

U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Southern Pines, North Carolina, USA

Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club

Yuka Saso

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to the 77th U.S. Women's Open presented by ProMedica. We are joined by our defending champion Yuka Saso. Earlier this week you returned the trophy; how has it felt to have been a champion for the last 12 months?

YUKA SASO: It was amazing. It was life-changing, and at the same time, to have the trophy for a year, it was awesome.

Q. How do you feel coming in this week? Where is your game, and what do you think of the golf course?

YUKA SASO: My game is okay. Golf course is great, very beautiful, very difficult, especially the greens. There's a lot of falls off.

Yeah, I think it's going to be a great challenge for all of us.

Q. What do you think is going to be the key for you this week?

YUKA SASO: Play good golf. (Laughter.)

Q. You've got your picture on the elevator of my hotel, it's on the front door, it's been everywhere. How has that made you feel?

YUKA SASO: Doesn't it make you tired looking at me? Yeah, it feels great. I just feel shy a little. But yeah, I'm grateful for everything that USGA has done. It's lifetime changing, and also once-in-a-lifetime experience.

So yeah, it's awesome.

Q. What has the biggest surprise been in the last year?

YUKA SASO: Biggest surprise? After winning the U.S. Women's Open? Getting to lift the trophy and also getting a card in LPGA.

Q. You were able to go back to the Philippines with

the trophy; talk a little bit about those few days.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, it's awesome. I got to visit very famous places with the trophy. It was awesome. It's the first time the U.S. Women's Open trophy going back to the Philippines.

It was awesome, and bringing back to my home club and seeing my friends back home after two years, and especially with the trophy, it was just awesome.

Q. Have there been any specific parts of your game that you have worked on leading up to this week?

YUKA SASO: Everything. I think in U.S. Open you need everything, not just one part of your game. I think everything has to be good.

Q. What about the mental side, being defending champion? Do you feel any added pressure, and how have you dealt with that?

YUKA SASO: I just want to enjoy and have fun. I actually don't know. I don't even know if I'm nervous or not. Yeah, I don't know.

Q. When you talked about working on your game, you said last year you had watched Rory McIlroy videos a lot. Do you still turn to those when you need some help with your game?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, that doesn't change.

Q. What have you seen now in watching those that has changed or is different?

YUKA SASO: I see some of his shots. He's trying to hit fade with his driver to be more consistent. I think that's a good way of seeing, okay, with drive you have to be long, but at the same time, you have to be consistent, and off the tee I think I've been learning a lot from him recently.

Q. You took home a pretty big check last year with your win. Did you buy anything that you had your eye on or really wanted to get?



YUKA SASO: No, I didn't buy anything. I didn't buy anything. Did I buy anything? No. Wait -- no.

Q. If you won almost \$2 million here on Sunday, would you buy something?

YUKA SASO: I want to save up a little. Yeah.

Q. Pine Needles, last two players to repeat did it here; do you feel a change of perception of you maybe coming into this?

YUKA SASO: I wouldn't compare myself to Annika and Karrie Webb. They're awesome players. They're legends. I will do my best, but whatever the outcome is, I'll be grateful.

Q. Does it change your mindset that you're kind of a favorite this year?

YUKA SASO: Am I? Not really. I'm just here to do my best. Hopefully everyone that watches us golfers enjoys it.

Q. Looking back at the last year, you've gotten to meet Rory McIlroy, you've gotten your LPGA Tour card, you went and watched Hideki play gold out in Hawai'i. What's the most memorable experience you've had being the U.S. Women's Open champion and how good does it feel to be back?

YUKA SASO: Like I said earlier, to get the LPGA Tour card and to play full-time on LPGA, I think that's the biggest memory that I'll have.

I think meeting Rory, too. I think that's the best part from last year after winning the U.S. Women's Open.

Q. Was it weird for you to get recognized by people as the U.S. Women's Open champion? Did you have anybody come up and be like, oh, you're Yuka Saso, and you're like, wait, that's me?

YUKA SASO: No, it's not weird, but I get very shy. But it feels awesome, calling by people, oh, you're the U.S. Women's Open champ. At some point last year they started calling me champ or U.S. Women's Open champ, not by my name. It's awesome, but I thought maybe you could call my name first and say U.S. Women's Open champ. But this year it's been good. So that's really awesome.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

