

Maybank Championship

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, last press conference of the day. Welcome back everyone. I have with me Lydia Ko, who earned a sponsor's invite into this event this week.

Lydia, I know you just landed this morning. How excited are you to be here in Malaysia?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's been a few years since we have been here. I had a really fun experience the last time -- well, the last few times we were here -- so nice to be back in Malaysia again, especially playing as a sponsor's invite. Really grateful for the opportunity.

I haven't seen the other golf course yet. I know the men used to play there. I'm excited to go check it out tomorrow.

Q. Yeah, not getting out there today with the rain. But tell us what you remember about the course and being here in Malaysia from the last time you were here. I know that was all the way back in 2017. Just what sort of memories do you have of playing here in Malaysia?

LYDIA KO: I think I played with the Queen at the time once during the pro-am, which was a really unique experience. The golf course was really nice. Was always in really good shape. I think when you come to places like Malaysia and Singapore and Thailand the weather is obviously a factor when we're out here.

Hopefully the rain the last couple days is going to be -- is going to all wash out so that by the tournament days it will be a dry few days. Yeah, you know, I just remember it being a good mix of holes and the course being in really good shape. I heard that the other course is even better, so I'm excited to see tomorrow.

I know it's a pretty short turnaround, so I'll just try and have to make the most of the pro-am.

Q. How excited are you playing this event?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I'm excited. Obviously this is an inaugural event for us, a new trophy, a new partner. I had



really good memories of here my rookie year and first few years on tour, so definitely good to be back.

I think sometimes you go to the same places and when you stop going there you realize like how good it was. It's nice to kind of refresh those memories. Golf course, even though we're at the same golf course, is the other one, so a it's a little bit different.

So it's kind of getting the best of both worlds of coming to a familiar place but having to experience and get to know a different part.

Q. What have you heard about the West Course?

LYDIA KO: I just know that the men used to play there, the PGA TOUR event, and I think Justin Thomas won here a few times. I heard it's a little tighter and longer than the other course that we used to play.

But you never know until you're really out there and get familiar with the golf course. There has been times where there are two courses at the same golf club but could have totally two different feels, so that's what practice rounds are about, for you to get familiar with that.

I haven't had a practice round yet so I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly what I think of it. I think it's going to be great. Hopefully the rain doesn't affect the golf course too much.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your game. Some of the reports have indicated that you have struggled a lot earlier on in the season. Recently you picked up. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Was it something to do with your swing or something else? Share with us if you can.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think I had the best finish of my season last week in Korea. I was playing as a sponsor's invite there and as defending champion. I think if I was probably playing better golf there would have been a little bit more pressure playing as defending champion, but because I haven't been playing that consistently I think I almost played with less pressure and kind of felt like I have got nothing to lose.



I played some of the best golf, four under-par rounds during the week, I think that was the first time since probably very early in the year, so I feel like I'm moving in the right direction. If I knew exactly why and what I needed to fix I would've probably fixed it right away. There is no set recipe or structure on how things go.

I think like early, mid half of the season I was struggling with my ball striking, and that has improved in the last couple months. Then you work so hard in one aspect that the other -- maybe the short game might not be as good.

So that's the nature of the game. You're trying to bring all those components together. Sometimes it feels easy and you could shoot an easy 3-, 4-, 5-under par; sometimes you feel like it's not that far off and you shoot even or a couple over.

So it's hard to kind of get the balance of both, like the short game and the long game together, and obviously that's what I've been struggling with. But last week and the last couple weeks I feel like my game has progressed, and that is all I can do.

I only have a few more events, three more events this season, and hopefully I'll be able to finish my season strong and get ready for next year.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about the field that we have this week? It's quite a strong field. It's certainly the strongest that we've had in little while for the women's game here. What do you make about the LPGA coming back to Malaysia? You guys haven't been around I think more than six years or so.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, you know, I don't know the exact reasonings of why we were here and didn't come here for a few years and then we came back, but obviously between the LPGA and Malaysia and the golf community here, obviously we had a good partnership that we were able to come back even after five plus years, and to the same golf club, which is great.

I think one of the probably big reasons of us having a strong field this week is we've, since COVID, had like a proper fall, Asia Swing. Whereas last year we had a couple and maybe like a break in between so we were kind of getting back into the old scheduling of things. So players can play the first three or the middle two or all, or, you know, one here and there.

I think just having that better structure in your schedule is a help for players to come, especially if you don't live or reside in Asia. It is quite a trip to come all the way over

from the U.S. or Europe, so it is nice to have that we can play a few good events. It is great to see -- I don't know exactly whoever player that's playing this week, but I know that there is a few Malaysian players and quite a few of the top names all here this week.

So I think it's going to be a great showcase from Thursday onwards.

Q. Seeing that past few times that you were here you actually played quite well on the East Course, do you have probably a goal or expectation this week that you have that you would like to achieve?

LYDIA KO: I obviously had my best finish last week, so be good to carry on that momentum. I think we all know that everything could be going great today and it might not be as sharp the next day.

So, no, like I said, because I haven't been able to see the golf course I don't exactly know what kind of course management I need to prepare for the tournament. That will be something that I'll have to focus on tomorrow when I'm out there.

But, yeah, I think just for me it's really important to keep building on the confidence, and that might not necessarily mean like a certain like finish of what result. I think if I can have more under-par rounds under my belt and feel like the things I'm working on are getting better then I'm progressing.

Sometimes you only see what's happening right now or what just happened. All you got to do is take that one step forward. So hopefully just a lot of the positives that I saw from last week can continue and I can keep building on from that.

Q. You have one of the best short games on tour and the best on tour from greenside bunkers. What would you say is your key to staying committed from the sand? Do you have a swing thought that helps with that?

LYDIA KO: I think just making sure I'm in the right setup to I guess match what kind of shot I'm doing. I like to use a lot of bounce in the bunker. Obviously if it's super firm and like compact then that's probably not the shot to go.

For most parts, I think I try and stay aggressive and using the bounce. That wasn't a technique I used to use as an amateur. That is something I first learned when I came to America, and playing on bermudagrass in Florida helped me a lot with that.

So, yeah, I would say I just try and imagine the shot and be creative with that.

Q. What does your typical setup look like for greenside bunker shots?

LYDIA KO: I think weight distribution a little bit more on the left, which is something that Sean Foley taught me. He said it's kind of like the insurance, and then I can be as aggressive as I can making the kind of feel of the head going past the hands and using the bounce aggressively.

I think I always like to put the weight a little on the left side and from there I can just be super aggressive with it.

Q. Last one. Do you have a favorite drill you use practicing from greenside bunkers or a specific practice routine you follow?

LYDIA KO: I don't think so. I think when I chip around the greens I use my 58- or 54-degree. If I have a longer 30-, 40-yard shot in the bunker, then I might use my 50-degree on top of that or a pitching wedge.

Just trying to be creative, and that way I don't have to like smash my super high lofted wedge. Another thing I do is draw a line right behind my ball and make sure I deliver the club as close to that line as possible, that way I'm delivering the club consistently, which means I can control the spin and the contact.

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