

The Amundi Evian Championship

Sunday, 25 July 2021

Evian-les-Bains, France

Evian Resort Golf Club

Minjee Lee

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to present our the 2021 Amundi Evian Championship winner Minjee Lee from Australia.

Minjee, congratulations. It's less than a half hour old, but you're now a major champion. What does that sound like to you?

MINJEE LEE: I'm speechless. I been waiting for this for so long. It just feels unreal to have won. Just even in the playoff, and all throughout today, I played really well to get myself in that position, and I just really happy.

Q. You did play well. It was an amazing day. You had quite a comeback. We'll talk about your card first. Let's start on the front nine. Birdie on No. 1, string of pars, but then birdies on 7 and 9. Tell us about the way your day started.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, I hit a really about shot in 1 and I gave myself a birdie opportunity and made that one.

The next couple holes are a little bit trickier for me anyway how it fits my eye. So I had a string of pars, and then I think I birdied like 7 or 8 or something.

Q. 7 and 9.

MINJEE LEE: 7 and 9, so they were both really good birdies. You know, after nine holes I think I was like one back from the lead so I knew I had to play really well to have a chance to win.

So I just tried to give myself as many birdie opportunities as I could on that back nine, because it was warm out it was playing quite short so I had a lot of short clubs in.

So, yeah, I just tried to give myself as many birdie opportunities as I could.

Q. And then you had another string of pars but then you kind of went birdie crazy at the end, 14, 15, 16, and the clutch one on 18. Walk us through that streak there.

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MINJEE LEE: Yeah, so I think I birdied the par-3 down the hill, so that was actually quite a long haul. I had a dead straight putt and it went straight in the heart, so it was nice to see it go in.

And then after that was the par-5, which the tee was up again so we could hit it onto the green, and I was just short so I chipped in a putt there.

And then the 16th I hit a really good shot in and it was like three feet from the hole. So that was just an easy kick-in, so that was nice.

I got into a little bit of trouble -- well, sort of. I hit it right on 17 and I hit a really good shot in, but my putt passed and made the one coming back, which was nice to see.

And really clutch on 18 to make birdie there, too.

So I finished off really strong and I have every day, so I knew there were birdies finishing. Yeah, that's pretty much what I did.

Q. So you make the birdie on 18 and then it's the waiting game.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

Q. What was the time on the putting green like? Were you keeping track of what was going on? What was going through your mind then?

MINJEE LEE: You know, I knew one of the two, Yealimi Jeongeun Lee6 was probably going to make birdie. The chances were that I was going to go out in a playoff. I just hit a couple putts, and Hyo Joo and In Gee was right there on the putting green with me, so we just chatted and it was pretty chill until they told us to go to the 18th hole.

Q. And then that 18th hole was amazing for you.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

Q. Talk you through those two shots into the green; quite beautiful.

MINJEE LEE: You know, off the tee I didn't hit the best tee shot, but it was good enough because it was on the

fairway. But, yeah, the second shot I hit 6-iron in, but initially I was like, I'm going to -- I think the yardage was for 5-iron but with adrenaline and everything Gilly was like, Let's go 6-iron. Hit a good 6-iron and it was like six feet from the hole. Yeah, no, it worked out.

Q. When you came into this week how were you feeling? Did you think a major championship was at the end for you potentially?

MINJEE LEE: You know, I played really well at Dow. The final day I made two eagles and I think I had like 7- or maybe 8-under that day. I knew I was playing pretty well. You know, I didn't really come in with too many expectations. Just wanted to kind of play well in this major.

That's what I did. I didn't have any other really thoughts in my mind coming into the week really.

Q. You've already been able to chat with family back home in Australia. What was their reaction?

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, they were all cheering for me, but apparently my dad was like, She's going to get into a playoff and win, so he kind of called it.

But, no, they were really happy and a little bit teary. But, you know, they're as happy as I am, so, yeah.

Q. Who were you chatting with? Mom and dad?

MINJEE LEE: And my Nan was there, too.

Q. Heard from Min Woo yet?

MINJEE LEE: I'm sure he has, but he's in America right now. Yeah.

Q. You're not old, but it seems like you've been out here for a long time; so many wins. Was it starting to become any sort of pressure to get a major championship under your belt?

MINJEE LEE: Maybe not -- I mean, yes and no. Like I put a lot of pressure on myself to perform, and I hear so many people say, We really want to you win a major and major is just around the corner.

It's easier said than done, and everybody is so good out here. Yeah, it's just really nice to have a major title under my belt. No, it's just -- you know, I always have high expectations for myself, so maybe in that sense, yes.

Q. And you joined quite a list of players from Australia. Karrie, Stephenson, and Hannah, who you grew up playing with. What does it mean to you to have your name forever linked with those three?

MINJEE LEE: You know, they're just all amazing people and amazing golfers, too. You know, it just has a really nice ring to it. Yeah.

Q. While you were waiting out on the putting green you said you were trying to stay chill. What did you do to stay chill and what were you eating?

MINJEE LEE: I kept nibbling on my nectarine, so it must have looked so bad on camera. But I just finished that and then I didn't really want any of the baguettes. The girls were eating the baguette. Yeah, and I had some water.

Q. How did you stay chill? I wasn't there to see. Just chatting? Were you putting? Were you listening to music? Were you telling yourself things? How were you keeping yourself in a good state of mind?

MINJEE LEE: I wasn't like super nervous. I was just pretty calm after. But I think I was more nervous playing the 18th hole, like the first time round.

But I don't know. I just felt good. I just hit -- rolled a couple putts and I was just kind of calm. Yeah.

Q. Minjee, you ended up 6-under on the 18th this week, including the playoff. What about that hole seems to suit you, do you like so much?

MINJEE LEE: Well, it was a par-4 before and then it became a par-5. You know, I think I only had like 6- or at the most 5-iron in, so it's like a pretty short hole if you drive it on the fairway.

Even on the right side I went for it one time and chipped in for eagle on the second day, I think. So I just think it's a good finishing hole because everybody has a chance to make birdie and hit it on the green for two. It's just good for everyone.

Q. Definitely saw a lot of movement there today and I think is certainly what made that last group so exciting watching; you knew anything can happen.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah.

Q. Talk about coming up in golf, how you learned the game. I know you learned from your mom, but the role she has played for you and for Min Woo and coming up and getting where you are in life.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, so when we were really little we used to go down to the driving range with mom when she was teaching. We would just practice. Yeah, so that's been a really long time since we've done that.

And then I got a coach once I got into the, what do you

call it, the state program. I've been with Richie since then. It's like I've only had two coaches in my whole life, for a long time anyway.

But it's been great. Mom knows a lot about golf and our whole family played golf, so it's just like we've always been around it. And Min Woo was always really interested more than I was, so it was just kind of -- I just followed in everybody's footsteps I guess playing.

Q. Did you play any other sports?

MINJEE LEE: I swam before, yeah.

Q. Have you heard from Karrie yet?

MINJEE LEE: Actually she did message me straightaway.

Q. You were so poised on the back nine in tough conditions. It was beautiful out, but it's hot. So much pressure. How did you keep your composure on that back nine, particularly you started off with another string of birdies to keep yourself behind -- excuse me, pars.

MINJEE LEE: When I was having those string of pars I think I missed a short one on 10 and then 11 it wasn't super short.

Then 12 I missed a putt there as well. Going down the 12th fairway, Gilly, my caddie was like, You know, you have a chance to win your first major championship, so why don't you just like give it a go.

I was like, Yeah, I'm trying. But, yeah, no, we just kind of had that chat and then I was like -- the next hole I birdied, so...

Yeah, I don't know. It was just like just little things. Just little kids smiling or people clapping for you. It's just nice. I think that's what really kind of kept me going.

Q. You mentioned Gilly a lot, your caddie, Jason. How much do you rely on him and how long have you been working together and what's that relationship like?

MINJEE LEE: Already four years now, so maybe just over four. So, yeah, I mean, it's time that we sort of like know each other really well. Four years have gone by. He knows me really well on the golf course and I know him really well as well.

So I know when -- if we're off, then we know each other so well so we can pick it up straightaway. We were just really happy and happy to be out walking and we were like, Oh, we got so lucky with the weather this weekend.

So we were just really grateful for that, to be honest.

Q. Because this morning was gross.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah? Was it raining a lot?

Q. There was rain, the lightning delay, and then it turned into the most beautiful day of the week.

MINJEE LEE: I know. It was just so nice. I was like, We are so lucky.

Q. Congratulations, first of all.

MINJEE LEE: Thank you.

Q. Secondly, I would like to come back to Karrie. I know a couple years ago I had lots of conversations with her when I was doing an article for the celebration here. I know how much Evian means to her. So can you share with me, did she give you any tips? How did she tell you to play Evian, whatever, et cetera?

MINJEE LEE: I don't think I really asked her about like how to play the golf course or anything like that, but over the years she's been so supportive of my golf and just me as a person, so it's just been really nice to have her in my corner.

She messages me quite a bit, so just here and there I just think it's just really nice of her.

Q. To me that's also very much Karrie, too.

MINJEE LEE: Yeah, definitely.

Q. One other question: You're in Perth, right?

MINJEE LEE: Yes.

Q. Whereabouts in Perth do you play and who were some of the people you trained with and grew up with, because you've got a lot of people from Brett Rumford and all sorts of other people coming out of the Perth area.

MINJEE LEE: I play at Royal Fremantle Golf Club, so there was actually not too many girls when I was growing up that were members there. So, you know, I really just practiced by myself.

But there was a lot of like boys coming up, I guess, here and there. But I sort of didn't really mix with them, to be honest.

Q. What's next? British Open, I take it.

MINJEE LEE: I am, but the Olympics is in a couple -- in

a week and a bit, so I'm going there first. Yeah.

Q. And then you will come back for the British Open?

MINJEE LEE: Scottish and British, yes.

Q. First of all, good luck to start with at the Olympics; and secondly, it'll be great to see you back in Europe, too.

MINJEE LEE: Thank you.

Q. Thanks. It was really a spectacular win. I think everybody was excited.

MINJEE LEE: Thank you so much.

Q. The last two questions. The first: The playoff on 18 and the eagle kind of similar to the playoff with Lydia at MEDIHEAL?

MINJEE LEE: Oh, yeah. Actually I was like -- before I went out to the playoff I was like, I need to change my outcome because the one I played was with Lyds and she made eagle and beat me.

So it was just a quick thought that went through my mind. I just really wanted to have a good hole. Yeah.

Q. And you did. You had a very good hole. Finally, the Olympics, is there a better way to go into Tokyo than with a major championship under your belt now?

MINJEE LEE: You know, it's so cool. I still can't believe it. Yeah, the Olympics have been on the back of my mind since Rio, so I'm really excited to play and go out there and rep my country. Yeah.

Q. Will you be going back to the states first?

MINJEE LEE: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Well, congratulations. We're so happy for you. See you in Tokyo, and more importantly, see you back here next year as the reigning Evian champion. Congratulations, Minjee.

MINJEE LEE: Thank you so much.

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