

U.S. Women's Open

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Houston, Texas, USA

Champions Golf Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 75th U.S. Women's Open Championship. Please join me in welcoming world No. 3 Nelly Korda to the interview area. She is competing in her sixth Women's Open. When I say your sixth Women's Open, what comes to mind?

NELLY KORDA: Wow, I'm old, or getting old.

THE MODERATOR: Recently you have talked about your experience playing in the your first Women's Open. Can you just reiterate some of that?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, gosh, I was so young, 14 years old. My dad caddied for me. We played at Sebonack, and just getting to hit beside the best players in the world and playing in the same event as them, it was a dream come true.

That's kind of where I decided this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Q. How are you feeling? How's your back?

NELLY KORDA: It's good. It's a lot better than it was. I'm just really grateful to be out here, and I'm just going to take it step by step. I just started practicing probably 12 days ago, so I'm just happy that I'm pain-free.

Q. Can you tell us exactly what happened at Aronimink and then what you were diagnosed with ultimately?

NELLY KORDA: I just did something stupid. I tried cracking my back and my back went into spasm. It's just been -- I wanted to take it slow until I was 100 percent. This year it's a funky year, too, so I didn't want to come back too early and kind of aggravate it again.

Q. Two courses this year; talk about how that changes your preparation.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it's crazy. I have never done this before, so there's a lot more yardage books, and I definitely

have to keep them in the car because I have this habit of forgetting my yardage book when I get to the golf course.

But yeah, a lot more prep. These greens definitely play a big role, and so I've been working a lot around the greens.

Q. You, your brother, and sister have all had fabulous years in a pandemic. I'm wondering, why is it that there's not a slacker in the Korda family? You guys could have gone the other way and just not been that -- been more complacent about sports. Why do you think you are all so driven?

NELLY KORDA: Obviously my parents, and I don't know, I think we just push each other to be better, better athletes, better people. We're always there for each other, and we all want to see each other succeed.

I think we just all as a family just push each other. Every single time I play against my dad, he doesn't play golf at all, and he just always wants to play a money match and he knows how to push my buttons.

So it's actually crazy. Like I usually just win 1-up or sometimes even going into the last hole, but we all just always push each other and try and make each other better. And aggravate each other sometimes.

Q. Does that make you want to play him more, or do you sometimes feel like I just don't have that in me?

NELLY KORDA: No, I mean, thankfully we just play like once or twice a year. Like I said, he's usually with my brother, so when he gets home he wants to just chill.

Q. With greens so large at Champions, does it change your strategy whenever you're attacking pin locations or anything like that?

NELLY KORDA: For sure, yeah. Your iron play has to be on point this week, especially it's playing long, so you're going to have longer clubs in, and I think the greens are going to get firmer throughout the week.

So making sure -- I mean, honestly, even if you miss a green, they're huge greens, but even if you miss a green you're likely to be in the water because the runoffs are so big.



So definitely the greens are going to play a huge role this week and putting control and trying to minimize your mistakes on the green.

Q. Going back to the back for a second, how bad did it get, and what did you do when you couldn't swing and you took the time off?

NELLY KORDA: I just took my time really with it. I didn't want to rush. I wanted to make sure that I was 100 percent whenever I teed up or tried to swing again.

So honestly, I just -- it wasn't that bad. I just wanted to make sure that it wouldn't happen again.

Q. What's been your routine this week? What's kind of the game plan, and has that been less than you would have done because of your back?

NELLY KORDA: So yesterday I played 18 for the first time walking since KPMG, so my feet are a little sore today. And I just played the front nine on the other course and walked the back, chipped and putted.

Q. What's the biggest adjustment you have to make whenever going from bentgrass greens to Bermuda greens?

NELLY KORDA: So I actually -- is one golf course bent and one golf course --

Q. No, just in general.

NELLY KORDA: I grew up on Bermuda so I'm used to that, but I think it's how it spins on the greens, one; and two, I would say putting, you just have to -- sometimes with Bermuda you have to play the grain. That's like the biggest part of Bermuda. Bent, you just play the slope.

Q. The USGA has been using a women worth watching hashtag this week. How does it feel to have the organization kind of get behind women's golf in that way?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, it's awesome. Every year I think women's sport is trending in the right direction. And I actually just saw that even the women's NHL re-Tweeted or was Tweeting about us. It's awesome to see that all these organizations are getting behind it and spreading the word.

Q. Just curious how you assess your year to this point. It's been a weird year for a lot of reasons.

NELLY KORDA: I think I've had a really good year. I played well in ANA and I played well at British and I had some really good finishes. I missed, I think, three or four events this year, but other than that, I'm very happy with how my year has gone.

I've made some changes. I have a different coach.

Q. Does it make you anxious at all coming into a major not having played that much?

NELLY KORDA: A little, yeah. I mean, you kind of don't know what's going to happen. I mean, your feel is not 100 percent there. Like yesterday when I was putting I was hitting them like 10 feet by, and I was like, my feel is definitely not there right now.

But I think as I play more rounds under pressure obviously it'll get better.

Q. How far can a hashtag women worth watching and Tweets, especially from the male PGA TOUR players, go in raising the profile of women's golf?

NELLY KORDA: For sure. I always said like you need everyone kind of to get behind a movement, so I think if the PGA TOUR players got behind this, it would spread like wildfire.

Q. In that same vein, when you've been able to watch your brother at tennis events where it's the women and the men playing these big events together, do you have longing, like why can't golf figure out a way to do that, like the Vic Open, do more of those types of events where we both share this big platform?

NELLY KORDA: I think it would be really good for women's golf. Again, it would spread the word more about it, and I think it would get more people interested in women's golf. Not even just older people. I would say even like the younger generation, kids. I just think it would be really cool.

Q. What do you think is keeping it from happening?

NELLY KORDA: I'm not sure. I don't know. I'm the wrong person to ask.

Q. Who from your family is coming out to support this week, and how much does that add, especially when there's no fans out here?

NELLY KORDA: My dad is coming out. My mom will be at CME, so it's a hard time of the year for her to leave home for two weeks, so at least my dad will be out here, and it'll

be nice.

Q. You mentioned the coach change; when did you make it, and who are you working with now?

NELLY KORDA: I switched coaches just before British, and I'm working with Justin Sheehan.

Q. It's all been good, an easy transition for you?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it was really easy. I mean, we're not doing much with my swing at all. It's more of how to practice and how to approach the golf course preparation, that stuff.

Q. It seems like most of the year you've been among the pre-tournament favorites to win when major weeks roll around. I'm wondering, how do you process that? I'm sure the pressure internally that you have is more than any external pressure, but what is it like for you to know that people think it's your time now?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, it's awesome to hear, but you know, at the end of the day, I think everyone has a different path. Some people may have their first win a major, some people it may take longer.

If I play more consistent golf and my body is feeling good, I think the better I feel going into the major, the better I will perform.

Q. You mentioned changing instructors. I was just wondering what sorts of changes you've made in terms of approaching the golf course.

NELLY KORDA: Just more work around the greens, just paying more attention to detail.

Q. How easy or hard is it to trust your path when you hear all of that external noise?

NELLY KORDA: I think you just have to have a really good support team. It's all about the team you build. My parents have always preached that, and I think when you have a really good team around you, they'll reassure you even when times are tough.

Q. Do you normally try to crack your back or was that a random thing?

NELLY KORDA: No, I mean, it was cold. My body does not do well in cold weather. It gets really tight and I just made a little oopsie, which turned into a little bit longer of an oopsie.

Q. Which hole was it on?

NELLY KORDA: It was probably on 13, yeah. First day.

Q. Can you just give us an idea of how much you and Jessica share sister to sister this week? I know it's a major; you play practice rounds together. How much do you approach this together with strategy and studying and your two teams coming together, as well?

NELLY KORDA: Kinda. Usually the only thing we talk about is lines off the tee. It's just nice to have her out here. She's like, I'm so happy I have a friend again.

So we play every practice round together and we kind of feed off of each other, but at the end of the day she approaches the golf course a little differently than I do.

Q. What's the best advice your dad ever gave you, especially just around being a professional athlete?

NELLY KORDA: It's not a sprint, it's a marathon, and everyone has a different path.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Nelly. Good luck this week.

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