husband there to -- with me at CME and what -- him watching me win for the first time, I think like everything -- that's why I cried because it's just like so emotional, not just that moment but everything kind of came up with me.

So yeah, 2020 was a year that I could not have planned out any better and obviously that gives me motivation to

do well this year. But take it step by at the point and even if things don't go well ask don't get too frustrated about it, and just focus on the now and I feel like everything else is going to take care of itself.

#### **Q. Talk about the new team event with the PGA TOUR and Grant Thornton.**

LYDIA KO: It's very exciting that Grant Thornton I think is the head sponsor, it's very exciting that partners like that believe in this kind of path and I feel like sometimes women's golf is -- we have more and more partners that are believing in us and supporting us and you can see that by how much our purses have grown, especially last year, and most, all of our major championships and even some of our other ones as well.

We are moving in that right direction and then this is definitely another exciting jump. I know Nelly played the event last year, Lexi has played in it the last couple years.

So I've felt like that was going to be a thing that I've always wanted to play in something like that. I am not in any of the team events now, so to have that kind of opportunity I think is really cool.

I haven't been -- I've been asked or invited, I'm not really sure how like the proceedings are for that event yet. But I think I've had that talk with myself, who I would want to play with, but I also think at the same time, I'm going to be like pretty nervous playing alongside a PGA TOUR player but it's going to be so much fun.

I think it will draw a lot of attraction, especially juniors who watch both the PGA and the LPGA. So they can come out and watch two of their favorite golfers, and they are paired together, like Jess and Ricky and Nelly and Tony. Even if I don't get to play I'm excited to watch it and hopefully this is more of a trend that we go and this is only -- this is the big picture to growing the game of golf anyway, so I'm excited for it, yeah.

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