

# Maybank Championship

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club

## Jeeno Thitikul

## Celine Boutier

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, hello everyone and welcome to the 2024 Maybank Championship. We're here in the media center. I'm joined by Celine Boutier and Jeeno Thitikul; both tied for the first spot last year and headed into a nine-hole playoff if you all remember.

Just for both of you, what has it been like to be back here at the Maybank Championship so far? Who would like to go first? Celine.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it's been good. It's been fun to just come back to a place with good memories. Last year was my first time in Malaysia so I definitely feel like a little bit more comfortable and at ease this year coming back.

Just seeing the tournament site and everybody involved in recognizing what we did last year was kind of cool.

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, same. I mean, I have been to Malaysia a lot. To be honest I didn't expect that all the fans going to recognize me last year. There was a lot of fan saying my name. I was like, wow, that's kind of cool.

Yeah, feel like home as well because it's close to Thailand. The heat is kind of same. And then the food is always nice. I just love playing in Malaysia.

THE MODERATOR: And we'll just bring it back to the major storyline of last year: The playoff between the two of you. What do you both remember from your perspectives about it and the nine holes?

JEENO THITIKUL: Tired. It's been -- I think it's the first playoff that, one, it's long, second, it's suspended like during the playoff, which is kind of interesting.

And then just like it's just us two waiting in the clubhouse, which is like funny. And then, yeah, it just was tired and also fun and pressure playing with her like nine holes.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it was just a grind. Just been a



really long day already and then the rain delay and everything and then the holes that kept adding up. I just remember losing count at some point and just was like, you know, just one more hole. You can do it.

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah.

CELINE BOUTIER: So it was, yeah, definitely a challenge just mentally, physically. But, yeah, just was a cool experience. I don't think I'll ever hopefully play another playoff that long.

So it's just like a cool experience.

THE MODERATOR: Be back here at Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Golf Club, what do you both remember about this golf course and maybe seeing to yesterday and today? What do you like so much about this golf course and why you think you played so well here last year?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think it's kind of a target golf course. You don't have to bomb it every hole. You have to place it pretty well on the fairway, and then I think there is a few birdie chances if you're able to hit it close.

I remember the greens being quite slopey, and then I just remember it being in great shape as well.

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, I think for me, I just love the greens. Yeah, it's quite slopey, but it's have a chance for you to hit it there and then it's give you opportunity to have like close birdie.

And then I think the greens looks pretty smooth to me, like near -- I don't know what they did, but they did a perfect job out there. It's really smooth. I just said, wow, I didn't see any scratch or anything at all.

THE MODERATOR: Celine, last week you played really well at the BMW Ladies Championship. Runner-up; top 10 before that. What he is it been like in this stretch of golf for you?

CELINE BOUTIER: It's definitely been a little bit more fun. I feel like my game has been close the last few months. Just I just haven't been able to convert and really put in



some results.

So just being able to see some results the last few weeks have been really good personally, and hopefully I can keep going for the next few weeks.

THE MODERATOR: Jeeno, you've has a great season as well. You started a little late, but your scoring average has been incredible up to this point and playing really well. What has it been like for you recently?

JEENO THITIKUL: It's been nice. I think I had really good -- even week in, week out in contention, all the thing been working pretty good except it's not coming together in the same week. Like last week I hit it really good but couldn't hole the putt. Then China I holed the putt but not hitting irons that good.

I was talking and joking with my caddie that I've just been waiting for the week that everything is come together and then I think it should be fun and challenging week for me.

**Q. Question for Jeeno. Last year you were runner-up. Do you feel like this year you want to sort of like try to win the event or something?**

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, I always love -- like I said, I think I have a chance and I think all the people have a chance to win even we have not starting yet. We have like, how many holes, 32? If my math a good enough. Yeah, 32 holes, 32 chance. I think what I can do is controlling myself and then control what I can control.

Yes, I want to win and then I knew that it's a lot of talented player out here on the LPGA Tour that they can just like bombs, hitting 9-under, 8-under, 10-under in the last round or maybe like every day, which is like it's going to be week by week.

So I would talk about this week. Really looking forward to like controlling my mindset and then being positive and being in the present, should be the best that I can do out there.

**Q. Jeeno, since you mentioned about Malaysia being very close to Thailand and the fan support you receive, do you feel that -- how does that extra support feel to you coming out to a field that you know that recognizes you so much?**

JEENO THITIKUL: Of course, like I mentioned earlier, last year surprising me a lot because I haven't been to Malaysia for long time. Like since COVID hit. And then just been back last year. As a pro. I haven't played in Malaysia as a pro at all, so last year is the first time.

I saw a lot of people shouting my name and recognize me. I was like, wow, it's surprising me a little bit and giving me goosebump for the tournament, and like love to see them all around watching us as well.

**Q. The question is for Celine. How do you feel for this year since we always heard about some quotes that said it's not easy to defend a champion rather than to be as a new champion. On that what can you offer? What is the different for this tournament?**

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I think it's a little bit of positive emotions coming back and having good memories from last year. Maybe a little bit of added pressure because I want to perform well and defend my title.

It's a unique situation. I feel good. I hope I put a solid performance this week and give myself a chance. That's all I can ask for, and see what happens.

**Q. Since you've played last year and coming back this year, is there maybe out of 18 holes one hole that both of you find more memorable?**

JEENO THITIKUL: For me it's 18 on the last round, like before the playoff. Because, yeah, I knew that I had to make it to the playoff, and then it's just the first day that I hit it like second shot on the green in par-5.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I think 18 is a great finishing hole, par-5. Then you have to hit a solid drive to give yourself a good chance of reaching the green. Even if you don't reach the green you have a good chance of wedging it close to get a birdie. It's a great finishing hole.

I think personally 15 would be a bit more special because it was our last hole and I was able to make a birdie there.

**Q. If I can ask Jeeno first, away from your game, there has been a lot of talk about Thailand, and for good reason. A lot of girls are coming up and playing really well. Just your thoughts on that and the game in Thailand. And then for Celine, the LPGA has worked really hard and continues to work really hard growing the Tour. Maybe you can share your thoughts on that. Thank you.**

JEENO THITIKUL: I think I forgot my question already. Yeah, I mean, like I said as always like I love seeing like all the new generations coming up from Thailand to the LPGA Tour. I think we do have a lot of Thai players coming this year. I think we have like 12, 13 players on the LPGA Tour, which is what I love to see.

And then for me, inspiring the kids in Thailand, it's one of my goal in golf, in my career as well, because I knew that a lot of Thai players are talented, but they just need some inspirations or guiding them the way to maybe they have a chance and talented enough to come here on the LPGA.

Just perform and then let them know how good Asia and also Thailand is.

CELINE BOUTIER: Just about the LPGA growing around the world? Yeah, I think it's definitely been a lot of new tournaments and even new countries we've had events in since I joined the tour in 2018.

So it's definitely been fun to see just a lot more interest around the world. I feel like our Tour is definitely global. Yeah, we have a lot of events in the US, but we have a lot in Asia. I think we have like about maybe eight or nine and then we have also like three or four in Europe.

So it's just definitely global. You know, our roster like the players is also very global from all around the world. That only helps to generate interest if different countries.

Just seeing also different players from different backgrounds and countries winning also helps. I know for example in France, even just seeing just other girls performing really well at the highest level on the LPGA helps bring more light in their country for women's golf.

So I think it's only going to get better. Yeah, just literally just only seen the sport grow throughout the years I've been on tour so definitely been really positive.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies.

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