

# Shriners Children's Open

Sunday, October 15, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

TPC Summerlin

## Tom Kim

### Press Conference



**Shriners**  
Children's Open™ 

**THE MODERATOR:** We'd like to welcome the champion of the 2023 Shriners children's Open Tom Kim into the interview room. Tom earns his third PGA TOUR victory and successfully defends his title. Tom, congratulations. What does this victory mean to you?

**TOM KIM:** It's very sweet. I feel like the first two wins came at me really quick. It took a lot longer than my first two wins to get my third one. But it's very sweet.

This is really for the team. I've worked really hard personally, but without their help, I would not even be close to getting my third win.

This is really sweet for us.

**Q. You're the first player to successfully defend a title in this event since Jim Furyk in 1999. What does repeating here at TPC Summerlin and doing it at an event sponsored by Shriners Children's do for you?**

**TOM KIM:** I think because it's sponsored by Shriners Children's that's even more, certainly because I'm 21, I'm not the oldest guy out here, and the kids here are even younger than me. I feel like I'm kind of close in age with them, and if there's anything I can do just to inspire one kid out there, it would mean the world.

To repeat, it's really cool, but real think repeat was only possible because of the kids, because they inspired me so much at the start of the week. I'm just really glad that I kept the trophy in my hands this year again.

**Q. I heard you in the Golf Channel interview talk about expectations. When you win twice before you turn 21, I'm sure there's a lot of them. Were there more internal expectations you put on yourself or ones you felt externally?**

**TOM KIM:** Yeah, for sure. I think those two wins, I wasn't really -- I was playing my game. I wasn't thinking about, okay, I need to win this event, I need to do this. No, I played and it happened. It happened very naturally. It

happened very quick.

I think by the end of last year, two wins on the PGA TOUR all of a sudden, ranked 13th in the world. Suddenly you feel like you're right there and you need to do something extra or something. But it really wasn't.

I felt like I almost added a lot of pressure towards myself to perform really well this year. But really it's been a very big learning curve for me, and it's very humbling to be able to experience what I've experienced this year. That's why I feel like this third one is even sweeter.

**Q. Between Shriners and now you had several top 5, top 10 finishes, but earlier this week it felt like maybe it didn't feel super successful to you maybe because of that kind of downward trend in the middle there. Did it feel like a successful year to you at this point coming in?**

**TOM KIM:** I mean, I had my best finish in majors this year, made TOUR Championship. You can't say it was a bad year.

But just personally I feel like I've always expected a lot from myself, and that's why I felt like I think -- I always feel I could do more. I think that's why I felt like it wasn't the best year.

But it was still a solid year, and I've learned so much this year. Like it's been unbelievable how big the learning curve has been.

But no, it's been -- this one makes it a lot better of a year for sure.

**Q. What were some of those lessons, some of that learning curve?**

**TOM KIM:** Just the adjustment to the courses really. I haven't seen all the courses out here, and it's been a big adjustment. These guys are the best 125 in the world, and that's a very small percentage of how many people play golf.



The margins are really, really small. The players now -- every player has a chance to win every week. So just to -- I think the biggest thing is just really kind of letting things happen, not really trying to force things. I thought earlier in the year I was trying to force it a little bit, and I even played worse because of that.

Just really just controlling what I can control, play the way I can play. Like today, even though I had those two soft bogeys, I knew if I just played my game and just stayed in it, I was going to be there, and I felt like that's exactly what I did.

All of the things that I've learned this year really was the result of what happened this week. I made more bogeys than I did last year, but because I was in it and I just stayed patient and I was really just playing my own game, it was only in my head.

Really I think this week is just the result of what I've learned this whole year.

**Q. Can you talk about the emotions of the round. You got off three quick birdies and then gave two of them back right away, and then it was a dogfight the rest of the way. Can you talk about how the day felt.**

TOM KIM: I think getting off to a hot start really, really helped. I feel like if you -- because there's a lot of birdie opportunities out there, when you don't have the fastest start, you kind of feel like you need to start making birdies almost in a sense. But because I gave myself a really nice quick start, I was able to kind of just play freely a little bit, I would say. It helped.

But really Adam didn't really get off to the best start, but he came back right away. So it just really shows you how small the margins are out here.

He played unbelievable. I knew there were some low scores. I really wasn't checking leaderboards. But once I got to 3-under after 4, I think - is that right? I knew that I kind of had the tournament in my hands almost. Because I got off to a hot start, I knew I was going to be up there.

Really soft bogeys on the next two holes, and I knew I was probably out of the lead, but I kind of told myself it was fine because there was plenty of birdie opportunities. I knew if I just stuck to my own game, really didn't want to force anything.

But no, it was hard. I felt like me and Adam really kind of -- we didn't really run away from it because it's not like we separated ourselves like me and Pat did last year, but it was really close. I knew that 18 was a number to get into

the clubhouse. It was really up to me and Adam to really see who gets it.

It was pretty intense really. It was just me and Adam, and I feel like it was almost match play once we got past 14. It was just him and me. It was whether I wanted it or he wants it, and we both just see what happens.

It was probably the most emotional final round I've experienced win-wise the last year and a half.

**Q. I was going to ask you about that stretch, as well. I think when you were on 13 tee, there were 12 players within one shot at that point --**

TOM KIM: Really? I had no idea.

**Q. I was going to ask -- I know you said you try not to look at leaderboards, just play your game, but at that point do you look?**

TOM KIM: 13 tee you said?

**Q. You said when you got past 14 is when you felt like it was down to the two of you.**

TOM KIM: Yeah, so I knew -- once I was on 11, there's a leaderboard right there, and I took a glimpse, and I saw 18 was leading and I was one back.

But I knew that those last few holes you could really make a run. I was just staying really patient.

Once I birdied 12, I was like, okay, I birdied 12, I'm tied for the lead. Now it's just if I'm good enough, I can take it. Because you've got 13, reachable par-5; 14 is a really short par-3; 15 is a drivable par-4; 16 is a very short par-5.

I knew a lot of birdie opportunities were in the way. I knew I couldn't win with one birdie, and I was right. So I knew that once I birdied 12, I was like, okay, that really helped me get momentum and made 13 a lot easier, 15 a lot easier, 16 a lot easier.

I knew that it was bunched up, but with those birdie opportunities, I knew if I played these last five or six holes like the first or second round, I knew that I would have a pretty good chance.

**Q. I assume 2024 Fall Series you've penciled this in to come back and try and three-peat?**

TOM KIM: Yeah, for sure. Three-peat sounds nice.

**Q. So the hard-hitting question of the day. Last year**

**you won at 20, this year you win at 21 in Vegas. What's the celebration going to be like?**

TOM KIM: I was actually thinking about this last night. If I win -- I knew I was going to get this question.

If I take the red eye -- but I'm not going to take the red eye, so I'm going to go at 6:30 in the morning. I'm going to go back home. I'm going to finish a piece of chocolate that I wanted to finish, so I'm going to do that. Then I'm going to order room service and I'm going to go to bed, then I'm going to wake up at 3:00 and take my 6:30 a.m. flight.

I can't wait to finish that chocolate. I've wanted to finish it so bad.

**Q. What kind of chocolate is it?**

TOM KIM: I brought it from a trip from Europe. It's a Ferrero Rocher white chocolate. It's great. Like I've saved it, and it's going to taste so good tonight.

**Q. TPC Summerlin is obviously located in the community of Summerlin. You've gotten to know this area pretty well with two wins. What do you think and like about Summerlin the community in general?**

TOM KIM: You know, I'm not a really big fancy loud type of guy, so when I come to Vegas, I don't really like going to the strip. I kind of stay five minutes from the course where it's really quiet and it's really nice. Back-to-back is great, so Summerlin and I are bonded very well. Hopefully it's nice to me again next year, as well.

I love Summerlin, and I hope it loves me again next year.

**Q. You've spoken all week about wanting to come back and defend. Why was that important to you? What was kind of special about being able to do that?**

TOM KIM: Like it was so hard for me to be -- the week of Wyndham, to just be at home. It was so hard for me to just sit on my couch and not really be able to do anything. It was very frustrating personally as a player because it was my first win, and I was so determined to come back to Shriners at least being healthy and at least have a chance to win as a defending champion.

Winning this week is just making me miss that week even more, my first win. Not to have even a chance to compete out there, as a player, it's hard. But I really do want -- obviously this win is dedicated to the people here but I also want to dedicate it to the people at Wyndham. Just to not be there, it's very frustrating as a player.

Hopefully I'll be able to have a chance at Greensboro soon.

**Q. I think in the TPC Summerlin clubhouse there's a hallway that has the history of different events, and your photo is up there on the left. I'm not sure if you noticed that --**

TOM KIM: Oh, I noticed it.

**Q. Was there any -- first, have you had your photo in a clubhouse before? Is that the first time you saw your name?**

TOM KIM: I'm pretty sure it's not the first time, but it's -- at least with a trophy and saying I won here, because I came here really after the win last year and it wasn't up there, and I was pretty frustrated about it, and I told them, hey, guys, what's going on here.

I think earlier in the week when I was walking by it, I was like, man, I really don't want anyone else's photo up here. I kind of want to hold my picture up there. I was able to do that, and I'm very happy that I'm going to have that picture up there for one more year.

**Q. You winning here means your face is all over the city, the marketing materials. You are what drew people to the event. Does that add motivation to keep it there, stay there?**

TOM KIM: 100 percent. Obviously when I drive back to my hotel, I can see my picture up there. It's pretty cool. I think that's also something that is very cool as a defending champion to see those kind of things. You don't really get to do that much.

Like I said, to see that one more time again, it's going to be nice.

**Q. You had some very kind words for Joe out on the green and how much he meant to you this week. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?**

TOM KIM: Yeah, Joe is really -- the journey that me and Joe have had, he's not really just my caddie. He's really like my big brother now. Not only do I ask about golf questions, I ask him about life stuff, as well. We've formed a very, very special relationship.

He goes through a lot of stuff because of me, and I annoy him a lot. I'm just really grateful to be able to have that bond with him. He's helped me develop so much as a player. I've learned so much from him.

I would not have been able to get my third win this fast

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

without him.

I love him to death, and I'm very grateful that I have the opportunity -- we have the opportunity to work together as a team. This one really goes out to him because he's the best dude I've known.

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