

THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson

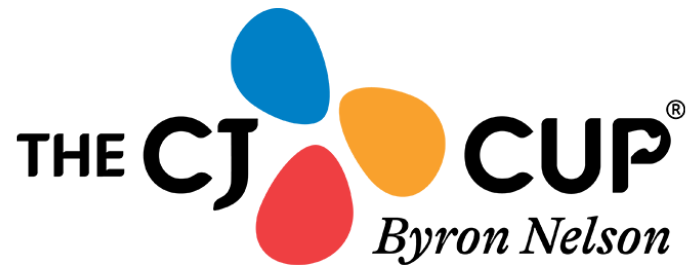
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McKinney, Texas, USA

TPC Craig Ranch

Tom Kim

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Tom Kim to the CJ Cup Byron Nelson. Tom, this is your fourth consecutive start here at this tournament. What do you like so much about coming back to play here?

TOM KIM: First of all, it's just a home week. I think that's always really nice. I have good memories here. I haven't really played the best that I could have the last few years.

But this was my first appearance before my really big run in '22, and I think every time I come back I kind of just reflect to those moments of before I was a PGA TOUR member. The emotion, the excitement I felt coming in here and playing here. And it's just trying to relive those memories and just try to bring that fire back like I did in '22.

Q. You're a three-time PGA Tour winner. This is your 11th start this season, your first since the Masters where you finished T52. How would you assess your form so far this season?

TOM KIM: It's been interesting. There's moments where I've had better starts than I've had previous years. And then there's been moments of uncertainty of where did the game go?

And the strong fall last year and four second-place finishes, it was really into that moment of, man, I'm really close to kind of getting over the hump. It's just been a process to find that again.

I made a few changes in the offseason, and it's been good sometimes, but it's also been backfiring. I think that's part of the process.

And I'm trying to stay really, really patient in what I'm doing, not trying to push when it's hard because there's an expectation in myself and a belief in myself to perform the way that I know I can. And to not be able to do that personally, it's frustrating.

I think I feel really close. It's just going to take a little bit more time. I'm aware of that. And hopefully I'll be able to

find my form again where I can contend a little more consistently.

Q. How much of the course have you seen early this week with the overseeding? And how is it playing any different from previous?

TOM KIM: I saw the front nine last week. I came over here and played a few holes, and it's very different. I think it's way better. I think it's more challenging. I think this golf course can show its teeth.

I think with the Zoysia grass I think before just around the greens it doesn't bring that big of, I think, challenging times because you can spin the ball a lot.

Now, with the overseed, it really challenges you to be able to hit the ball well. And contact is very, very important.

And I think with how good this property is, it brings a lot more challenge to the top guys. And I think it's just overall just such a better design with the overseed.

Q. How often do you play out here, living in Dallas?

TOM KIM: Like Craig Ranch? Not much really. Whenever I'm home, I try to go back to my club, just try to get away from tournament golf. And I live 35 minutes from here. So it's a little ways away. I'm normally here just for the tournament.

Q. You've been one of the best iron players on tour over the last three years. How would you evaluate that aspect of your game after San Antonio and Augusta?

TOM KIM: I think the belief is very high with my game, knowing that if I just get anywhere near on a run, I feel I can hit it as close as anybody. I felt I proved that in very high-pressure conditions.

It just hasn't been where it needs to be. My golf swing is just not feeling so comfortable as it did the last fall.

I think I've lost a few pounds just fitness-wise. And I think that's got a little bit of -- just my body is not used to it. I know it's going to take time. But once I know I find it with



where I am now, it's going to be really good.

Q. If I'm not mistaken, your best finish here is tied for 13th. Can you put a finger on why South Korean golfers have done so well in this tournament?

TOM KIM: You know, I actually don't know. I think Kaje has won here twice, I think. I think when I first came here, I was at 163 ball speed, and now I'm at 174. So I think the course definitely is playing a little differently than it did last time.

I was hitting a lot more longer clubs but I was very precise. I think there's certain holes here that really make you lose shots, and at the same time makes you gain shots.

In '22, when I was really precise with a lot of parts on my game, you just keep creating a lot of birdie opportunities.

And I think Korean golf is very, very well known for the precision that we have. I think a lot of the Korean players are more accurate than a lot of certain players. And I think when you can hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens -- the greens are always really good here -- so once that putter gets hot, you'll make a ton of birdies, and that's what you have to do out here.

With this year, with how different the fairways have become, it's become a lot more tighter, there's a lot more rough. So ball-striking is even more important to create those birdie opportunities.

When you consider all the top Korean players, we're pretty decent ball strikers. I think that's why our guys have had success.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the Presidents Cup. We just had an announcement of the captains for both teams -- Brandt Snedeker for the U.S. Team and Geoff Ogilvy for the International Team. You've been a member of that team for the past two playings of it. Geoff was involved as a co-captain. Just thoughts on the selection and what you look forward in '26?

TOM KIM: It's really cool. I'm really happy for Geoff. He really deserves it. I've been a part of two Presidents Cup and he's been vice captains for both of them.

I think we've had a lot of good runs. We've had a lot of good days. We went 5-0 on Friday last year. I think it was really a big moment for the team.

I know at the end of Sunday, the scores weren't as close as we would expect it to. But we had moments where we've scared the U.S. team, I think. And he's been a part

of that. I think the belief is there of knowing we can get over the hump.

I think with Geoff, seeing the really high moments and the low moments, if he can just bring us, play that role of -- he has that charisma and the aura to be able to lead us to win. And he has the confidence for sure, being a major winner and knowing what it's like to win at big events.

And I think if he can just get our team to keep experiencing the higher highs a little bit more, and the lows, just be a little better.

I really believe that we'll have a chance, especially I know how hard it is on American soil.

Q. I know you're young, and I'm not sure if you're a bit of a history buff in golf or how much you follow it, but the connection of Byron Nelson being involved in this tournament for so many years, but then also just recently seeing Rory McIlroy achieve something that no one's seen for a long time, what were your thoughts on Rory's victory and what was your first impression when that happened?

TOM KIM: I'm so happy for him. The emotions that let out on the 18th green were so real and raw.

I got to play with Rory my first Masters on Monday, the practice round, and the first two days. I could just see, even no matter how you try, you can still personally only imagine what he's feeling, the pressure that he's feeling. To be able to do that and watching the last few holes, I never really felt that nervous for someone else before.

This guy's trying to chase history, and it's taken him so long to be able to do that and to be in the position that he's at, it's unimaginable. I think everyone -- he definitely made it a lot harder on himself than it should have been. I think he kept everyone on their toes for, I think, three hours. But once he got it done, I was so happy for him. And it's really good for the game of golf, and I think a few players have said it, but he finally got over the major hump so it's going to be a lot more challenging for us to compete.

Q. I'm not sure you were even alive the first time it was achieved, the target. But there's another opportunity coming up shortly, Jordan Spieth with the PGA Championship. Witnessing it once in your lifetime is pretty amazing. How would you feel if it were to happen again in the same year?

TOM KIM: It would be astronomical for the game of golf. I really do believe that, to be able to have two career grand slams in one year. We've only had -- is it only five -- is it



six now? I think Jordan again being such a big face of the game of golf would be really good for us, for the PGA Tour.

I think he's seeing Rory do it for sure is going to motivate him more to get it done in Charlotte.

Q. You appeared on Thursday afternoon with defending champion Taylor Pendrith and fellow countryman Sung-jae Im, a team member of the Presidents Cup. What do you look forward about that pairing on Thursday?

TOM KIM: It's really fun. Obviously Sung-jae being Korean, we've gotten along really well. We'll have fun out there.

And Taylor being part of the Presidents Cup, it will be a cool international group.

Obviously very, very comfortable personalities to go around and play golf in. It's a home-game week for me so there's an amount of expectations I want to do well. And hopefully have a chance on Sunday.

We'll put our head down. We'll have some fun but once Thursday comes, it's going to be competition mode.

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