

The Amundi Evian Championship

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Evian-les-Bains, France

Evian Resort Golf Club

Inbee Park

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're going to get started with Inbee Park. Welcome back to the media center for the Amundi Evian Championship. Here with Inbee Park, appearing in her 13th event of the LPGA season, a win at the Kia Classic and six other top-10 finishes. Here she's making her 11th appearance at the Evian Resort Golf Club with a victory at the 2012 Evian Masters. Welcome back, Inbee. We all missed being here last year. How good of a feeling was it to see Lake Geneva and to see all the beautiful sights here in Evian.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it was really great to be back here and I didn't know until I came here how much I missed this place. It is so beautiful. Obviously the weather was just amazing the last three days, and the golf course is in really, really good shape. Hopefully the weather just holds on until Sunday so we play this beautiful golf course for all four days.

Yeah, like I said, really great to be back here in a beautiful place. Didn't think that I missed it this much, but as soon as I arrived here at the hotel, at the golf course, and just the view of the venue here is just amazing.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned the course; our lead rules official is saying this is the best he's ever seen it and that's amazing considering how much rain it's received over the past two months. You've had a couple days to see the golf course, reacquaint yourself. How does it look out there for this championship week?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it is probably the best I've seen. I think after they did the renovation this is definitely the best condition I have seen this golf course. The first day when I did the practice round it was a little bit soft, but today I played the pro-am in the morning and it was firming up nicely.

In the next couple days without the rain, I think the course is going to play firm and fast, which is how we want to play this golf course.

The greens are very tricky still, whether they're slow or fast. You're always going to struggle on these greens trying to read the putts. There's a lot of slopes on these



greens, so you've got to be careful of that, and the rough is thick, so you have to be in the fairways and you have to be putting well.

THE MODERATOR: Beyond the winning moment from 2012, what are the biggest moments you remember from that week here in 2012 when you won?

INBEE PARK: Well, I remember because that was the second win of my LPGA Tour career and the first win traveling with my husband. It was a very special moment.

Out of all the like 20 wins I've done with my husband, this is definitely the first one and the best one because it was the first one.

It has a really special place in my heart, and just the moment -- I felt like that week I putted so well on these greens. I felt like I struggled a lot on these greens over a few years before heading into 2012 Evian, but somehow 2012 the putting was just working really well. I was trying to work out why, but still couldn't figure out why the putting in 2012. Hopefully another year of putting like that in 2012.

THE MODERATOR: What is it with you and your putting? Has that always been a strength of your game.

INBEE PARK: I think so. I think my putting has been -- always been above average. I have been having these years that I was putting really, really good, and then I had the years that I'm putting above average but not as good as other years, but I think my putting always has been really good, I think, overall.

I definitely have those weeks where I don't putt well at all, but that's normal with putting. I don't try to be too greedy with the putter. When I try to be too greedy with the putter, you're not making many putts. Just trying to be very calm and very nice to my putter so it works. Sometimes I put a good stroke on it and it doesn't go in. Sometimes I put a bad stroke on it and it goes in.

You just don't know. It's golf. Especially putting is just something that I still can't figure out.

THE MODERATOR: You can't figure it out but you have it and you can't explain it. It's a strange thing.



Q. You did win the Evian Masters in 2012 but what would it mean to get a win here and add another major title? Do you feel any pressure to add that to your resume?

INBEE PARK: That is definitely one thing I've always wanted to do. I definitely won in 2012 but it wasn't a major. It became a major, they redid the golf course, and we're playing a little bit different of a golf course.

Obviously becoming a major, definitely wanting to win another Evian Championship. Yeah, this year I think would be a really good year to do it, as well, coming into the Tokyo Olympics and obviously the course is in really, really good shape.

I really want to play well on this type of a golf course. Yeah, it's really going to come down to putting because I played the pro-am the last couple days and a practice round, still can't exactly figure out every putt. Sometimes it breaks a lot more than I think and sometimes it just breaks the other way.

Just trying to learn the greens. I did homework for the last three days and hopefully that pays off for the weekend.

Q. You mentioned the Olympics; what is the anticipation level for these Olympics as you hope to defend your gold medal? You said this is what has kept you playing is the opportunity to play in Tokyo. What are you feeling as you get ready for this week?

INBEE PARK: Well, I think it has been definitely a big motivation of mine going to 2021 Olympics. I was able to achieve my goal and qualify for the spot.

Yeah, really excited to be going to the second Olympics of my career, and I feel like I'm in a little better shape than I was in 2016, so I feel a little better.

Yeah, just really, really excited. I know it's going to be a little bit different, obviously, with the COVID, but I still think Olympics is Olympics, and yeah, we're just going to have a lot of fun.

Q. You talked about 2016 and your injury, and I think that story and that comeback is one of golf's great stories. What was it like that year of 2016 wanting to play, not knowing if you could, taking the time off and then, oh, hello, I'm going to come win gold?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, that was probably the most mysterious thing that I've probably ever done in my whole entire career. Still can't figure out how. I worked really hard to play in 2016 Rio Olympics.

A little different preparation to 2020 Tokyo because 2016 I probably took two, three months off before heading into

the Olympics and just worked on my game, no competition at all.

But this year I feel good, no injuries, so I am just playing the tournaments before so I can get the good feel of competition.

It's going to be hard to beat the last one for sure, but hopefully this way works, as well.

Q. What are your plans over the next week? When do you head to Tokyo and what your plans from there?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I go back to Korea after this week and then leave to Tokyo on Saturday.

Q. Continuing on the Olympics question, in all of the victories that you've had in your career, how do you rank the Olympics with the majors? Which would be more important to you?

INBEE PARK: I think for the rareness of it, the Olympics is definitely number one. I have seven majors and one Olympic gold. For the rareness, I'd say the best accomplishment I ever had is the gold medal.

Q. Is there one in all these accomplishments that really stands out outside of the Olympics?

INBEE PARK: 2013 was a very special year for me, winning the three majors in the same year. I can't really tell you one of that, but I think just that year, just that whole entire year was just a very special year for me with the three majors.

Q. Any special preparation other than playing a lot this time that you're doing, and have you played in Japan before?

INBEE PARK: I have played in Japan about two to three years in Japanese Tour in and out a little bit. Not full time, but I have played about 10 events every year for about three years, so I am familiar with the Japanese golf courses, and I have played on many of their golf courses.

Q. Have you played the Olympic course?

INBEE PARK: No.

Q. This time a year ago was so strange; I know you said you didn't realize how much you missed it until you got back, but can you put into context kind of where we were a year ago right now and certainly where we need to still be having our masks but feel like we're somehow getting back to normal?

INBEE PARK: You know, I thought it was coming back to normal, especially the last couple of months or so

when everything was just calming down. Then this delta virus came in, and in Korea we're having the most cases ever in the last couple years.

We thought we were going the right direction, and then now it feels like it's going backwards. I know it's going to be a very tough battle for everybody, and hopefully we all get together and get through this.

Q. Following from the Olympics, of course three years' time the Olympics will be in France, in Paris. Can you see yourself playing in that?

INBEE PARK: Well, I can tell you that I didn't see myself playing in 2020 Tokyo, but I am here, so I don't know. Maybe 2024 in Paris. It is definitely a beautiful place and a place I always wanted to go.

Yeah, I mean, it would be nice, but I don't know if I'll be there. I'm not sure.

Q. You play quite a lot of golf, obviously, in the buildup to this, I take it you're going to play the Women's Open, as well, at Carnoustie. What's your schedule like after that? Are you going to put your feet up a bit or carry on playing as often as this?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I think I'm going to play this one and the Olympics and the British Open, and then I'll take probably three, four weeks off after that.

Q. Going to the Olympics and talking about the gender equality between the men's side of the game and the women's side, do you feel that the Olympics puts the two sides on equal footing, and if so or if not, why? What are your thoughts on that?

INBEE PARK: You mean the competition level?

Q. For the competition, for the golf, for the overall experience.

INBEE PARK: Well, I think for my perspective, I think the Olympics is definitely the venue and definitely the place that I really want to experience. I think most of the girls probably think like that. But I don't know, like the men's, I've seen the news that a few of them pulled out of the Olympics, and I know definitely they have a lot more schedule than we do, and sometimes everyone's choice could be different.

Yeah, I think the level, the field that we're getting, I think the women's field definitely gets -- I guess if you -- let's say 60 girls have qualified, then probably 58, probably like more than 90 percent is going to stay or want to compete. Out of the men's maybe just a little less percentage than that.

Yeah, I think the level of getting involved is probably a

little less.

Q. But when you're on-site, is it pretty much -- it seems to be the same, the men's week and the women's week as far as the atmosphere and experience?

INBEE PARK: I think it is actually probably the most equal golf tournament that we'll ever see, definitely. The PGA TOUR events and LPGA events, there's definitely some gap of difference, but Olympics is definitely -- I felt like it was the same week.

Q. What did you do during the COVID period? Were you practicing or training or did you create another hobby, another interest to occupy yourself and get away from the COVID stress?

INBEE PARK: I think in the first month or so I kind of took some time off from golf. After that I started practicing and training because I didn't know when we were going to come back and play.

Nothing like new hobby or anything, I just lived a normal life, just training and practicing.

Q. And resting up?

INBEE PARK: And resting. In Korea. I spent most of the COVID time in Korea.

Q. Do you have a good luck charm or a fetish that helps you win all these majors and that is really key to you when you're going to play in the Olympics and everywhere else?

INBEE PARK: My dog, Rio. He's a golden retriever, and I got him after I won the gold in Rio Olympics. Since then Rio has been my most precious thing and most lucky -- the best lucky charm I'll ever have.

Q. What are your thoughts about the media coverage for the Olympics; is it equal?

INBEE PARK: I think it is very similar and very fair. As a woman's perspective I think it is definitely the best week.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned your husband earlier; you always have your small group that you're with, you have Gi, you have Brad, you have So Yeon, your best friend. Has that been important to you throughout your career to have that group with you and maybe your home space when you're on the road?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, we have a new person in our group, Danielle Kang, as well, and she would be feeling sad if we left her out. But yeah, it is always great to have good company like that. This is -- the LPGA Tour traveling and just eating meals by yourself is just so

miserable. No matter how good a golf you play, I don't think you're going to be feeling too happy. It's always great to have some good people around me like that. Yeah, I'm very lucky.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Inbee. Good luck this week. We'll see you out there.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports