

HSBC Women's World Championship

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Republic of Singapore

Sentosa Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to our defending champion, Lydia Ko. Tell us, you've been out on the course. How are conditions?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I played the front nine -- no, the back nine today. Took a day off yesterday coming over from Thailand. So good to be back. You know, when you've made a lot of good memories, it's nice to kind of draw back on them, even when you are playing a practice round. You know, how fast the year really goes by, it's unbelievable.

But yes, hopefully I'll be able to draw on a lot of the good highlights from last year, and kind of take that and the good momentum from last week into this week.

THE MODERATOR: I know when you came here last year, you were like, I've played in every edition and I haven't won. How much did it mean to you to get over the line, and how does it feel coming back and seeing yourself as defending champion on the artwork and everything?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's pretty special. I feel like I made a lot of good friendships, having played in Singapore for many, many years. You know, from seeing some of the junior little girls, that was literally up to my hip height and now they are getting so much bigger. You know, a lot of the times they actually draw like a little sign for me.

I think that's what's always been the special part of this week. The result was kind of secondary, and I just wanted to put on a good show, play a lot of good golf in front of the friends and fans that I've made in Singapore.

Yeah, I feel like it was a win that was special for a lot of us, you know, not just for myself, and obviously 2024 was a very special year for me. So to kind of back up a year that was really unbelievable with another win in '25, I think it was a great way to really start the season.

THE MODERATOR: Last week, you weren't feeling very well but you had a good finish. Can you talk about your form coming into this week and the start of the year for you?



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LYDIA KO: Yeah, I played solid in Orlando at my home club, and it had been a few years since I was last in Thailand. It was nice to go back.

I always remember the course being in really good conditions but the fans were really the highlight of that event, and having returned a few years later, the fans really didn't disappoint. Obviously it helps with Jeeno playing really well and winning on Sunday as well.

I feel like I have a lot of good momentum coming into this week. Obviously every week is a new week, and every golf course is different. So you just have to adjust accordingly.

But it's been a great couple of events to start the season. I'm just all in all very excited for what's ahead this year, and I feel like the game is trending in the right direction.

So I would hopefully like to put myself in contention more and just give myself more opportunities, which is kind of the name of the game ultimately.

Q. Of the many inspiring golf stories, any of those that you can share in your career?

LYDIA KO: I mean, I think the -- like Paris was obviously very special for me. But I think the Olympics in general were very important points in my career.

You know, obviously the Tokyo Olympics was meant to be played in 2020, but because of the pandemic, we played a year later. And I was actually just telling somebody that I'm selfishly, as a golfer, I'm glad it was a year later because I felt like I was a little bit better prepared and at a better place with my game than in 2020.

I think inspiration within my career, probably the Olympics has been huge. And even going into Paris, I didn't really have a great few months leading up to it. I had my first Top 10 in months at the Canadian Open, and then that was kind of the start to it. But I didn't think that that could potentially lead to a Gold Medal a couple weeks later.

For me, that was my inspiration in the sense of, I think there were moments in my career where I felt like there

was really no chance, and I wasn't really sure if I was ever going to win again.

But to be able to excel at probably the biggest sporting event in the world, I think that those were probably the biggest motivators and inspiration for me.

Q. Looking at Jeeno last week in Thailand, what do you feel like the pressure is like to win on home soil?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think it's always special to win at home. I think it's always a dream that you think about. It's hard to compare it to anything else until it really happens.

Obviously, like I said before, the fans at the Honda is amazing. They are out there supporting, and it's probably one of the biggest crowds I think we play in front of, I think even including major championships.

For them to support Jeeno, I saw so many people with like the "Jeeno" tee shirt. I didn't know if it's a fan club or who makes it. But I think it is very unique and different to any other event.

I think as a player, you always want to win at home soil. You want to bring the trophy for your local fans, and especially because you probably have more family there that week, too.

So, yeah, I can imagine it being more special. I saw the little clip of Jeeno saying, I think to her mom in Thai, it was her first time winning in front of her mother. I think outside of just winning in Thailand and winning at home, I think that would probably have meant a lot to her.

As good as she is, you'd think that, like, you don't think about it, but obviously because it means so much, I'm sure she did think about it, and I think that's what really made it special. And honestly, it touched my heart when I heard that because, I mean, I would never have guessed, right. I think that was really the cool thing to kind of see.

Q. You mentioned last week that you are working on improving your greens in regulations numbers. Can you talk about what specifically you've been working on?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I feel like my iron play is normally the strength of my game, but the last few years, it's definitely been a struggle. I've improved in my driving, which is probably one of the biggest areas in my game that I felt like needed work, and it had almost took like a complete flip.

You know, some were to do with technical things working with my coach, and some was to do with like club fitting, as well. I'm a free agent when it comes to equipment, so

it's nice to kind of see what works well with me, and I feel like I have a pretty good setup right now.

I put in a lot of work my club fitter and my coach and my team in the couple weeks leading up to Thailand. So to kind of see the work pay off is really good. As golfers, we're all crazy, right. We always want to adjust and be a little bit better. If we try to be the same, I don't think you would be good anymore. You're always just trying to polish up your game, whether it's equipment or technical points.

So I'm sure I'll always be working on that. But yeah, I think it's just been a combination of technique plus equipment.

Q. Coming in as defending champion, is there anything that changes about your mindset and your approach?

LYDIA KO: I don't think my mindset changes at all. Obviously, you know, I've got a lot of good memories to draw back from. You know, and also, kind of know that I can win at this golf course.

But I think outside of that, my course strategy, like course management really doesn't change. You know, a lot of us, it's literally a year later that we're here. So it's a whole new week.

So, yeah, from a strategy standpoint, not really.

Q. A question about WTGL. I wanted to ask you about it, and I think it was announced Michelle will be playing.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, all of the 16-ish players that has been announced, they are very all high-calibre players.

Obviously the WTGL and the TGL is a different platform for golf. I think golf is what we traditionally know is a 72-hole tournament, stroke-play. But I think over the past two years, the game has really evolved, whether it's through YouTube space, through content space to different types of tournaments. The Grant Thornton Invitational was something that had returned after a really long time.

I think having this kind of diversity in golf is very good. I think it broadens the demographic that is interested in golf, whereas I think sometimes when you would traditionally know of a golf tournament, maybe it would be just a certain demographic.

But I know that the demographic that watches YouTube golf is a little different to the people that watch the LPGA or maybe the PGA TOUR, and maybe a different demographic watches the TGL and the WTGL. I think this is a platform for the game to grow. Obviously it is a

very new product from the WTGL standpoint.

I'm interested to kind of see where this goes to. There might be some trial and error here and there, but I'm excited to be part of this generation that's starting it.

I think that this is -- like all in all, we're trying to grow the game and give more opportunities to future generations, and I think this is a pathway to that.

I think if we only go down the one way where we've been going or what we think is normal, then I think there's a limb Toyota how much we grow. I think it's going to be a great platform to be a part of, and I am honestly interested to see like how it goes because I just don't have that much experience in that, either.

So it's going to be fun, and I love team play. So it's going to be -- it's something that I'm really looking forward to is playing but I think all in all, a very good opportunity for women's golf and golf in general.

Q. Last year the men's golf, saw Rory win the Masters, and the next couple of tournaments, he said his motivation had taken a dip. You've won almost everything. Just wondering what drives you to win tournaments.

LYDIA KO: I mean, I haven't done the career Grand Slam, so maybe if I do that, then I might lose motivation like Rory.

But I feel like, yeah, I'm sure he might have lost a bit of motivation, but at the same time, when a player is that good and is that calibre, I feel like he still doesn't like losing, if you know what I mean.

Yeah, there might be the question in your head like, okay, what's next? And I've had that question in my career at multiple points, and even after winning the Silver Medal in Rio, that was such a big goal of mine. After that was done, I had lost a little bit sense of direction in my career.

Yeah, I do think that when you are at that high level, it means you are a little different, very special, and you know, I'm sure even if he -- I don't know what the next event he teed up at, but he still wanted to win at the end of Sunday, and I think that's what makes him so good, right.

But yeah, I think the U.S. Women's Open has always been a big star or key on the schedule in any season. I obviously haven't won that. So that's always a motivation.

But all in all, I think just outside of how many event I want to win and what tournament I want to win, I feel like my game is trending to the point where I know that if I just

keep working on, it I'll just become a better golfer and the results kind of sort itself out.

I'm honestly excited for the process and not really much -- what exact event that I really want to grasp. I feel like if I do the process well, then everything else is going to kind of sort itself out.

So, yeah, I honestly am enjoying, I think, the work in between right now. And it's pretty hard to say when you've been on tour for 13 years because sometimes I do turn up and I'm like, okay, this again.

But I am really excited to see where my game is heading, and that's why I'm excited for this year because I just I feel like I'm becoming a little more consistent and stronger fundamentally as the golfer, Lydia.

Q. I wanted to know what sort of stuff do you do for fitness, and how does it help you?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I have a couple trainers, and I have a physio and trainer on the road, as well. You know, obviously on the road, it's really hard to gain a lot of muscle and all that because ultimately I'm trying to perform, and I want to make sure that I'm also not fatigued by the end of Sunday.

So, yeah, I mix between weight training and cardio and a little bit of Pilates, so I'm kind of doing the mobility/stability stuff, as well as the strength and power. I kind of try and have it a bit more balanced.

To be honest, now that I've been on tour for so long, my body, I know, is not the same as ten years ago. So my recovery is not as fast as I think I should be. So sometimes I think the fatigue catches up to me more than where I am mentally. So I'm just trying to have a good balance of that.

But yeah, you know, for me, I just noticed that having a good all-around balance is the most important thing, and not making -- and not being too heavy on the one side.

Q. So what will you do after a round? Is there a specific routine you have after a round?

LYDIA KO: My trainer in Florida, Gaston (Khoury), before I go to an event, if there's a gym at the golf course or a gym at the hotel, I'll send him pictures of the gym, and he sends me a couple programs. So I'll follow that on a Monday, Tuesday, and maybe once or twice during the tournament days.

But it's honestly dependent on where my body is at. If I'm not feeling good, it doesn't matter if I have two programs to meet. I'm probably not gaining much out of it. So like last week I did less workout than I normally would just because I wasn't feeling that great.

Yeah, I think you need to find a good balance of, okay, what will help me, and what will benefit me but at the same time just making sure that I'm still fresh.

Q. You're such a great player -- did you ever have doubts --

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think there's been multiple times where I wasn't sure if I would win or not again. I think when you've played well and things came more -- it was never easy.

I think a lot of people will see how consistent Jeeno is playing, and they will be like, Oh, it must be so easy for her. But she puts in a lot of hours. All of our players put in a lot of hours and effort and sweat and tears to get to that moment. Outside-in, it might look easy, but even if she shoots, or whoever shoots 64, it was never easy, right.

So I think sometimes it just comes a little easier. Sometimes it's things that you're trying to do, the execution is very good, and sometimes it really isn't. I think when you're trying to do one thing and execution does not meet and you do, and that happens for a while, you start questioning yourself, are you going to break par, are you going to win again.

I think there's a multitude of thoughts that come through. It was only natural that it came to me, and I feel like I've had my fair share of lows. I think that's why I think when I did overcome it, it was more rewarding because there was a phase not too long ago where I felt like that moment was probably not going to happen.

Q. Who have been your role models?

LYDIA KO: I mean, Se Ri is probably one of my biggest role models. I am born in Korea. Her winning the 1998 U.S. Women's Open was like not only big in golf, where like people that were interested in golf, but it was big for the whole country, especially at a time when I think there was a financial crisis in Korea.

I think she's always been a huge role model of mine. I was fortunate enough to come out in my first few years on tour, was the same as her last few years on tour. For me, I cherish where we would go to dinner together with her sister and my mom, and I think she's somebody that I really look up to. And anybody that really is Korean descent, like, looks up to her.

Stacy Lewis has been like another role model of mine. She's given me some really good advice throughout the years. I've played with her in the final group when I won the Canadian Women's Open when I was 15, and then at other points where I've had -- when I felt like I was struggling a lot, she would come and give me this kind of

advice.

So, yeah, Stacy is somebody that really helped a lot for me, and, you know, kind of gave me the right words of wisdom and advice at the right time, even when I wasn't sure if I needed it.

So, yeah, she's somebody that I'm actually very thankful for.

THE MODERATOR: Just last one to wrap up. You've just been on the green with eight of the ten top players that are here this week. This is the 18th edition of HSBC, and they have just renewed for another five years, so their longevity in the sport is remarkable.

Can you say a few words about what that means, having a sponsor that's so involved and supportive?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think as an organisation and members of our tour, we are very thankful for partners like HSBC, who hasn't just been here through the good times but through the lows, as well. And whether it's as a player or as an organisation, I think you really sometimes take things for granted.

But, you know, partners like HSBC, we really wouldn't be here without them today. Obviously they are big in support. They support sports and women in sports, and this event is one of, I think, the best events on the calendar year for us. So we're very grateful for their partnership.

But, yeah, they do a fantastic job, not only for the players but for the staff and the fans, and the hospitality is just all-around very good. So it's great to work with partners that are so supportive and are excited to grow the game and see what the future also looks like because sometimes you only see what the present is.

Obviously they are excited to go on this journey with us, and I feel like the LPGA Tour has come a long way these last few years. Even in the last six months, there's been a lot of exciting announcements, and I feel like we're only growing from here.

Thanks to our Commissioner and our partners like HSBC, I do believe our tour is trending, and whether I'm playing on Tour or not, I'm excited to kind of see where this goes, and like the founders said it, we're trying to leave it better for the next generation. Yeah, we are all trying to do a good job in that sense.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect, thank you very much. Best of luck.

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