

U.S. Women's Open

Sunday, June 2, 2024

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA

Lancaster Country Club

Yuka Saso

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming champion of the 79th U.S. Women's Open presented by ally, Yuka Saso. What is it about the U.S. Open?

YUKA SASO: I don't know. Like I said, I think it's the familiar faces that I see like Julia, all the staff, USGA staff. They just made me feel very welcomed, and they take good care of me. Maybe that's the reason why.

Q. Somebody told me on Tuesday that they thought from tee to green this place reminded them of Olympic Club. Did you see that at all?

YUKA SASO: Well, the slopes, yes. But I think Olympic is worse.

But I think this golf course, they gave us a first cut. I think that made it a bit -- a tiny bit forgiving. I don't think it's the same.

Q. Talk us through today a little bit. Were you looking at the leaderboard? Obviously you knew where you stood. You were coming from behind.

YUKA SASO: I hit a good tee shot on 1 after three days. I think I played pretty stable. I made double bogey on 6, though. I think that happens every time. I think that happened to me in 2021. I think that double is good luck.

I was hitting my driver really good. I don't think I missed a lot of fairways today. I putted really good. I switched to this new putter, Odyssey. I've been putting really well with that, and I think that helped a little bit, as well. I think I just stayed patient and enjoyed playing golf.

Q. You talk about patience a lot. Where does that patience come from? Where did you learn it do you think?

YUKA SASO: Playing the first U.S. Women's Open.

Q. Do you ever catch yourself starting to become impatient, and what do you tell yourself in those

moments?

YUKA SASO: Well, I can be impatient with other things. But I think -- I don't know how to explain it. Just stay in the moment and trying to focus on every shot, trying to do my routine I think helps me calm down a little bit and be patient.

Q. I think your caddie said he had a conversation with you after the 6th hole, kind of refocus. Do you remember what he said to you, and did it help you?

YUKA SASO: No, not that one, but I remember before we started he talked to me, whatever happens today, he'll be very proud of me. I think I remember that all the way. I think that kind of words of him helped me a lot.

Q. When you were making your birdies on the back nine, those four birdies in five holes, you looked on TV very strong. You looked like you had taken it to a new level and everybody else was falling all around you. How did it feel in that moment? Every shot looked so powerful and clutch.

YUKA SASO: I'm not sure how the other players played. I wasn't looking at the scoreboard. I wasn't too relaxed to be able to see the scoreboard. But like I said earlier, I just tried to be focused on my routine and my game, and I think that's why I looked like that on TV. I think it's a good thing that I looked like that.

Q. Morgan told an interesting story on the broadcast this afternoon about you practicing your swing in front of a mirror before school. Does that sound familiar?

YUKA SASO: Mirror? Yeah. I do that.

Q. Like when you were younger?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, yeah, at my house we have this big mirror. It's like an air swing or shadow swing, however you call it. I did that a lot of times. I didn't know how it meant, but I did that a lot.

Q. She said you'd do it before school for like hours.



YUKA SASO: Oh, no. Who said that? Morgan Pressel?

Q. Maybe I misunderstood. It was a story from your dad. It looked like you put a lot of work into it --

YUKA SASO: Yes, when I was younger but not too much now.

Q. I'm trying to get to how you grooved your swing. What went into it?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I did that mirror thing before I'd go to school, and after I'd come back from school. I'd stay on the golf course until it gets dark because I live inside the golf course when I started. Yeah, I think just staying a lot of times on the golf course or holding a golf club, pretty much 12 hours I think helps a little bit.

Q. How are you going to celebrate this win?

YUKA SASO: Probably celebrate it with the USGA staff and all my team up here.

Q. Any specific thing that you want to do?

YUKA SASO: I don't know. Probably talk to them.

Q. We don't see you get teary very often. Can you explain that tearful emotion, what this win means to you having to wait so long for your second?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, since 2021 I haven't won after that. I think it just makes it special because after a long wait, and I wasn't expecting to win the U.S. Women's Open, every time I -- last time, too, I wasn't expecting it, and this time, too, I wasn't expecting it. I think that's why it made me a bit emotional.

Winning just makes you look back in all the things that your family and your team and my sponsors, they supported me throughout good or bad, especially ICTSI or KPMG or especially Callaway.

I talk to them so much. I've been requesting a lot of golf clubs. They've been -- all the support that they did, very grateful. Every time I made a request, they would answer right away.

I think those stuff helps, too. Like I said, all the people here at the USGA is -- it feels very comfortable.

Q. How have you maintained your self-belief over the last three years as you've waited for the second one?

YUKA SASO: I think I really wanted it, as well. Not just to get a second win but also to prove something to myself. I haven't won in two and a half or three years. I definitely had a little doubt if I can win again or if I won't win again.

But yeah, I think those experiences helped a lot, and I think I was able to prove a little bit something to myself.

Q. There were a bunch of good scores in the morning but a lot of the afternoon groups, specifically the last three, really struggled with the exception of you. What did you see from the golf course setup today, and what do you think is the reason that you were able to succeed where your fellow leaders weren't able to?

YUKA SASO: I'm not sure. I think just sticking to the game plan, routine -- most importantly, the routine that I've been doing the whole week. I think that helped a little bit to hit good shots and not miss a lot.

Q. On No. 17, were you aware you were up three at that point, and what goes through your head when you hit a putt that far by in that situation?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I saw the leaderboard there, and I saw that I was leading by three. I thought I was going to do something like on hole No. 6 again. It's just a difficult flag, pin, hole location.

Again, I think it's a good challenge, and I told myself it's a challenge, and if I am able to hole this, then I think I'll be able to give myself a good chance on the last hole.

Nothing too serious. I just did my routine, and luckily I holed the putt.

Q. You talk about this routine that you have. Can you describe what it is that you do?

YUKA SASO: Get the distance, get the wind and try to get where I want to land the ball, wait a little bit until my playing partner hits, choose a club and commit to it.

Q. Does leaning on that just help you stay kind of calm?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I think just following my routine makes me focus more on what I have to do, so I think that helps a little bit to make myself focus, stay focused.

Q. When did you put your putter in play?

YUKA SASO: I changed it last year October in Japan. As soon as I tried it, I switched right away.

Q. What was it that you liked about it?

YUKA SASO: I just liked the feel. As soon as I tried it, the feedback that I got, I thought that was it. I started using it, and I changed the grip, as well. I changed to from a normal grip to a long one. I just really like the feel and the look, how it looks.

I don't know, it just suited my eye. That week, as well, in Japan I putted really good. I didn't take it out of my bag.

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