

U.S. Women's Open

Monday, May 26, 2025

Erin Hills, Wisconsin, USA

Erin Hills GC

Yuka Saso

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming two-time U.S. Women's Open and defending champion Yuka Saso. Just some initial reactions to the golf course?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, thank you for having me. Very difficult (smiling). That was my initial thoughts.

It's kind of a linksey type, very windy. Yeah, I think it's going to be a good challenge.

Q. You got out here early, played Saturday, Sunday, today. What's your prep like for a major championship and especially the U.S. Women's Open?

YUKA SASO: Just trying to get to know the golf course as much as I can. The conditions here can be very difficult, especially at the U.S. Women's Open.

Trying to familiarize myself a little bit more so I came early, but yeah, I need a few more days.

Q. What is it about the U.S. Open setup that brings out the best in you?

YUKA SASO: I don't know, maybe how tough it is. I think it makes me focus more. I should be focusing every tournament (laughing). I think it's so difficult that I have no time to relax, which I think makes me focus deeper. I think that helps.

Q. I know winning the first U.S. Women's Open was life-changing for you. What did winning a second one do?

YUKA SASO: It was also life-changing (laughing).

Q. In what way?

YUKA SASO: I could call myself a two-time major champion, and better than that, two-time U.S. Women's Open champion. I think it's a great tournament to have beside my name, and -- I don't know, maybe because I dreamed of winning this, and winning it twice is much

better.

Q. Did you feel more pressure after winning a second one? Did it feel any different after winning the first one?

YUKA SASO: I think -- you asked if I was nervous, right?

Q. The pressure to follow it up --

YUKA SASO: I don't think I felt any pressure after the first one or second one. It was more about the challenges that I had after that. I mean, everything was great. Everybody was calling me "champ." I'm a winner of the U.S. Women's Open. But also the challenges after that. I moved here to America where I'm far away from home. I needed to get used to life here in America. That was one of the challenging parts of the first one.

But the second one -- what was the challenging part?

Q. Maybe there wasn't.

YUKA SASO: Nothing much, I guess. I don't know, after winning, I thought I could be better. I always feel that every day anyway. I was happy; that's for sure.

Q. When you achieve a dream like that so quickly and then do it again also in pretty rapid succession, what continues to motivate you when you check off some of your big goals in your life so early?

YUKA SASO: What motivates me? Win another one.

Q. So another U.S. Open win or another win in general? Do you want to just keep adding titles?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, it would be nice to win another one, but any other tournament would make me as happy. But obviously if I win again, it would be more special. Yeah, winning keeps me motivated.

Q. Looking at your game this season, your putting seems to be working really well for you. What have you found with your putter that has really led to your



success on the greens so far in '25?

YUKA SASO: I've started this -- how do you call it? Like a formula or like a routine with my caddie. We started doing a tour read early in '24 just to help me and my caddie communicate better on the greens. I think that helped a lot. And working with my coach, with John Graham. I've been working with him since 2023 summer, and from then, my putting improved so much. Just continuing that, I think, that's one of the reasons why I'm putting good.

Q. You talk about major championships bring out the best in you mentally, but they also seem to bring out the best in your physical game. What do you think it is about your game that really translates to this kind of golf and how difficult this kind of golf is?

YUKA SASO: I don't know, I've never played here -- I played Saturday, Sunday and today. It's a long walk. I'm trying to get myself ready, trying to have a good recovery every day. It's going to be a long day of golf, so it will be a long patience day.

But yeah, I think just enjoy and not to hurry things I think helps me to be in that moment and not to feel too pressure or feel overwhelmed too much.

Q. U.S. Open courses can get harder as the week goes on. You were telling me from Saturday to today you've seen that. Can you talk a little bit about that?

YUKA SASO: Yeah, but I think I'm used to playing long because I've played U.S. Girls, U.S. Am where we practice Saturday and Sunday and we start on Monday, Tuesday stroke play, and then we play match play from Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and if you get to finals you play until Sunday. I think the USGA prepares me very, very well for this event.

But I think I'm used to it, and I think I really need to come here early and really need to get to know the golf course as much as I can in a short period of time.

Q. How would you compare your preparation for this year's championship compared to the way you prepared on last year's course?

YUKA SASO: Nothing really changes. I tried to go to the golf course early as much as I could and take notes as much as I could, practice as much as I could and get ready for the tournament Thursday. Nothing really changes.

Q. Where do you keep the trophy, or where was it for the past year?

YUKA SASO: At my place, my house.

Q. You have two?

YUKA SASO: Yes, I have two, so the replica is in Japan from 2021, and then the trophy from last year, I brought it to Japan and did a trophy tour, and then I brought it to the Philippines, as well. I already did the trophy tour there, but I still did the trophy tour by myself. Then I brought it back to Dallas where I live here in America and did some Dallas tours. Then I cleaned it and put it in the box, and yeah, it was in my living room inside the box.

Q. Where did it go in Dallas on the tour?

YUKA SASO: Oh, just everywhere I go. Wherever I go. It was in my car. Nobody is going to steal my car. They were like, oh, what's that, must be very important. So nobody really --

Q. Was it in the box in your car?

YUKA SASO: Both, yeah, one time in a box and one time in my passenger seat.

Q. Buckled in?

YUKA SASO: Oh, yes, of course. Of course. But not the bottom part, just the top part.

Q. Not the base?

YUKA SASO: Not the base, yeah. Just the upper.

Q. What part of your game have you spent the most time on since the Chevron?

YUKA SASO: Oh, a lot. A lot. Pretty much everything from off the tee -- yeah, everything.

Q. Does that translate to you were frustrated with everything, or is that normal?

YUKA SASO: Well, there was for sure frustration, but I think I understand well that golf is not a perfect game. I can't be perfect with it. I think the grinding part is what I enjoy the most. Everything was not going well, but I think I know where I want my game to be or I know what I needed to do. So I was not happy but also having fun at the same time, which is kind of weird.

Yeah, the results were not where I wanted to be, but I think not playing well makes me grow a bit more to be more patient and just to trust myself and try to build that momentum. But that doesn't -- how do you call it? That

doesn't make me feel like, oh, I can't play golf anymore. I don't feel that way.

Yeah, it's weird, but I don't know how to explain it.

Q. As a spectator, we want to see how excited you are playing in the field. Which hole is your favorite here and what hole is the most difficult?

YUKA SASO: I think on Sunday, everybody would enjoy hole 16, 17, 18. That's for sure. What do I enjoy? I don't know. I've been struggling. It's definitely not easy. I wonder. Hmm. 9 is a fun hole, hole 9, the par-3 I think is fun. Hole 10 is also fun. Have you walked the golf course yet? There's a big slope. I wasn't expecting that. It's in the yardage book, but I wasn't expecting it to be almost 100 yards of dip. Also, some par-5s, like reachable par-5s. What hole is that? Sorry, I don't remember -- 14 I think is also fun. I think this golf course has a lot of slopes that you can use, and 14 is one of them.

I hit a 3-iron yesterday, I hit it on -- there's a bunker on the left side. I hit it close to that area, and then my ball finished on the right side of the green, and I was like, how did I start on the left? So I'm still figuring it out, but that hole is very fun. 14 and 9.

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