

# WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Kevin Yu

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Kevin Yu into the interview room here, making his tournament debut here at the WM Phoenix Open. How excited are you to be here at TPC Scottsdale this week?

KEVIN YU: Yeah, I'm very excited to be playing here at Waste Management. I went to college at Arizona State for five years and still living out here, so very excited to be able to play this week.

**Q. Is this a tournament when you were at Arizona State that you would come to and be a fan?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, definitely. I think during the five years I came every year, so I was looking forward to playing one year, and now here, so really looking forward to this year.

**Q. Not any videos out there of you as a fan at 16, are there?**

KEVIN YU: No, now I get to -- hopefully somebody posts my video to social media.

**Q. You just played Pebble Beach, finished No. 4 going into Pebble, or you were No. 4 in the AON Swing 5 standings. Now you're looking to remain there to get into Genesis next week. Talk about trying to remain in the Swing 5 and get into Riviera.**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, I'm looking forward to playing that one, too. Definitely still need to play good out here this week. This is a course I play pretty often, so I just need to bring my "A" game out there and hopefully have a good result and stay inside the Top 5 and hopefully get into next week.

**Q. There's been a lot of ASU guys that have come through and played this tournament. Have you been able to pick their brains at all and get a sense of what you might expect this week?**

KEVIN YU: A little bit. I played with Jon and a couple guys before. Obviously I have the stats from previous years, see how all the good guys did in the past, which part they

did very good in the past. I also talked to Jon before, so hopefully their experience can help me this week.

**Q. You've had two top sixes in your last three weeks, and I know last fall you missed a few cuts. What's led to you having those better results and anything you've worked on in the break that helped you?**

KEVIN YU: I feel mentally I was more comfortable being in that situation the last few weeks, just coming into the 2024 season.

Last year my putting was almost dead last on TOUR, so I was working really hard on my putting. Obviously last year wasn't very good, but the week before last week has been really good. I can see some results coming into this year, and hopefully keep it going that way.

**Q. Is there any technique or did you change your putter? What did you do to hone in your putting over the break?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, actually I hired a putting coach last year and started working with him. It's been, I think, five months already, so I just got a new putting coach that has been really helpful.

**Q. Who is it, and what have you worked on with him?**

KEVIN YU: John Graham, and I've been working on a lot of stuff. A lot of reads, a lot of speed work, some technique, too. It's kind of everything. It's just step by step. It's not like you can change one thing the next day. You have to put some work into it. It's kind of been everything -- it shows the results.

**Q. Do you have any memories of No. 16 coming as a fan, and what are you thinking about playing as a player for the first time?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, it was crazy because I think, like I said, I came pretty much every year when I was in college. Then I came to watch CT Pan quite a bit. It was crazy back then. I thought it was crazy just seeing all the people yelling at it, and people -- when you play golf, people feel



like you have to be quiet and everything, but 16 is definitely the opposite. They try and get louder and louder. It's just kind of wild for the first time.

Now I think it's pretty cool. It's a little different experience, but in a sense you have to maintain your focus and try to not think about all the noises and people talking and all that stuff. Just have to stick to your plan and hopefully hit a good shot. Otherwise you get booed.

**Q. Last year you got on to the PGA TOUR. What does it mean to be playing in a TOUR event close to your alma mater?**

KEVIN YU: It means a lot. This is a thing I've been dreaming of since I was five years old. I've been playing golf for like 20 years, and ever since I've played golf I've wanted to be on the PGA TOUR. It's nice to actually achieve my goal since I was young. Right now I'm just trying to keep going and hopefully have a good career.

**Q. It seems like you've maintained a good relationship with Matt Thurmond at ASU, and I know you guys have told each other through TOUR events that Sun Devils finish. How did you learn that at ASU and how have you used that really the last few weeks with your top-10 finishes?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, coming out to every tournament, coming into the last couple holes, we always talk about Sun Devils finish, which is the last couple holes is very important. If you can finish like two birdies in the last three holes, which can help even making cuts or having a good result -- like Palm Springs I think -- I definitely bogeyed the last hole, but I was making some birdies coming into the last few holes.

Just knowing that you've got to play good the last couple holes gives you a very good chance to have a good result. That kind of gives me an advantage.

**Q. How much have you been able to rely on Matt the last few years out on TOUR?**

KEVIN YU: I mean, not as much right now because he's still pretty busy with the team, but we still talk quite a bit and just kind of mentally he always tells me to keep it going, and I'm doing a good job, and every time if I need any help, he definitely will be there for me.

Just knowing there's somebody there for me I think is really important, and I'm really thankful to have him as my college coach.

**Q. With the new AON Swing 5 and that competition, as**

**you're coming down the stretch at Farmers, was that in your mind where you stood, and how did that play out?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, it's in my mind. It's definitely the goal coming into the 2024 season, but wasn't really thinking a lot when I played in the tournaments. Just knowing that that's a thing for me to get into all the Signature Events, but also at the same time I know if I just play good golf, I definitely had that chance to play all the good events, the Signature Events.

**Q. I know your surgery was February last year this time --**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, during this week. It was crazy. I didn't get into this week last year. I thought I had a chance to just work out a little bit, and I was doing vertical jumps, and when I landed, the tragedy happened.

**Q. Where were you exactly when the --**

KEVIN YU: I was just working out at my trainer's gym like five minutes away from here. I was just doing some regular stuff, and then when I landed I heard my knee pop and I just couldn't walk, so I got an MRI and I tore my meniscus, so I had to get surgery the week after.

**Q. Did you try the Monday qualifier earlier that week?**

KEVIN YU: No, because I played Pebble last year, and we finished on Monday, and basically there's no flight back here. I think it was like 12:00, just no flights that can get me back here, so I didn't play the Monday qualifier.

**Q. Do you remember what day the injury happened?**

KEVIN YU: I think it was during -- I forgot which day, but I think it was either Wednesday or Thursday of this week, this tournament last year.

**Q. Left knee?**

KEVIN YU: Left knee, yeah.

**Q. What exercise were you doing?**

KEVIN YU: Doing vertical jumps, like consecutive vertical jumps. I always try to measure how high I can jump, and I was trying to jump as high as I can, and I guess I was trying too hard, and when I landed, the knee just happened.

**Q. How high can you jump?**

KEVIN YU: Not very high. That's the thing I've been



working on.

**Q. How did you spend the time when you were sidelined?**

KEVIN YU: Actually working out quite a bit back home because I couldn't do much. I couldn't play golf. I was actually working out just kind of my upper body and some flexible things. Also I was fishing quite a bit, too, back at home, and just spent some time with family.

**Q. Do you feel any different as a second-year PGA TOUR member having kept your card as opposed to the rookie year? Are there any differences just knowing you did keep your job out here?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, definitely feel a little differently now because I feel like I've been playing a lot of courses now, a lot of tournaments now. You kind of know where you want to play. I just feel more comfortable being out there. Like today I didn't play the whole 18 holes because we just got done Sunday and I was pretty tired.

I feel like the schedule I can manage a little better now. Hopefully as the year goes on, I can definitely manage my time and the schedule better.

**Q. When you came to the tournament, did you walk 18 with CT Pan? How would you spend those days when you came as a fan?**

KEVIN YU: Yeah, he was still busy. As a player, he wants to do his thing. I came out to watch and we would probably have dinner after and I tried to not bother him as much. It was just a good catch-up. It's nice to see a Taiwanese golfer playing on the PGA TOUR during that time, so it was pretty fun to see another Taiwanese out there.

**Q. With the Olympics coming up this year, knowing you have a good shot to qualify, what's that mean to you, and what does that make you think about when you think about the Olympics and what that could mean in Paris?**

KEVIN YU: It's amazing to think about. That's definitely a while ago for this year to get into the Olympics, so now I have a good chance to get in. I'm looking forward to it, and I think it would be cool to represent Taiwan again, and hopefully I can play with CT again because back in 2014 we played a tournament called Asian Games, which is kind of one below in Asia like compared to the Olympics. It's nice that I can team up with CT again. Back then we did pretty good. I think I won the bronze medal and he won the gold medal, and the team won the gold medal, too, so hopefully we can do pretty good again this year.

**Q. How would you describe the putting, and what was the low point?**

KEVIN YU: Like last year? I feel like I was doing okay before I came to see my coach, and actually there's a lot of things I need to be working on. Like speed, I was not very good. I couldn't really hit the lines as much as I can. Just kind of everything.

I feel like putting, it's like you have to hit the right line, you have to hit the good speed, and then you have to have a good line. I feel like last year those three things were not matching up. This year we're trying to figure out everything and trying to -- hopefully those three things can come together for this year, and that's the thing I've been working, and I think I have done a lot better now.

**Q. What are your goals for this season?**

KEVIN YU: Definitely I want to win a golf tournament this year and get into the Olympics and then get into the top 50 so I can play all the Signature Events for this year and then get into the TOUR Championship, top 30.

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