

U.S. Women's Open

Monday, July 3, 2023

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

Nelly Korda

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming World No. 1 Nelly Korda. Nelly, I know this was your first time playing. Based on what you saw on TV and expectations, just talk about what the course was like for you.

NELLY KORDA: Amazing. The views on every hole, I feel like you get to a hole and you're like, this is my favorite view, and then you get to another hole and, no, this is actually my favorite view.

So very scenic, amazing golf course, so much history, and so grateful to be out here.

Q. What is your favorite hole now that you've seen them all?

NELLY KORDA: All of them. I like them all. I mean, 18 is incredible. Kind of seeing it for the first time, Tiger hit that shot around the tree.

And then obviously No. 7, too, the par-3. Actually I almost made a hole-in-one there. I haven't made a hole-in-one since I was I think 11, but I was over it and I was like, hole-in-one, hole-in-one. It would be one for one. It landed probably an inch away from the cup.

Q. What did you hit?

NELLY KORDA: A pitching wedge.

Q. Describe what you think would be the most challenging aspect?

NELLY KORDA: I think all of it. It's pretty crucial to obviously hit the -- it's a major championship. It's crucial to hit the fairways. The rough is pretty thick in some areas. It's a little bare in others.

Knowing where to miss it is a proper -- to be around the golf course where you don't short-side yourself. I think that's very crucial around here, too, is just knowing where

to miss, which is hard.

You're like, oh, obviously you're trying to hit it, be aggressive and play really well, but when you're just not on top of it, you can't pick where you miss.

Being lucky. I think that all kind of needs to come together, but probably the smallest greens I've ever seen. It's an amazing golf course. I think every part of your game has to really click.

Q. You mentioned the small greens, and that always comes up when the men play Opens here, that it's so unusual compared to other elite courses. How does that affect your thinking when you're standing over an approach shot?

NELLY KORDA: Well, we played Baltusrol and those were some of the biggest greens, and now we go to Pebble and these are some of the smallest greens.

You have to really dial in. You have to really concentrate out here, especially with the bouncy poa. You don't know what kind of first bounce you're going to get, so just making sure that you're taking your time over every shot, being very diligent with your routine and just with the process with your caddie, too, making sure that you talk over every part of every hole.

Q. Of all the holes you saw today for the first time, which green seemed the smallest and was sort of the most difficult to hit?

NELLY KORDA: There was one kind of diabolical green on the back nine, a par-5.

Q. 14?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. That one was like -- especially coming in. It's not reachable for us in two unless it's moved up. With a wedge you can easily spin it.

That left side, it's pretty narrow, so I think that's going to be a really, really hard green.



But honestly, all of them. If you're coming in, if you're not striking it well and you're coming in from the rough, it's going to be super tough.

If you're coming in with long irons, too, on the bouncy poa, it's not like Baltusrol where you can run it up. I feel like here you're going to have to fly it on to the greens properly and they're small, too.

Q. What's the first thing that comes to mind when people say Pebble Beach?

NELLY KORDA: I would say scenic. The views out here are impeccable. Some of the biggest houses I've ever seen, too. It's a little bit distracting being on the golf course and looking at all the properties here.

Q. What tournament do you think of?

NELLY KORDA: I don't think I can think of any tournament.

Q. Something tells me you don't watch a lot of golf on TV.

NELLY KORDA: Not really actually. You're right. I don't really think of any golf course. I don't think you can compare this golf course to any tournament. It's Pebble. Now I understand it, playing it for the first time.

Q. In your own words how meaningful is it that the Women's Open is coming to a place that's so iconic?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, iconic. It's amazing to see we're making these massive strides forward, not only with the increase in purses but the venues we get to play, the rich history that we just get to be a part of. I think that's our little piece of history, as well.

Q. Being the adventurer you are, did you go to the edge of the cliff on 8?

NELLY KORDA: No. I looked to the side and I was like, oh, my God, Jordan was crazy. I saw that they actually grew out the grass there, and I was like, that's probably because of him.

Q. I know we've been talking a lot about the challenges of the course. How would you describe the challenge that Pebble presents relative to other major courses the LPGA plays?

NELLY KORDA: I think obviously the weather, just being here on the coast, adjustment of yardages. It doesn't fly as far typically.

Then I would say just the slope. I had so many shots where the ball was below my feet, above my feet, and then on top of that, you're hitting into small greens, so you have to adjust with the slope and hit the green at the end of the day, and poa annua greens, if you're -- at the end of the day those greens do get bumpy.

So making sure you stay patient is going to be very crucial this week.

Q. Talk about learning the course. Was there any research you did before getting to Pebble, and what have you learned since playing about the track?

NELLY KORDA: Not much. I know my caddie did. He talked to a couple people for me. I don't really want to know too much about a golf course until I'm out here and I can learn it myself because maybe they process their information differently to what I process and I see the golf course a little differently.

So I don't like a lot of opinions before I get to see it myself.

Q. What's the most challenging hole for you out here?

NELLY KORDA: I'll tell you on Thursday. I think they all have -- they're all tough in their own way. If it's a tee shot, if it's a green. They're all such great holes. I love 7. I think it was really cool.

Actually I played 7 on EA Sports. That was the one hole my brother -- we always played Pebble. I don't know what it was. I don't think it was PGA back in the day, Tour. Maybe it was Tiger Woods. We used to always play Pebble, and my favorite hole was always 7 on that game.

Q. You were talking about playing this for the first time. What type of adjustments do you feel that you're going to have to make, especially after practicing this round?

NELLY KORDA: Adjustments, I think more of figuring out your yardages. They definitely do fly from -- the air is a little heavier here, so I would say my balls are probably flying close to seven to ten yards shorter, depending obviously on the wind, as well.

So adjusting to that, adjusting to the weather, and then the slopes. You're going to be hitting a lot of shots with the ball below your feet and ball above your feet.

Q. How are you feeling physically coming into this week?

NELLY KORDA: Good, yeah. I feel really good.

Q. Are your parents here this week?

NELLY KORDA: They're coming in tomorrow, yeah.

Q. You've probably been asked this over the years, but how has that shaped you, the competitiveness of being in a family with two athletes as parents and now siblings, as well, how you and your brother sort of feed off each other?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, when we played Monopoly as a family it got really heated. We're definitely very competitive but very close. We've always said that we wouldn't be where we are without each other and our parents, the guidance that they've given us.

I think for us, we're super grateful for all of that. They're still our go-tos. Even my sister and my brother. They're the first people to message me and vice versa, and we're always there for each other.

Q. Did you play much tennis growing up, and does their experience translate into that competitiveness, or how does the tennis background sort of spill over to golf?

NELLY KORDA: I think it's just part of like an individual sport. I think that's what kind of helps like the mindset of it.

My dad is actually really, really talented. He was a scratch handicap when he stopped playing tennis. It was a sport where we could all play together, all be together as a family.

Tennis is just so one-on-one that when my dad stopped playing, they loved that we were all outside together and spending time as a family.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about your mindset leaving Baltusrol and what you worked on when you got home?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, obviously pretty disappointed. Flew out on Friday right after the round.

I think it's just golf. You constantly go through it just like the roller coasters of it. I think it just makes you appreciate the highs more, I would say.

But making sure that I was mentally ready to come into this week. I just put my head down and grinded. I love that about golf. I think no one knows everything and no one is an expert, and I think that this is the beauty of the game is

that everyone experiences highs and lows.

Q. What specifically did you grind on? What did you leave Baltusrol frustrated with?

NELLY KORDA: Everything. I had a two-way miss at Baltusrol, and I was not making any putts, too. I spent a lot of time on the range.

Q. With Jason?

NELLY KORDA: No. No. No. Not Jason. With my dad, David Whelan, and actually a lot of help from Jamie Mulligan, as well.

Q. You're feeling good, but it makes me wonder, have you been able to establish any kind of a flow of tournament golf in what seems like a stop and start nature of last year?

NELLY KORDA: Of last year?

Q. Of just getting back into a full stretch, flow of tournament golf.

NELLY KORDA: I was actually feeling really good at the beginning of the season. Actually I played a lot of golf. I did four weeks in a row playing Chevron, LA. I played the International Crown and then I flew straight to New Jersey.

After that, I just didn't feel 100 percent with my back. Obviously it sucks to miss a couple weeks, but health comes first from what I've learned the past couple years.

I think it's just golf. It's sports. It's life. You've just got to adapt.

I took some time off. I always give 120 percent whenever I'm out here.

Q. Something you touched on a minute ago about the prestige. Money is great and purses are fantastic. How do you differentiate the value of big money and big courses? Which is more valuable to the --

NELLY KORDA: I don't play this for money. I play it because I love golf.

Q. But in terms of being in a place like Pebble and going to Chicago Golf and Pinehurst down the road, is it more important to have bigger venues in terms of bringing attention to the women's game, or is it just prize money that would excite most people except you?

NELLY KORDA: I mean, it does obviously excite.
Everything comes hand in hand. I think when we get put
on these incredible venues and you raise the prize money,
that just raises attention. I think everything comes hand in
and everything has to work together to form something
beautiful. I play golf because I obviously love it.

I think me getting to do it as a job is just a plus.

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