

U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Southern Pines, North Carolina, USA

Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club

Lexi Thompson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area, everyone. We are here with world No. 6 Lexi Thompson. Your 16th Women's Open appearance but your first one was right here as a 12 year old. What do you remember from that week?

LEXI THOMPSON: Probably honestly how nervous I was. I don't remember much of the golf course besides No. 10's tee shot because I just remember, again, how nervous I was, and I was so happy that it was raining because there was nobody out there following.

But it was just an amazing experience. I remember driving up with my parents, practicing my signature on the way, and just embracing it all.

Q. I was looking back at your pre-championship press conference, and you mentioned at the time that your favorite TV show was The Suite Life of Zack & Cody. A lot has changed. Talk about from then to now.

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, times have changed. It might be my favorite, maybe second. (Laughing).

Yeah, overall just maturity. I was 12 years old then and just have grown as a person and as a player and have learned a lot of things about myself, and it's just been a great experience.

Teeing it up here when I was 12 is the reason where I am today, because I realized then that this is what I wanted to do.

Q. Talk a little bit about the golf course specifically. Obviously a lot of really legendary champions here, but talk about Pine Needles.

LEXI THOMPSON: It's an amazing golf course. I got to play a full 18 yesterday. It's in great shape for us. Definitely important, I guess second-shot golf course; obviously keep it in the fairway is very important; not getting into the sandy areas.

But with the runoff greens and just kind of placing it center of the green sometimes taking your par and getting your two-putts and getting off the green is sometimes important out here.

Q. How would you describe the challenge of getting over the finish of last year's U.S. Women's Open?

LEXI THOMPSON: I wouldn't say that there was really any challenge to it. Didn't go the way I wanted to, but every time I tee it up there's always something to learn. I always say there's really no feeling, you're always learning. Every time I tee it up, there's something to be processed, to learn.

Yeah, it didn't go my way, it was frustrating, but it happens. I'm here.

Q. I remember last year talking about working with a mental coach at last year's U.S. Women's Open. I'm just curious, are you still doing that, or maybe something that Morgan said that you and Martin Hall, not only when you work on the technical aspect of putting, but you're working on that part, as well, what that looks like?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I'm not working with the same mental coach, but honestly just enjoying life more, realizing that golf isn't life or death as I took it sometimes when I was younger.

Just enjoying my time out here more, realizing that it's just a blessing to be out here. And having Martin Hall on part of my team, helping with my golf swing, but other than that just being such a positive influence in my life and having him around has helped me out tremendously in just getting through the past year of ups and downs and just going through that whole process with me.

Q. Is there anything specific that he shared with you that has been -- that kind of you wrote in your yardage book or stuck with you?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, obviously we've made a few swing changes, but besides that, just the positivity that he brings to me every time I see him. He's always there to

pick me up if I am struggling. He's always sending me YouTube videos of positivity and just reinforcing that.

That's what you need as part of your team, because golf can be a cruel game sometimes, so it's important to stay positive.

Q. You talked about patience here and mentioned the runoffs. How easy is it for you now at this stage in your career to play away from pins that might look accessible from the fairway but you know aren't?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, it's important, definitely, out here. Some pins might look accessible, but at the same time, if you miss it just by two or three yards, you can be off the green 30 yards away.

So it's important to just -- sometimes just play towards the middle of the green, take your 20-, 25-footer and maybe take the chance of making that putt or taking your par and getting off the hole.

It's the U.S. Women's Open. There will be tough pins, but there will also be some easier ones that you can play a little bit more aggressive at, but out here I'm sure it'll play tough, so I'm really looking forward to the challenge.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the purse this year; what were your first thoughts when you heard it was going to be \$10 million?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, it's amazing. Just to see the purse increases, of course at the U.S. Women's Open, that's huge for us, biggest women's championship that we have, so we obviously want to see that.

But I think just the women's game in general has grown dramatically even since I turned professional, so seeing the sponsor's game that we have out here on the LPGA Tour, seeing the purse increases, the TV coverage, that's what we want. We want to grow the game and leave it in a better place.

Q. In the men's game there's another Tour that's trying to lure the players away from the PGA TOUR with massive amounts of prize money. How would you feel if you were offered similar prize money for a women's Tour?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, I couldn't tell you; it hasn't come up to me.

Q. Your driver is probably the most potent weapon in your bag. Is this a course you can attack with your driver, or is it going to be taken out of your hands?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, I played the full 18 yesterday. I got to hit a good amount of drivers, which was nice. If it wasn't driver it was 3-wood, which doesn't go too much shorter than my driver.

So it's always a good weapon to have. Just getting in the center of the fairways and having the opportunity to hit the middle of greens out there is very important, but I can definitely hit some drivers. It'll all depend on how firm it gets throughout the week.

Q. Having short irons into these greens is a huge advantage.

LEXI THOMPSON: Very important, and the more height the better into these firmer greens.

Q. You mentioned you're working with a new mental coach. Who is that and what's the primary lesson he or she is imparting on you?

LEXI THOMPSON: I'm actually not working with anybody. It's just working on myself I would say is the bigger thing. I'm surrounding myself with the right positive people, with my family, my friends, and just having that small team around me to make me feel good about myself and just life in general that I'm just grateful to be here.

Q. When did you make the decision to shrink your team down?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, I think that's just important being an athlete in general, being a top athlete, just having that close circle around you that's always been there throughout your whole life and your career.

Not somebody who's -- of course you gain people along the way, but realizing the most important people in your life.

Q. You played here in '07. Since then there's been a restoration here; how different does it play now?

LEXI THOMPSON: Well, I don't remember the golf course. I don't remember the golf course in 2007. Unfortunately I literally only remember No. 10's tee shot. That was it. I didn't even remember the second shot.

Yeah, it's tough because I have played so many golf courses over the years, so I don't really remember too much. I remember that it was an amazing golf course. Unfortunate that we had to play in the rain every day in 2007.

But I'm just happy to be back. It's in great shape for us. It's a really good layout, so it'll be interesting to see where they place the tees and the pins out there with how firm it'll get.

Q. We hear from a lot of athletes that a goal eventually is not to define yourself by the sport that you play, and yet it strikes me that someone like you could understand that because it has been a huge, huge, huge part of your life for so long. How do you go about that? How do you take this massive overwhelming thing in your life and say it's not No. 1 or it's not the only thing?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, it's tough sometimes, right, because me, I grew up playing golf ever since I was five; grew up on a golf course, two older brothers that played, so it's just kind of what I was born to do and grew up around.

It's important to me to just realize that it's not all my life. Yes, I get frustrated with loss of events or troubled rounds, but you just have to realize at the end of the day you still have your family around you, still have the people that love you and love you no matter what.

That's the most important thing to always realize. It's just a game.

Q. You look at someone like Michelle who's scaling down, perhaps stepping away, do you feel like that perspective you have will help you transition to a time when this isn't like something you're doing all the time when you retire?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I think so. Michelle has done amazing things for the women's game, and just the things that she does off the golf course, branding wise for herself, as well, it's inspiring. I'm happy for her, she has a family now, and I think she realizes that like I am there's more important things to life than just golf.

Yeah, that will definitely help, but of course like I'm all in every time I tee it up, I want to win, but there's definitely more things to life.

Q. Sort of similar question, you mentioned kind of enjoying things outside of golf more recently. What are some of the things that you unplug with or are sort of used to maybe not focus fully on golf?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I mean, other than golf, I think a lot of people know that fitness is kind of my go-to. It's my outlet, and I just absolutely love it. Maybe hopefully own a gym one day. It's definitely a passion of mine.

But just honestly being around my family and friends when I do get the time at home or go on little vacations just to get my mind away from the game and unwind. I think sometimes that's more important than grinding on the practice facilities. It's more helpful to get your mind to relax and body a little time off.

Q. What does it feel like to be in the Women's Open?

LEXI THOMPSON: Oh, good question. It feels amazing. Being an American, being in my own U.S. Women's Open Championship, it's the highest honor, and to be able to see girls like that out here supporting us and supporting the women's game, it's truly an amazing feeling.

You look like quite the golfer so I'm sure that you'll be out here one day.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports