

The Amundi Evian Championship

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Evian-les-Bains, France

Evian Resort Golf Club

Jin Young Ko Franck Riboud Jacques Bungert

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're very happy to be joined in the middle by our defending Amundi Evian Championship winner Jin Young Ko as well as our Evian leadership team of Franck Riboud and Jack Bungert.

Jin Young, this is your 12th event of the LPGA Tour season. Just a few weeks ago you won in Texas at our Volunteers of America Classic. Making your fifth appearance here in Evian, you earned the win in 2019, a come-from-behind two-stroke win. Welcome back. It's got to feel good to be back and defend this title. How are you feeling?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, it's an honor to be back here after two years, and I missed this tournament in 2020. I couldn't play -- well, COVID is all around the world, so I missed this week. Finally I got back to here, so I'm very happy.

THE MODERATOR: We're happy to see your lovely face up on all the billboards and everything. Does that ever get old seeing your face? Always exciting?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I saw that my picture is everywhere, so I was thinking, wow, that was just two years ago, but feels like face was like five years ago. The picture really looks young. What happened after two years with my face? I was thinking, yeah -- I can see my pictures everywhere, so my feeling is like this week is my hometown, something, so I feel really comfortable to play, and I can't wait to play the next four days.

THE MODERATOR: You've had several days out here on the golf course now. What are your thoughts on the course? They've worked hard; our rules officials are saying it's the best they've ever seen it. How does it look out there?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, two years ago greens are really soft and the fairways, as well, but this week it's going to



be greens are a little more firmer on the weekend probably, and the green speed is really fast, too. It's going to be fun. It feels really major tournament, so I'm really happy.

THE MODERATOR: A great way to gear up for the Olympics, another exciting event. Is this going to be a good way to get ready for the Olympics and are you excited about that opportunity?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I am thinking this week is going to prepare me for the Olympics, so it's going to be good. Yeah, I really want to play this week, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thinking back to two years ago, take out the win, but what do you remember the most about your week here at Evian?

JIN YOUNG KO: Two years ago on Sunday we had delay maybe over three or four hours, and I read the Bible, and I was thinking, I don't want to play like on Sunday because I don't want to play with the rain. But I played, and I won. It was -- yeah, like kiss both sides, so it was great memory.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to ask the gentlemen on each side of you, what are your greatest memories of the week --

JACQUES BUNGERT: The same.

FRANCK RIBOUD: The same, yes.

THE MODERATOR: I want to throw something in that we just announced, kindly working with the team at Evian that Evian Resort Golf Club and Jin Young are going to be part of EA Sports PGA TOUR. Really exciting opportunity for people around the world to get to play Evian. What does it mean to you, Jin Young, to be part of that game?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I heard this is like the first time including women's golf like character on EA Sports PGA TOUR games, and I had a great time for -- like they made a lot of like scanning for my body or faces, everything, so it was fun.

THE MODERATOR: You can relive your win here and play at home. This course will be featured on there.



JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, this golf course is really wonderful, so yeah, I want to.

JACQUES BUNGERT: The kiss will not be in there.

THE MODERATOR: The kiss will not be in there, sorry, so maybe we can work on that for next time.

Q. How did you spend your time off after your win in Texas before coming here?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I went to -- I go back to Korea after Texas with my parents, and I met my friends and coach, swing coach. It was a great time, and I met my little dog, so I had a great time in Korea.

Q. What's your dog's name?

JIN YOUNG KO: Korean Name is Daebag, but English mean is awesome.

Q. Talking about the Olympics, how big was Inbee's gold medal victory at home in Korea and what would it mean to bring another medal home to Korea in two weeks?

JIN YOUNG KO: Everybody knows this is really tough getting the Korean team for the Olympics, and we're going to play four players like Korean national team. I saw 2016 Inbee got gold medal, and I was thinking, oh, could I play 2020 in Tokyo because I was playing KLPGA, so I was like, I think I couldn't because I was playing in KLPGA.

But I won like Hana Bank, so I getting the LPGA member, and then I got a lot of great World Ranking points, so I get in right now. It's going to be good motivation for me, and it's an honor to get in the Korean national team with the Olympics with Inbee and a lot of good players.

THE MODERATOR: It was here two years ago with your win you got back to World No. 1. Is that on your mind at all this week? Nelly took over World No. 1 a few weeks ago. You could do it again this week. Do you think about that at all?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, cross fingers. I'm trying to -- I will try and do my best on this course, and I hopefully getting back World Ranking No. 1, but if not, I'm fine.

Q. A year ago things were so uncertain, and certainly we all still need to be safe, but how does it feel to know a year later that we're back here, we're back here in Evian, and to just see where we are now, how excited are you about where things are for you right now?

JIN YOUNG KO: I really missed this week last year, and this year is like, Amundi, like new sponsor joining the Evian tournament, so I want to say thank you to Amundi and Rolex and Evian for the longtime supporting for women's golf. I want to say thank you.

Q. Jacques, Franck, is there anything you wish to say to Jin Young? It's wonderful to have your defending champion back.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Yes, absolutely. We just want to say thank you for being here, a great week. Hope to see you on the 18th, and for the kiss we'll see this year with the protocol, but we might find it. And definitely we'll have some posters especially done for you this year, so we'll give it to you later. Thank you again.

FRANK RIBOUD: I would say to thank her because what we did yesterday with the kids -- not with the kids but for the kids, I think, how do you see in English, autism? One of the main sponsors is LG, and they really help us to collect money for the kids, so I would like to thank you also for that.

JIN YOUNG KO: It's an honor, thank you.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Yeah, we had a very emotional moment yesterday with our guests where Jin Young was putting back the trophy. It was a very emotional moment, the opening ceremony of the tournament, and I hope she will touch it again soon.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I will, thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for having us back. Thank you for your support.

How important was it to the both of you to make sure this tournament happened this year?

FRANK RIBOUD: I think we are very happy too. We are also very happy to have this tournament end of July because I'm afraid it's going to be tough to have this tournament end of August. I don't know why; perhaps my big nose told me nothing will change.

We really get the feeling that everybody is happy to go out, to live together, to have parties, to watch golf, and we are very proud that the Evian Championship, above the fact that it is a big tournament, it's also one of the first even -- perhaps not in the U.S. but in Europe and especially in France, it's one of the most important events, allowing people to be together without the mask and this and this, okay, so there is a huge sanitary protection.

But I think we did our best to live normally during this tournament with the players, and I can tell you that everybody -- you get the feeling that okay, for the first

time we are living again. More than golf, that's the feeling I got from the tournament.

But the tournament, as I said yesterday night, normally I say thank you to the greenskeeper and the team after the tournament, and this year we'll say thank you before the tournament.

Just a little story, but the greenskeeper, his target was I want nothing on my course from the referee, no paint, no marking, nothing. If you were there last week, I think the whole objective was kaput because of the rain. Even if we need the water to put that in this bottle, but certainly everything is okay. He reached the target, so he was so happy, so smiling, I don't have any mark on the golf course, I don't have any mark on the golf course.

That's the reason why I would like to thank them because last week that was a nightmare, a real nightmare.

But the players, I just walk on the golf course. I was supposed to play. I played with Jessica Korda, and nothing against the players 25 years ago, but probably because I was younger, one reason, but the thing was I got the feeling I was playing with a great champion, not because I wasn't playing with a great champion 25 years ago, but you get, okay, I can drive -- there is a similarity between my way of playing and the way the pro was playing. It's no more the case. They are incredible champions now.

I'm saying that because we have always this discussion between ladies' golf and golf and men's golf and this and that. It's a stupid discussion.

The ladies can really protect, defend and develop their sport by themselves. They don't have to merge tournaments. No, they are champions now. I am really impressed by the quality of the game they deliver. It's impressive.

You know that better than me, and in my position because of my wife it's quite difficult to explain that, but it's really new for me. They are young, they hit the ball -- I'm enthusiastic to defend and to protect the ladies' golf, and I think 26, 27 years ago my father choose the right thing.

THE MODERATOR: We agree, and we thank him for that.

FRANK RIBOUD: Today it's very fashion, and 27 years ago in Evian, nowhere. It was not so easy. Thanks for your help, because it was also the journalists that we succeed by doing this, so thank you.

THE MODERATOR: What are your thoughts on being able to come back, on seeing all of this come back together and just what a team effort it has taken to bring

this tournament from where it was a year ago where we weren't able to play unfortunately to back together safely for the next week?

JACQUES BUNGERT: Yeah, "safely" is the important word because obviously as Franck mentioned we are here in kind of a bubble, but a very protected one because we obviously abide and follow the rules, the strict rules, and day by day on the situation of the sanitary situation and requirements.

But yes, in this beautiful bubble, it's great. We can feel and we have felt in the past weeks the emotion rising up among the team. Franck was mentioning the greenskeepers, but all the teams, from the resort, from the tournament, organization, everybody was really thrilled of being back, because you don't know what it means to be two years away from an event you're organizing and still keeping alive because behind the scenes there's a lot of work with our sponsors, with our partners, with media, with the tours.

It's a day-by-day situation, but yes, at last we are there. It was great, as well, as Jin Young just mentioned it, to see the emotions amongst the player. We didn't feel that way, and it was nice for us.

Remembering, by the way, the old days when the players were coming at the beginning and very happy to be here, to be part of the family, here I felt exactly the same. That's about the emotion.

But it's true that aside from that, it's great also to see the enthusiasm and the international spectrum even behind the screens now, and to see the excitement among the tournament.

It's true that the feedback is interesting, too, on the golf course, so that's the best --

FRANK RIBOUD: I would like to take the opportunity to introduce, because I got a lot of questions about this sponsor Amundi, what is it, is it an Indian company, so I would like to -- I don't know if he's -- oh, you are there with your mask. Perhaps we can take the opportunity to ask Alain to come to explain to us what kind of stupid company you are.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Alain Berry is the head of communication of Amundi, so just give me the opportunity, and I was about to mention it, to thank our club sponsors because behind it and for two years we had people helping us, our partners have been really behind us supporting the tournament, even when it was canceled, and they said, okay, let's go, and Alain is here to show and to embody this commitment of our partners, because yes, we are very proud, as Franck mentioned, to have now Amundi as a title sponsor for the tournament. Alain, if you would maybe.

ALAIN BERRY: Yes, thank you, Franck. Thank you, Jacques. Hi, everybody. Happy to be here. I don't know a lot of you accept some of you we have made some interviews by phone, so I will be happy to meet you today and during all the week.

I will take this opportunity to first say some words about Amundi for those who do not know exactly. Franck was saying, well, where do we come from. I'm going to give you a bit of details and maybe a word on why we have chosen to be a title sponsor and take this opportunity to talk about two programs we have launched this year with our teams, and part of the team is here so I will talk a bit about it.

Amundi in just two or three words, we are talking about the European leader in asset management and part of the top 10 in the world, and the asset management, sometimes all the people ask me if it's bank. It's not exactly a bank. We offer investment and savings solutions, so it's just a part of the activity, bank our clients. We have 100 million clients around the world in 35 countries, so it's a French company. Franck will let you know it. But Amundi is a name which can be taken for every continent, I would say, so it's a bit nice.

So we have high tech clients, pension funds, insurance, everyone who has savings to give. We are a subsidiary of Crédit Agricole for those who are French here.

We have been in the golf since 2011. That means at the creation of the company, and especially on the Open de France.

Why have we chosen to sponsor the Evian Championship? For two reasons. First one, to move on the golf women's tournament for one main reason, which was closer to our values on equality, parity. We think it was a good moment and very important let's say inside the company to show that we were going to move for women championship.

For Evian, I will not comment let's say all around the tournament, what you know very deeply around figures of a tournament, just feeling between the tournament and Amundi is that Amundi now is looking forward in many, many countries to increase its development, and especially in Asia and in the U.S., and of course the visibility, the notoriety of the tournament here is very important due to the number of players coming from the U.S. and Asia.

What we have done after having signed the contract, and it's a five-year contract, very important to be for a long time in the tournament. It was during our discussion a main point when Amundi is going into sponsorship. It's not for one year, it's not for two years, it's for a long time, and I hope that will be the case also for this contract. I'm

really happy to say that we will have time to discover all the players, all the tournament and be there for a while.

Just a last word about what we have launched. We have launched the Amundi women talent program. What is it? It is to support five young players coming from not only France but also Germany, Spain and Italy. I don't see you now, so Camille, Caroline and Lucrezia are here at the back, so three of the five players, but two others, Lucy and Luna, they are not here because they are playing tomorrow and I'm happy to say that we have two members of our team playing tomorrow, and my wish is of course to help them during all of this two years we will be with her and be able to have them in the tournament next year. That's what I wish for them during the year.

We have another program about the young talent, French young talent going to the university or looking for entering the university in the U.S., and I think it will be interesting also to do it and especially to help young players, and we are talking about women but also men in that case in November.

So that's what I wanted to say as an introduction and maybe to answer a few questions if you have them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Alain. On behalf of the LPGA we really highly appreciate your support of this championship and support of several players. Thank you very much.

JACQUES BUNGERT: I wanted to add a few things before we go to the Q&A. Two things. Thank you, Alain, and as I said, we embody the support of our sponsors, I think I want here to thank also the club, the sponsors, including Rolex, Evian and all the major partners that have been with us for a long time and that you are now joining, being part of the family. I think without them -- we don't say it enough in sports, but without partners, without sponsors, there's no professional sports at this level.

It's high time that we thank them, as well, because it's thanks to them that this tournament is a major, it's thanks to them that women's sports in general and golf in particular is existing.

As Franck mentioned it, it's been our values. You were talking about our values. We've been supporting women's sports and golf, especially in everything we do here, is done to that purpose of women's golf development, including the fact that we help young talent through the program you mentioned.

Last but not least, I just wanted also to tell you that there is a little novelty here in the tournament. We are starting a new Evian Golf Life TV. It will be online every day at 9:30 p.m., talking about obviously the tournament, golf, the outside-the-ropes situation as well as including some

interviews with the players, with the partners.

You will find it on Facebook and you will find it on YouTube, so please go there, tell us -- give us feedback because it's a new initiative that we're taking.

Thank you, and now we can start up the Q&A if you have any questions.

Q. What kind of crowds are you expecting this year as compared to previous years?

FRANK RIBOUD: I think we're expecting whatever. We don't know. Because we are in July, and as Jacques mentioned, we are talking about a bubble, so by definition the bubble is something you have to enter in respecting some criteria, and just you have family, you have two kids, 13, 16 years old, they're going, no, we don't go to the beach today but we are going to watch golf in Evian. But oh, you need to be vaccinated, you need to take a test if you are not vaccinated, blah blah blah, at the end of the day we go to the beach. So we don't know. We don't have the same signal we used to have the other years.

I don't know, perhaps 4,000 people a day, perhaps 500, perhaps 1,000?

THE MODERATOR: But still the right amount to be able to come and watch safely and be able to participate.

FRANK RIBOUD: That's the priority. That's the priority. So we didn't push a lot. Just imagine that two days ago normally to come here in the bubble and watch golf by walking along the fairways you were supposed to wear a mask.

I just give a phone call directly to the authorities, local authorities, explaining that I don't understand why walking in the street in Evian I don't need it and walking here I need it. Honestly even for all these people it's very difficult to manage. We have to accept altogether that there are contradictions, there are things we don't understand. I think it's tough.

The only thing that I know is we have the bubble, you enter the bubble and you are free to live as you are used to, so that's the most important for me. But perhaps we will have a lot of people. I don't know.

THE MODERATOR: People could be excited to get out.

Q. Talk about the field and the field strength. We have a number of top players here, 1 through 5 in the World Rankings, several players who aren't here. How confident are you and excited with the strength of field that we have here? We had Jin Young with you, Nelly, and certainly a number of the players who will be back next year.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Yeah, we have a fantastic field honestly and we feel lucky to have that type of a field due to the conditions, the restrictions for traveling, the situation of the delta at the moment in the UK, for instance, and the situation with the Olympic Games obviously.

So a lot of -- it's a tough year to travel, honestly. We feel lucky to have such a high-level field at the moment, and you have all the greatest champions of women's golf today on continental Europe, and we are very proud of it.

We are very confident that it's going to be a great week for them and very confident that the champion of the Amundi Evian Championship '21 will be a fantastic champion.

THE MODERATOR: Alain, I'm sure there were lots of opportunities for Amundi to become involved in women's sports. Why the Evian Championship? Why get involved with these two guys over here?

JACQUES BUNGERT: Because he loves us. He had no choice.

ALAIN BERRY: As Franck said in an interview I have read this morning, it began with a meeting here because we made a seminar with the Amundi main top management two years ago, so everything started here two years ago.

But globally speaking, there is no other tournament I would say at this level in Europe, as we said, as a major, having, as Jacques said, all the top players in the world. So why not Evian.

I would say how could we have chosen another tournament, in fact.

THE MODERATOR: I'll use this opportunity to thank the three of you for having us back. The LPGA is very excited to be back. It wouldn't be a season without a trip here to Evian.

Any final comments from the three of you?

FRANK RIBOUD: Perhaps I will add something to the last question because I have to say that if we improved the tournament every year since 27 years, okay, it's because of us and the team, but it's really because of the sponsors, because they really push us to deliver what they expect, and for sure Rolex is the best company to explain to us what do we have to do to deliver a major tournament.

I'm confident that Amundi will play the same role to help us to become even better.

It's true that they are very rational people. It's a financial company and they will merger everything, they will try to see if they have the right retail in their investment, and we need that. We need people like that to push that. We have to accept that. But the great quality for me is Amundi, on the other side, they continue to take decisions with an emotional feeling, if they love the team, if they love the place, if they love the -- and for me as the ex-CEO of Danone, it's exactly the way I consider we have to drive big companies, not only rational, and it's through that I was very lucky because I met your ex-CEO Yves Perrier, and I propose to come to speak to them. Nobody asked me to come, but I said, wow, they are there, blah blah blah, and I connect everything in my mind, and I say, you know what I come to speak with Danone and this hotel and why, and I think that match, and I discovered that the CEO of Amundi is like me, coming from the region, is born in Valais et Vaud, is also our guy, and more than that when he was 18 or something like that, he has a job during summer, where? In the Royale. And that's life. That's the way you decide. Not only rational, also a lot of emotional.

And if you decide on this both legs, you can sign five years.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Perhaps 10.

ALAIN BERRY: Absolutely, nothing to add. You give also the secret.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Thank you for being here, because without you it's not the same and we need the spray and the stream you give out to the world about Evian. Thank you.

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