

# Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Friday, 2 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

## Byeonghun An

### Press Conference



#### **Q. Tom is on the leaderboard. Can you speak to the pressure you feel as a golfer in that position?**

BYEONGHUN AN: Yeah, at least Tom is young. He's only 22. This won't be his last Olympics, how good he's playing the last couple years and will be playing next couple years.

Winning a medal is great but it's not like, oh, I want to win a medal so I can get a medal. It's not as easy as that. There's so many good players. Feels like there are better players this Olympics than the last time I played in Rio, the first Olympics in a hundred years, the field wasn't as strong as this. All of a sudden, people think this is more important than the other one which is a shame.

I always want to get a medal in the Olympics because of my parents, but different colours than theirs. I'm a few shots back. Hopefully get a good weekend and get a good shot at the medal.

#### **Q. Tom seems to deflect those questions. Does he ever come to you for advice?**

BYEONGHUN AN: No, he doesn't want to put too much pressure on himself. I get it. He's a young guy. Enough pressure that he puts on himself, so that's why he tries to avoid it.

I completely understand. It's a little different than other guys, where he's at right now. So I really hope he can make it through this week. If I can't get a medal, I hope he gets it.

#### **Q. Can you educate me on how the system works?**

BYEONGHUN AN: My understanding is when the rule is for me -- so what happened, they don't -- your passport expires every years for the guy who is has not done military service. So you have to renew it every year. How you renew is a little bit different for everybody. Some people go to like grad school, some people have -- there

are many other ways but for me it would be I've got it delayed until 2035, I think. That's when my passport ends. I think they consider me as a non-resident. So they kept -- you know, what as long as you don't live in Korea, because I still have a Korean nationality but I don't live in Korea so that's why they allowed me to stay overseas.

Last time I went back to Korea was like five years ago. For me, they are nice enough to, I wouldn't say delay, but lengthen my passport expiration. So I guess I just follow what the rule says. They haven't asked me for it, so I guess that's a good thing.

But I'm not sure what Tom's situation is because I know he left Korea at a young age. So I can't really comment on that because like I said, I know him, but we haven't really shared any details about that. You've got to ask him.

#### **Q. I remember when Sangmoon Bae, he was a star and winning at an early age and seems like ever since the military service --**

BYEONGHUN AN: It's not easy. You don't get to practise or play for a year and a half-ish. It's very harsh for golfers, and there are also many other guys who went there and back playing, a few of my buddies are playing the Japanese Tour. Want, he played on The European Tour and went twice to military and came back to play on The Asian Tour. There are a few guys who still play but it's tough to take a year and a half off not because of injury or anything.

Like I said, it's very hard for me to comment on it because Sangmoon went. I think he couldn't renew his passport; so he couldn't really get out of the country. You know, kind of sucks but it's the rules.

#### **Q. Is it like a cautionary tale, if you have to give up golf for almost two years, it can happen?**

BYEONGHUN AN: It is -- it sucks; you have to give up golf but I guess the other Koreans would say, everyone goes, so why do we get exempt from it. There are some ways to look at it.



But at least we have a chance at the Asian Games or Olympics to get a medal to get exempt from the military service, so at least we have the opportunity.

**Q. Does your interest in The Asian games and other Korean golfers go up because of that?**

BYEONGHUN AN: Probably, yeah. Probably. That's why, you know, Sungjae Im went to play in the Asian Games and got a Gold Medal. I guess that's one of the reasons.

But Olympics, a little different, I guess. Almost gives you great benefits, you win a Gold Medal and you get in other majors. It's a little different I guess. But hopefully, like I said, hopefully we get a medal this week.

**Q. I use this as an example, how much the Olympics means. You win a green jacket, you still have to serve?**

BYEONGHUN AN: That's true.

**Q. Kind of elevates the Olympics, I think.**

BYEONGHUN AN: I look at it as, yes, it's not a major, but it's one of those things I really want to win. I treat it as the other majors. It's once in every four years, so it doesn't happen every year. And just the history of my family, growing up, watching the Olympics, the last five or six Olympics, this feels a little bit special to me, I guess. But I'm not sure what other people thinks. But it feels like a major.

**Q. Last question about Tom. What do you like most about his game? How much has he grown as a player and a person these last couple years?**

BYEONGHUN AN: Well, I mean, he struggled a little bit early this year, I think, but looks like he's coming back to where he belongs, I guess. He'll do fine. He'll do fine. He's a great player. He doesn't hit it miles but he hits it far enough. He hits it very straight. He has great touch around the greens. Great putter. I mean, he already has a few wins under his bet. He's only 22 years old. That's a big, big help, so young.

I'd love to see what he can do the next ten, 15, 20 years. He's definitely -- he is a star already, so we'll see what happens the next couple years.

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