

U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Houston, Texas, USA

Champions Golf Club

Danielle Kang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming Danielle Kang, World No. 4, into the interview area. Danielle has five LPGA Tour victories, including one major and two in this shortened 2020 season.

Danielle is a two-time U.S. Women's Amateur champion and is making her 11th U.S. Women's Open start. When I say that, 11 Women's Open starts, what comes to mind?

DANIELLE KANG: Did they say 11 or 12, because they said 12.

Q. It's 11 or 12.

DANIELLE KANG: It's a lot of years, a lot of great golf courses that I got to play playing this championship, and I'm really excited to tee it up on Thursday.

Q. Your first Women's Open, we're talking to a lot of first-timers this year. When you think back to Pine Needles what advice would you give someone playing in their first U.S. Open?

DANIELLE KANG: Go practice some lag putting and try and minimize your three-putts. My first U.S. Open at Pine Needles was an eye-opener for me, and I'd only played golf for a year and a half at that point. But it was a lot of three-putts, hit the green, three-putt, hit the green, three-putt. And this golf course here at Cypress Creek, it's a big golf course, so a lot of lag putting is going to happen, as well. Got to make the five-, six-footers for nice par saves.

Q. How does it change your preparation coming into a U.S. Open that's on two golf courses?

DANIELLE KANG: The preparation changed quite a bit because I did take advantage of the advance practice rounds. I came here during the Houston Open, during the men's event, and played three rounds just to get familiar with the golf course. But I actually didn't play on Monday here, and today I played nine holes.



I think being able to calibrate between the golf courses back and forth will be really key, because they're both rolling differently, the greens. They break differently, speed is different, and grass is a little different.

I think being able to calibrate as fast as I can between Thursday and Friday will be a little helpful going into the weekend.

Q. You took a few weeks off. Just talk about your preparation and how you treated the last few weeks.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, I've taken quite a bit of time off. I actually needed to tune up some stuff back at home with my game and feel like I was ready to play here. I need to have my height and I need to have my ball control. Distance off the tee is going to be huge.

When I played here a few weeks ago I felt like that was going to be key, and it wasn't -- it's not as if I can just kind of brush off the 10, 15-yard yardages.

I wanted to get that dialed in and try to be here as prepared as possible.

Q. Some of the male players have been Tweeting, some of the PGA TOUR players, in support of the Women's Open this week. It's gotten a lot of commentary online. How do you think that shines a different kind of light on the women's game?

DANIELLE KANG: I think the women's game is getting a lot of good recognition. Not just the U.S. Open, but being able to play prestigious golf courses, having the history and people watching it and tuning in.

And especially during this pandemic. I know that a lot of people have time at home to watch now, and I know that the golf game itself has risen.

I'm very thankful that we are in the trending direction every year since I've been out here since 2012, but I only see positives, and can't wait to see what's in store for us in the future.

Q. Have you ever seen a fence on the range out in front of players like that, like you have this week?



DANIELLE KANG: Sorry, what?

Q. The fence on the range, have you ever seen anything like that?

DANIELLE KANG: No. I'm not thrilled about it, to be honest with you. Because I do a lot of wedge work. I do my wedge numbers with head covers every single day, so that's kind of bringing in a lot of obstacles for me.

So I've been going into tents and trying to hit wedges. I went over there, behind the trees over there and tried to hit it. I went across the range. I'm trying to find places where I do it, because routine is very important for me, and I want to be able to hit wedges.

I know that's because the range is shorter, right, but I guess I just have to wait for that last spot.

Q. What was your reaction when you first saw it?

DANIELLE KANG: I thought that was there temporarily. I didn't know that was going to be there the whole week.

Then I came on Monday and I said, Oh, is that going to go down tomorrow, and my caddie said no. We actually scouted the entire range on where I could hit wedges without interfering with other players' practice, because I have to dial in my numbers. Every single day it's different, and that's very important to me.

But I've got about two, three spots I have my eye on. We're good.

Q. Just to follow up on what you were saying about obviously PGA TOUR players kind of promoting this week and talking about it, just curious your thoughts on if you'd like to see a mixed event or concurrent events. Back in 2014 there was back-to-back Opens at the same venue. If you think something like that is overdue and just your sort of general thoughts on it.

DANIELLE KANG: I think the back-to-back event was cool, but I would think having a mixed event would be really interesting. Tournaments like Zurich having partner team, for us tournaments like Dow. But having a PGA TOUR and LPGA Tour player as a team competing against other players would be really cool and fun engagement for fans.

I don't know. There's a lot of sports betting going on, too, so I'm sure it would be really interesting and fun for a lot of people. It's not just for us, but having the growth of the golf game in general, reaching out to different types of fans and growing the game would be really, really interesting.

Q. Are you surprised it hasn't happened yet?

DANIELLE KANG: Didn't they used to have an event with the men and the LPGA back in the day? I wasn't playing. I heard a lot of positive things about it.

I haven't heard a negative thing about it, so maybe they should bring it back.

Q. We haven't seen you in a while. How have you been gearing up specifically for this major?

DANIELLE KANG: I've been trying to -- yeah, okay. To gear up I actually took some time off. I felt like my game was getting a little bit titter tatter. That's how I explain it. When I played this golf course I knew I needed my distance, I needed the height, my speed, I need that, and that's very important to me.

I didn't quite have that in Georgia when I played at Reynolds Lake, and I hit my driver like 225, about 225, and I was hitting things lower. That's something that I wanted to change when I came out here, or at least have in my bag because Cypress Creek is a big golf course. There's a lot of cover numbers, like 230.

There's going to be a lot of 4-irons in and 5-woods, and if I just could kind of capitalize on that 10, 15 yards, I think it'll benefit me just a little bit. So I wanted to tune that in during the few off weeks.

Q. How did you do that? Is that mechanics or is that gym work? What is that?

DANIELLE KANG: All of it, actually. It's rest, physical work, body work, physio. My physio hasn't been able to travel this entire year because of COVID, so it's a bit different for me to have like no body work done. It's every day I try to do foam rolling and do the workouts. It's shorter days, as well, so it's harder for me to cram in all the workouts and the practices.

So I tried to utilize the few weeks I had at home, and I guess it's more technique, as well. Technique has to be pretty timed up, but your body has to be able to do it.

Just working on the wedges was really important to me, so I think I've just been trying to dial in around the games, as well. Besides this golf course, I know that CME TOUR Championship, I know that golf course really well and I really wanted to be prepared for that one. Yeah, so...

Q. What's it like having Mav with you here this week?

DANIELLE KANG: It's good. He just had a really good finish, and then he's carrying around the snacks. Actually it's really cool to have him around, jokes aside, because he looks at all the greens for me, as well, and sees where they would be more grainy off the greens and try and hit this chip shot. I have him try and look at my lines. It's just having another eye out there. It's just helpful.

Q. What's the best piece of advice or observation he's given you so far?

DANIELLE KANG: Best piece of advice here?

Q. Yes, or observation or whatever.

DANIELLE KANG: Just relax. It's the U.S. Open; everyone is stressed out.

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

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