

# Mizuho Americas Open

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

West Caldwell, New Jersey, USA

Mountain Ridge Country Club

**Jeeno Thitikul**

**Aphrodite Deng**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Very excited to be joined by our two defending champions of the Mizuho Americas Open, Jeeno and Aphrodite. Welcome back. Obviously a different location for the both of you, but still defending this week.

When you think back to your wins last year, what are some of things you remember most and get excited about still?

JEENO THITIKUL: Me? Well, it's great. I mean, like last year I remember hoisting the trophy and then doing some (indiscernible) actions from some of the media told me to do.

Always nice to get the win last year here in Mizuho in such a cool place like Liberty National golf course.

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, think it's good to be back. And last year I think it was just really fun being able to play with Nelly and the whole atmosphere, and I'm excited to be back.

**Q. Kind of talk about - for both of you - about your experiences that it's been getting to - Jeeno for you, getting to work with the juniors, Aphrodite getting mentored by the LPGA Tour pros, what's that process been like and how rewarding has it been for the both of you?**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think it's definitely going to inspiring them for sure and then it's can be like a semi preparation for them, what they going to do in a tournament week like a pro.

Then they can have preparations like a pro, they know what the pro do from Monday to Sunday, not just the tournament day. But the preparation day is the most important days that the pros give it, so I think it's just a really good opportunities to showing them.

And then I heard from one of the girl, I don't know who, it's just like she just said, oh, I cried yesterday. I was like, you

cried? And then she said she met her role model and then her role model is really nice to her and then she just cry. I was like, okay.

I think it just really emotional and then she just really inspired.

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, kind of what she said. It's really inspiring to see all our role models here and being able to play with them and to see how they handle themselves on the golf course, yeah.

**Q. Obviously like I said at the top, different course. What have you guys made of this course and how it's been playing for the both of you?**

JEENO THITIKUL: It's totally different than Liberty. I don't know if she find it tougher like me or not, but I think the green is definitely tougher than Liberty National for sure.

One of the caddie when I arrive on Monday he said it's can play as a major. I was like, wow, interesting. And then after that I went to play nine, back nine, with the wind. I was like, I agree. After finishing that I was like, I agree it can play as a major course for sure.

But it's a good like challenging course that we be able to play.

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, I think it's really challenging. I think it plays really long for me and the greens are really sloped, so it's hard to get the ball to stop on the green, yeah.

**Q. I was going to ask you, what were your impressions of Mountain Ridge Golf Club? What had you heard on the grapevine? The Tour has been here, but several years back. What were your impressions prior and were they confirmed or not confirmed? You just mentioned about playing nine holes. Can you talk about that?**

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, the time that they here I didn't play. I was rookie on '22 I think they play like '20 and '21. I'm not too sure about that.



But like I said, I definitely -- it's can play long if the wind picked up, especially the back nine. I think the front nine, it is definitely shorter than the back nine.

I mean, instead of playing long and short, we had a tough pin position for sure because the greens very tough.

And then I don't think you can play long because like back of the green is just downhill like every hole and then it just -- if you miss it long side of the green I think it should be really tough up and down back to the hole.

So I think the key here, keep it below the hole so can give you an up and down putt more than, you know, downhill putt.

**Q. What do you do in terms of preparations? You guys were in Mexico last week. Now you make a switch automatically to the Northeast. How tough is that for you professionally when you start shifting around globally to play in different sites, different grasses, different time zones? How do you prepare for that?**

JEENO THITIKUL: The good thing is I wasn't in Mexico last week. I mean, but definitely when I was on a roll, I mean like example this week I was in New Jersey and next week I will go to Cincinnati, and definitely the hardest part is the adjustment to the golf courses, the adjustments that we had to with the green, the grass, and everything.

If you ask me how I can do, I have to practice. I have to preparation. I don't know, because it's the hardest thing -- that's why golf is hard. That's why we can't predicting. That's why the winning changing every week.

I think it's just the key point.

But if you can play consistently golf every week and then you been in the contentions or top of the Tour in each week that you play, which mean you succeed. You doesn't have to be win every time, but adapting to the atmosphere, to the environment, to the green, it's just really things that all the professional really want to do.

**Q. Aphrodite, you've had quite a few starts on the LPGA now. Do you ever feel like it gets any easier or is it still the same nerves and anxiety?**

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, I feel like it's easier now because I know what to expect, and I really like playing on the LPGA. I think it's really fun with all the crowds, and it's a lot different from junior golf.

**Q. What are you looking forward to most about this**

**week?**

APHRODITE DENG: Just to have fun and play my own game. Obviously enjoy the golf course here. I'm excited to play with the pros.

**Q. Jeeno, how does it feel -- walk us through defending thing week. Obviously Nelly regained her world No. 1 ranking. Do you feel any less pressure, you get to have your golf focused and just really stick to what Jeeno knows how to do?**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think I don't really have that pressure even before, now, or whatever, other players do. Nelly had done a very good job for the past few month, from starting the season she won it and obviously she won it in Chevron and last week in Mexico, which she plays insane golf. She deserve to be back.

For me I do my job, do my part. I know what golf had in store me right now, because like I don't think my irons going my way that much and I don't think golf going my way compared to last, you know, the end of the season last year.

But obviously it's the time that I really want to be myself more and then just let golf be more than controlling golf. So I think it's just the time that -- sometime things not going your way but you have to accept it and then moved on.

**Q. I think especially with Nelly she seems so free off the golf course and that's kind of allowed her to play better. Are there some things and hobbies that you like to do that takes your mind off that you think inadvertently help your golf game?**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think I done a lot of things on my off week, like I watching movies every night and then I just had some hobbies that is get me out of golf.

But I think obviously this periods of time I think like with my swing too much sometimes, so I just, yeah, I just talk to my coach two days ago and I just really vented all my feeling about golf him and then he just like then, then you can try less.

Sometime when you try so hard and then things not going your way and the result wasn't show, sometime you need to try less and then let's golf be. If you want to hit draw, hit draw. If you want to hit fade, hit fade. You going to play bad some day. That's just golf sometime.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JEENO THITIKUL: I still watching the one that came up on

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

-- the new one in Netflix, is it Hunting Party, the Hunting Party? Yeah.

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, I don't really watch movies that much so I have no idea.

JEENO THITIKUL: I recommend you watch this. Watch it before you turn pro for sure.

APHRODITE DENG: Okay.

**Q. Aphrodite, you've had a couple professional starts under your belt. What makes this event fun for you and the rest of the field?**

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, I think it's really cool that we get to experience a week of what the LPGA is like and it gives juniors a chance to see how the LPGA handles themselves.

It's just really fun overall because I think they have some nice events for us, yeah.

**Q. And for both of you, Jeeno and Aphrodite, you are the two defending champions here. What piece of advice do you have to for the juniors that are making their first start here this week?**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think just had fun. I think just had fun. Just, you know, get more -- as much as experience that you can get from all the pro, from all the course setup, from -- because definitely we will see you guys in next two, three years, four, five years. I don't know how old are you, but definitely we going to see new faces like you guys come up on Tour and then we'll definitely will play alongside together again, you as a pro, you as an amateur.

So just had fun. You got nothing to lose as an amateur. Just carefree, fun golf.

APHRODITE DENG: Just like take it all in and enjoy the overall experience and not really worry about the golf.

**Q. Just a quick question. How difficult is it to manage your time? How tough is that? You mentioned movies, pastimes, talking to your coaches. For both of you, because now you've won, obviously been a professional for a number of years, successful. How difficult is that as your career has taken off?**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think it's depend on how long you practice in the day. If you're not practice that much you have more time for yourself to go gym, to go like movies to go exploring around the city.

If you practice a lot, like eight hours, six hours a day, then you got no time to do anything I guess. I think it's just -- and then it's also depend on like everyone's routine as well.

APHRODITE DENG: Yeah, like what she said, usually I practice like most of the day, but I still have enough time to do like other stuff. Yeah.

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