

U.S. Women's Open

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Houston, Texas, USA

Champions Golf Club

Inbee Park

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 75th U.S. Women's Open championship. Please join me in welcoming two-time champion Inbee Park. Inbee has 20 career LPGA Tour victories including seven major championships. Inbee, welcome.

INBEE PARK: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Talk a little bit about your preparation for a December U.S. Open Championship.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, it feels really different because I have been back in Korea for seven weeks after KPMG championship, and I was just kind of telling myself, I think it's about time for off-season, but I'm trying to prepare for something.

So that just feels weird when the weather is getting really cold. It's going to be -- Christmas is coming, but I'm trying to go to U.S. Women's Open. That's quite different. But at the same time, it was fun.

At least this year we get an opportunity to play. The U.S. Women's Open is a very special thing by the USGA, and that we get an opportunity is such a big thing for me, and I really didn't want to miss this tournament.

We are just having it in December, so it's great.

Q. Talk a little bit about the preparation in terms of two golf courses and how you kind of adjusted your practice schedule this week.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I did nine holes, eighteen holes and nine holes. I only get to see once of every golf course, so it's not -- I shouldn't say -- I wouldn't say it's enough studying of the golf course, but that's kind of the max schedule that I can really do before a tournament starts, because I've already played last week, and I'm trying to learn as much as I could in three days.

It is hard trying to learn two courses in three days. It's very difficult. But I'm trying to do my best, and I'm sure it's the



same for a lot of the girls. Trying to see what I can get from there.

Q. Even though there's been some starting and stopping to the season, you've played extremely well. Talk about the state of your game.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I have been playing very consistently and I have been playing really, really good this year, so I am very happy with the results, happy with my golf at the moment. Just really getting close to finally an off-season.

So yeah, really excited for that. It has been a tough year for a lot of people. Same for women's golf, as well. Everyone it has been the same. I think it's just good how we pulled off this year, so I'm really proud of the LPGA Tour and the USGA for putting up a tournament.

Q. For those of us who don't appreciate how big women's golf is in South Korea, can you describe what the difference is for you on a week here versus a week back there? Can you even walk without being noticed at home? What is it like for you here? Is it a more relaxed lifestyle for you here?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, yeah, of course. In America I don't think -- some very, very small occasions people recognize me, people who really love women's golf.

But back in Korea, obviously women's golf is a big sport in Korea and a lot of people know about women golfers. Yeah, I definitely get recognized by walking on the road, and even like trying to pay the toll in a drive-through and get recognized.

Yeah, it's just a little bit more tiring, but at the same time it's a little bit more fun. I really appreciate how much attention we get back home. Hopefully it gets to the same level here. That's what we are driving for.

Yeah, it's just fun living there, but at the same time, coming over here, it really gives me a lot more relaxed life, going to the groceries, doing everything that I want to do without getting noticed.

So yeah, it's -- I have two lives.

Q. What do you think back in Korea they would make

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of the hashtag women worth watching when they've already figured that out?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I'm sure really that's -- yeah, in Korea we get definitely a lot of attention and maybe we don't need that phrase. But yeah, I think these women out here are definitely worth watching.

Hopefully a lot of people get to notice that and get to watch us play. Yeah, it's exciting.

Q. Earlier this year Adam Scott mentioned that he looks to you as someone with great tempo and he tries to emulate your tempo when he's struggling. Just wondering what your thoughts are on that and if you have any go-to swing thoughts whenever you're trying to achieve that tempo?

INBEE PARK: Well, when I was growing up I always thought that Adam Scott was like my -- like an idol for having a great swing, because he always had a great swing and he was a great golfer. He is a great golfer, as well.

But yeah, it's always an honor to get a compliment like that. The rhythm that I have been having since I was a little kid, I haven't really changed. It's kind of a natural thing for me. So yeah, just lucky with that.

Q. When is the last time you played a tournament that had two courses?

INBEE PARK: Two courses? I don't know. I can't even remember when that was the last time.

Q. And given what the U.S. Open demands in the first place, how much do you think the mental fatigue, et cetera, will be a factor this week, considering how much time you would have had to spend getting ready for two courses?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, it is quite different, and obviously U.S. Women's Open golf courses are tough to learn one, but trying to learn two tough courses is definitely a big task for everyone this week. But with the sunlight we kind of have to do it.

They kind of, I think, have done it really smart that we play on two golf courses. It's just a busy three days that we have to spend before the tournament starts. The girls are going to be probably more tired than before because a lot of the girls probably played like 18 holes of practice round a couple times before they play.

Q. In a normal one-course Open, what would be your

typical routine in terms of practice rounds Monday through Wednesday?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I usually do like nine holes every day. I rarely play 18-hole practice rounds before the tournament starts because we play 18 holes Thursday through Sunday, and I usually do nines, but I had to play 18 yesterday.

I was going to play 18 twice, but my body was just too tired that I decided to nine, 18, nine. That will be enough.

Q. I was in Dallas last week and you played well, had a chance to win on Sunday. How important is that to have a good week before you come to a major, or does that make much difference, new city, new course? Can you carry anything over from that?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, of course. I always think that -- I always love to play a week before the major championship, trying to give myself some confidence with a good result. And it definitely does help the game because definitely it gives you a lot of confidence going into the major week.

It doesn't matter whether you're playing a different golf course, playing in a different city. It's just you're just kind of testing out your game, and you kind of know where your game is at and you know what to improve.

You just never know that before you actually play in a tournament, so I really take it as a good practice week.

Q. You travel all over the world with the tournament; is that nice to get to stay in the same state and get to be three hours away? Did you fly or drive? How did you get down here?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I drove down. I learned again that America is a big country. It is the same state but we're still driving four hours. In Korea end to end is four hours. So yeah, it's a big country. Yeah, we drove down.

It's great not to actually -- not having to fly, but it was still a long drive, yeah.

Q. To what extent is it in your mind that you guys have your two biggest purses in consecutive weeks, huge weeks in a usually off month for golf?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it is, yeah. It's different. But everything has been abnormal this year. No surprise there.

I'm sure all the girls are just thankful that we just get an opportunity to play these tournaments at least at the end of

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the year.

So yeah, just -- it doesn't matter what it is. Just this opportunity is appreciated.

Q. Obviously Texas and Korea are two very different places. I'm just wondering what's your favorite part about Texas?

INBEE PARK: My favorite part? I love Texas barbecue. I love the people. Yeah, and I have been playing really good in Texas. I love the golf courses around here. Yeah, it's great to be back.

Q. Outside of St. Andrews, are these the biggest greens you've played on the Cypress course? What's the challenge there?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, the greens are huge, so we're going to do a lot of long putts around these greens. The speed is going to be the key on the greens. Yeah, obviously we're hitting long clubs into the greens.

Long golf course, big greens, you're going to do a lot of long putts, so we're going to hit a lot of long clubs in.

Q. If you hit it close, you don't have long putts, though, right?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, of course. (Laughter.)

Q. I guess what I'm saying, is it for some reason harder to get it closer when you have that much -- from the fairway you see that much green?

INBEE PARK: Well, I always love the big greens because I'd rather putt than chip. I kind of like the setup of the golf course. I just wish it doesn't rain and it stays dry so the ball can just roll a little more and we get shorter clubs in.

Yeah, hopefully it stays dry.

Q. Big difference for you between Texas barbecue and Korean barbecue?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, they're different. The marinating style, the sauce is a little bit different. But yeah, as a meat lover, I really love Korean barbecue and the Texas barbecue.

Q. When you saw your pairing, what was your reaction? Pretty marquee group.

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I have been playing with So Yeon in a practice round last Tuesday and Wednesday and we

played Sunday last week together. I told her we're playing six days in a row together, so I know you missed me, but I think that should be enough of us.

Anyway, yeah, it's just fun to play with a best friend, and obviously play with Ariya is always fun. It's a good group.

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