

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 30 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Australia

Jason Day

Min Woo Lee

Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted to welcome Min Woo Lee and Jason Day from Team Australia to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

I know you've arrived and played the golf course here at Le Golf National but can you give us a sense of how excited you are to be here representing your country and to kick off your Olympic Games experience?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, unbelievable honour. It's been a while since I've been in a team event, and obviously representing Australia in the Olympics, it's a massive honour, and it's a massive deal.

So I'm very excited to be here and Le Golf National is looking very, very nice. It's good and challenging in its ways. The rough is thick. So we'll go out there and see the front nine today, but yesterday was really good.

BRIONY CARLYON: Jason, from your side, experience?

JASON DAY: It's been a fun experience so far. I'm really looking forward and eager to get the tournament started. I'm excited to see who we are playing with. The whole week's been great so far. I've never played the golf course. I only played nine holes yesterday and we're going to play the front today. So it's a tough track for sure.

I think we are going to have some pretty decent weather, so I'm looking forward to that.

Yeah, I'm excited for the week. I think we've been treated very well here in Paris, in France, and it's nice to wear the green and gold. I'm excited about the whole week.

Q. Aussies made a great start to the games, not the medals. How much of a sense have you guys got of being part of the team and potentially contributing to



PARIS 2024



that? Have you been to the village and around the other athletes yet?

MIN WOO LEE: The village was amazing. I got to hang out with all the tennis players. They love golf. I didn't realize golf was that popular. A lot of people were asking for photos and swing tips and showing me their swings. It's good. I like doing that. I think that was the best part of the village. We're athletes in a sense we look after our diet, do this, the gym, blah, blah, blah.

But they are on a different scale and it's good to see them face-to-face, close, and see what they do, and a lot of like advice, questions that are asked, which normally we're the athletes in our life.

So it's cool to be part of and around super athletes. Yeah, if we are considered, athletes, they are super athletes, so it's good to know what they do.

JASON DAY: I have not down to the Olympic Village. I don't know if I'll go. I probably won't see any sports either. I'm still trying to get the body clock reset to this time zone. So I've been really trying to focus on making sure I get rest.

I have been watching the Olympics on TV but getting a taste of the team environment -- we obviously have team dinners and the whole team that we have got here this week, we are always together. In golf, that's very rare that you have something like that where you are constantly together other than like if someone plays the Ryder Cup or the Presidents Cup. So it's nice to have a bit of a change in a team environment.

It feels different because we are so individual as our port and as a player. It's nice to have that team environment. It feels like you're playing for something more than just yourself which is fantastic, but I'm not sure if I'll go and see any other sports just because I'm trying focus on getting a medal.

I'm definitely excited about watching all the other -- I know the other guys have gone out. The guy last night went out and watched volleyball, and Min has went and watched tennis, which is fantastic. I mean, if you've got the time,

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then definitely go do it for sure.

Q. When you are hanging around other athletes and tennis players, what kind of questions do you ask?

MIN WOO LEE: With the tennis guys, just asked a lot of basic questions. I think the media kind of blow it is up, when I was hanging out with Demon and he had a hip injury, and like when he pulled out of the singles, it's like massive news but it's kind of normal to them. They are just like, yeah, I probably won't play. What you see on media is a little different.

A lot of tennis questions. I was watching the doubles yesterday and Rinky was one of the singles players, and Demon and Alex was playing doubles, and I was asking questions. They do like hand signals and stuff like that. You don't see it on TV, kind of like baseball, signaling what they want to do, and very simple questions we couldn't really know, but more of the simple things which is really cool.

Q. Is there anything that you pick up that could help you?

MIN WOO LEE: It was more the team spirit. Golf is a lot different to tennis, but tennis, I feel like when I watch that sport, it's a lot of self-talk and it reminds me that I need to do that on the golf course, too. It's kind of hard when you play in every -- I guess in tennis, every point is a yes or no. In golf, there's a lot of pars and can be kind of mellow.

I think I like playing with aggression and emotion. So watching that sport kind of gives me a bit of motivation to make every shot kind of worth it and yeah, just from the outside, I would like to see myself with good body language. I can see that in other sports. There was times when the boys were bait down and seems like they do a good job of doing that.

I guess we're here because we are good with our emotions. But just a lot of, like, good MoJo would be good on the golf course.

Q. With you missed in '16 during the whole Zika concern. You get to Tokyo; you were injured or in a rut and didn't qualify for the team. Was there any part of you back ten that wondered if this chance would ever present itself again?

JASON DAY: To be honest I wasn't ever thinking about it. I know in 2016, looking back on it, I've said it before, where there was some regret, obviously, not going down. At the time I think I was like No. 1 or 2 in the world and I think I was like to a point where I was kind of burnt out, and the

last thing on my mind was representing Australia in the Olympics.

Looking back on it, I should just sucked it up and gone down and played. I think in that case it would have been a great experience for me to go down there and represent something that's bigger than you, you know what I mean.

And then obviously when it came to Tokyo, that was one games -- Japan is one of my favourite countries to go visit. I had some injuries and stuff, and obviously Cam and Marc were ranked higher than me.

To be able to play my way into it -- now, granted, we're from a pretty small country. It's not like if I was representing America; it's very difficult because there's so many good players there.

I just felt that if I could just play half-decent at some point, I would be able to get back on the team. It would be nice to be able to get into the Olympics in L.A. and then obviously hopefully get in the Olympics in Brisbane. But that's a long time from now.

MIN WOO LEE: Will you still be playing?

JASON DAY: How far is that away? Eight years?

MIN WOO LEE: 54.

JASON DAY: I'm the old man on the team, apparently.

Yeah, it's a thrill to be here I'm looking forward to seeing how this week goes.

Like I said, yeah, I did. I always thought there was a chance of getting back on the team.

Q. The World Ranking is what's used to determine the roster here. So many other sports have these different qualifying procedures. Is the World Ranking the best way to go, and if not; there a different way?

JASON DAY: Everything that we've done in our golfing career has always been pretty much based off the World Rankings system. On the TOUR now, it's starting to kind of change a little bit with the Signature Events, you have to finish inside the Top-50 of the FedExCup. So there's a couple of criterias you're trying to look for.

I think it would be, just because there are some players that get to come and play the Olympics that you kind of don't -- that don't play on the PGA TOUR or some other main tour. So it's nice to be able to see them and give them the opportunity.

Has anyone else talked about like a different system? I wouldn't think there would be another system to go to.

I may look smart but I'm not.

Q. Am I correct in thinking that Minjee is going to be out supporting you this weekend, and if, so how cool is that going to be?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I think she's coming out on the weekend or Sunday. She's got a tournament last week, and I think she's just hanging out at home and coming over early.

It will be awesome. We don't get to spend too much time together, so it will be nice. Mum and Gram is here, too. So maybe have a family dinner or something but it will be fun.

Q. Generally for whole family, brother and sister teeing it up in the Olympic Games, how proud a moment is that for them?

MIN WOO LEE: It's amazing. I've been saying, my sister has been on every team, and I've been slacking. So it's about time to make the team and represent Australia with her.

She's amazing. She's been playing very good for the last ten years, so it's nice to be in the Australian team and represented with her.

Q. Jason mentioned 2016. Can you talk about what's changed in terms of how you feel about the Olympics now compared to then, and just for you personally, in addition, what do you think it means for golf, where golf is in the Olympics now compared to where it was in 2016?

JASON DAY: I think if you would have asked me in 2016, I would have given you a politically correct answer, even though I thought differently. Just because growing up, even though I respected the Olympic athletes and the Olympics itself, golf was never a part of it. Early 1900s, it was part of it really, really, quickly. It was something I grew up watching but never thought that I would ever play as an Olympic athlete and was just never on the radar.

At that time, like I said in 2016, I was point a point in my career that I was like, I'm kind of done playing golf in my career right now because I got to a point where I was burnt out.

Now, watching judo and some of the women compete

yesterday, and the true emotions of what they go through when they lose, and watching some of these women break down, showing how much it actually means, not only to represent their country but like to try and win a medal -- because to them, this is their biggest tournament of the year, if not every four years, and this means so much more to them.

For us, we can play a tournament next week if we want to, so it just keeps rolling over. To watch an athlete go through that emotion of trying to overcome a loss or overcome winning for the first time, winning a medal for the first time, is very inspiring to watch.

So it definitely has changed the way that I view golf in the Olympics, and that's why I'm very thankful for the opportunity to be able to compete here this week.

Q. So do you think it's also in that eight years, golf's presence in the Olympics has also --

JASON DAY: Yes.

Q. -- more important to golf?

JASON DAY: Yeah, I think so. Being able to watch Justin Rose in Rio, Xander win in Tokyo, every time someone wins an Olympic Gold Medal for golf, not only on top some of the wins they have won, they also get announced as the Olympic Gold Medalist, and not many of the guys have won an Olympic Gold Medal, it would be nice to add your name. To be honest, I would be happy to win a medal in general but it would be nice to add your name to that short list of individual.

Q. I know that IGF has proposed a mixed-team event, possibly as soon as L.A. Any thoughts on what that would be like and how that would fit in with your schedule?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I guess we'll have to see. Watching the tennis and watching the Rugby Sevens, it's kind of condensed. So I think that might have to be a part of golf.

It will be a pretty long week for us if we had to do four days individuals and I don't know how many days of mixed -- two days of mixed. That's a lot of golf for us.

I would be very excited if there was a team event and that would be very cool. That would make golf grow, which is awesome, and we want to do that. So excited if it is in L.A.

Q. You had Clyde Sefton come into the hotel a couple nights ago. Wanted to get from you what his message



was about being an Olympian and what you absorbed from his presence?

JASON DAY: I think his sheer determination of becoming an Olympian. He told us his story about being adopted at, I think it's five weeks old, and then he told us a story about when he was watching the Olympics and his determination of like, hey, he went to his mom and said, Hey, I want to become an Olympic athlete and I want to wear the green and gold.

Then going through his whole story of how he was going to get it, and showing that determination from such a young age -- because no one teaches that. It's something that that's like instilled in you. And making the actual dream happen is another story. I mean, it was really inspiring, and like when you talk to him, he's got such a calm demeanor. He's a very calm person to talk to, and then obviously we talked about the Aboriginals and Islanders and just the background of all that, as well. It was really neat for him to come and tell us the whole story.

I remember watching him as a kid, which was really cool. It was before your time. It's so cool to be able to get to chat to him especially on his previous experience with the Olympics, what he went through mentally and physically, and then what he's doing now as well.

Q. Did you feel more like an Olympian after spending time with him?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, for sure. Just what it means to him. Like I said, he told that story, and he'd been saying it for the last 30 years, and that just shows how much it means and he never gets bored with it.

It's special. It definitely brings a little extra most physician for us for sure and yeah, I'm just excited to go and play.

Q. Your captain is a pretty heavy golfer back in the day. How is she going about running a team environment, which is somewhat usual, but what have you done to create a team?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, Karrie is amazing, what she's done for golf, and her career is very special. Me and Jason learning off her, obviously she's done very well in her career. She was on the bus this morning with us asking questions, how to do this, how to do that. We have a whole week so we'll spread the questions out.

JASON DAY: It been amazing to get to know Karrie on a deeper level. Really had not met Karrie beforehand, especially before the U.S. Open of this year, just in text messages.

Obviously everyone know what is kind of accomplishments she had on the golf course. I'm always pumping her for info, and it's always good to kind of have a captain that understands golf and understands what it takes to putt into winning tournaments and preparing for tournaments.

Picking her brain has been amazing for myself individually, but also for her to be the captain is special. I know that she is representing Australia very well doing it, and like I said, team environment, every single day, we are always together. We have dinners together. It been an absolute thrill to be with everyone.

Q. Winning a medal for Australia, have you thought about what that would mean?

MIN WOO LEE: It would be unbelievable. I haven't won that many tournaments. Jason has won a few more. It would be amazing. It would be a tournament win, which is huge.

I know it would mean the same for both of us, but yeah, podium would be nice. I think when it happens, or if it does happen, it will be a very special moment that will be in our lives forever.

JASON DAY: The rarity of winning a medal in golf, they only give out three, you know. It would be pretty cool.

Like looking back on it one day -- to be honest, before I came over, like all my mates were like, Dude, you're an Olympic athlete. They kept saying it. I'm like, man, whatever, that's fine.

Now after they kept saying it, I can understand how important and cool it is to be to call yourself an Olympic athlete because once you're an Olympic athlete, you're always an Olympic athlete. To have the opportunity to win a medal is very exciting to think about.

Yes, I've thought about it a ton, but pulling myself forward will only give me anxiety. So I'm just trying to stay as present as possible and work towards the goal of trying to win one of those medals.

But yeah, I'm just saying pretty set on like what I need to do to prep for the upcoming tournament.

Q. Did Ellie and all 12 of your children come over?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I'm one.

JASON DAY: Ellie was trying to come over but we couldn't get Winnie's passport in time.

Q. You mentioned burnout on a couple occasions in '16. Where does that come from, winning so much?

JASON DAY: From winning so much? I don't think it was necessarily from winning too much. It's more the other stuff that comes with it. Like stuff we're doing now. The signing of autographs. The pulling of different directions from your team, your family, your coaches.

Because everyone is pulling at you, you know what I mean. After awhile, you can only give out so much of yourself before you like go -- you pull the brakes and you're saying, I'm not doing that anymore.

So looking back on it, I understand how important it is to give yourself time to not only reflect on what you've done great but also just give yourself time to reset. I live a pretty private life, and I think the ability to say no to things is very important, too. It's okay to say no to people. You know, it may hurt their feelings in the short term but at some point, you've got to give yourself a break. Because I know exactly what I did to get to the position of being No. 1 in the world.

But I had the inability to say no to certain things and that's ultimately what ended up having me, you know, burnt out pretty quick.

BRIONY CARLYON: Any other questions at all? I think we are done for today. Gentlemen, all best for this week.

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