

# Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 3 August 2021  
Saitama City, Saitama, Japan  
Kasumigaseki Country Club

## Yuka Saso

## Bianca Pagdanganan

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. Yuka, you're making your Olympics debut, how important and honored are you to be here playing in the Olympics for the Philippines.

YUKA SASO: First, I'm just thankful and like at the start of the tournament I'm so glad that I'm here and able to play in the Olympics. I'm really looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: Same question to you, Bianca. Just how proud are you to be here at the Olympic games?

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: Of course I feel like it's every athlete's dream to be able to play on the biggest stage of sports, so it's definitely an honor to be playing out here and definitely representing the country, it's really different when you're playing for something bigger than yourself, so yeah, I'm just going to try and enjoy this whole week and see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

**Q. You've had experience playing before together for your country in the Asian Games and being successful as well. What do you think you can bring from that to this Olympic experience?**

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: I would say like playing with Yuka. I mean, obviously the Asian Games was team event and this is going to be a little bit different than that, but I think this is, just basing it off of experience, but I feel like at some point these kind of tournaments really try to bring out the best in each of us and that's something really exciting, especially this week, the Olympics, like I said, it's the biggest stage in sports, so hopefully we can kind of keep that thing going on for us, just trying to push each other to play better this week.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, I said this before too, Bianca is like



an older sister to me and she really takes care of me as well. So it's really fun and it feels good to be with her again here in the Olympics.

**Q. Yuka, I feel a little bad about this because a lot of people have talked about you, your swing and Rory McIlroy's swing and once media members get one thing that's all they want to talk about. But I overheard you the other day raving about his swing and it sound like it's something that you continue to look at, continue to rave about. How close or similar do you think your swings are? Is there something about his swing you're still trying to mimic, what do you love about his swing so much?**

YUKA SASO: Obviously Rory's swing is absolutely great. I think if you ask all the players here they will say the same thing. Obviously his swing is one of the swings that I think you should copy or get an idea from. I think how he uses the ground force, that's what I look to now.

**Q. Yuka, curious to know how your life has changed after that win at the U.S. Open and does it sort of like create more expectations for you, especially this week to try and win a medal for the Philippines?**

YUKA SASO: Private life, nothing changed. But inside golf course it changed a lot. A lot of people saying that I'm the U.S. women's champion, they don't call me by my name anymore, it's sad. But for me it's more about enjoying golf, it's not about the trying to pressure myself that I have to be, I have to play good or I have to be better, it's not like that for me. The experience for me is really important that I don't really want to miss the fun. So, yeah, like I always say, I'm just trying to have fun and learn every day.

**Q. Yesterday your caddie got heat stroke. How is he doing right now and how is it to compete in this Olympic games for tomorrow?**

YUKA SASO: Yeah, he's not -- I think he is better now than yesterday. I'm really hoping he gets better soon. I want to give him some quiet time to rest. It's sad that I won't be able to play the Olympics with him, but for me it's



life, I mean health comes first. So, yeah, I'll just try and enjoy and my coach is going to, I'll have him as my caddie for four days so just try and enjoy and learn.

**Q. Curious what were your impressions of the gold medal by your weight lifter last week, does that sort of like give you added motivation or inspiration to try and acts sell this week as well to win a medal for your country?**

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: Definitely the win was very inspiring and motivating for us athletes. There really aren't a lot of Filipino athletes competing at the Olympics this year, but again, like it's really such an honor and I don't know, I guess it's more of her being able to kind of break barriers. She won in a sport that isn't really dominated by females, so it's just, I mean it's kind of the same for golf. When you think about golf you think about it being a male-dominated sport. So just seeing her kind of break these barriers it's very inspiring and I guess it just also pushes us to work hard. I've seen her journey on social media and it's crazy. Like she posts a lot of videos of how she practices and she trains and I mean we probably train as the same hours a day, but just being able to see how everything has paid off it's definitely something inspiring for us. Hopefully we get to bring honor for the country too.

YUKA SASO: Same. Yeah. It's really great to see how she won the gold medal. I think golf is a little bit different, it's longer and we have to fight the heat and all that. So I'm just trying to enjoy and hopefully get the medal, but that's not in, that's not really in my head right now, I just want to enjoy.

**Q. Has the schedule of events being so chaotic from one continent to the next, to the next, does that wear on you or do you feel fresh right now? Is the schedule a lot?**

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: Honestly, I feel like I've gotten so used to traveling that I don't even try to think about that anymore. I think it's kind of nice that we just kind of play golf week after week. I don't know, it's just, you try to take everything day by day that you don't really have time to worry about those kinds of things. Of course there's some days when it kind of just hits you. But then again it's all part of this whole process. So I feel like it's, it takes a lot of mental toughness, a lot of getting used to, so I wouldn't really say that -- I don't know okay for tournament weeks I don't really think about it. I feel like it's the week after when I kind of have a few off days I'm like in bed like oh my gosh I'm so tired. But when I'm playing, I'm competing it's just different, like my mind is just in the game and I'm in the zone and so I don't really have time to worry about anything else.

YUKA SASO: Yeah, with the COVID thing right now it's really hard to set a schedule, especially for me because I have been playing here in Japan and I just got the card on the LPGA. So it's not easy, but it's golf, so I'll try and enjoy it and get the most experience out of it.

**Q. Yuka, curious, when you won the U.S. Women's Open, it was obviously big news in the Philippines and across Asia. But just curious if either one of you guys were able to win a golf medal do you think the impact would be the same kind of impact for your country and the region?**

YUKA SASO: I don't know. Is it going to be a big impact?

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: Could be.

YUKA SASO: Well, I think it will be great to win a gold medal. But, yeah, for me it's more about what I have to do now to play my best golf. So like I said, I'm just trying to enjoy and trust the process and play my best golf.

**Q. Bianca, you're known as one of the longest hitters on the LPGA. Are there any holes on this course you think you can use that to your advantage?**

YUKA SASO: I out drove her yesterday (laughing).

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: I would say like some of the par-5s are pretty reachable. I was watching the guys last week and I was kind of surprised the with how far they were playing the par-5s. I don't know if that's a normal thing to play a par-5 640 yards, but I played the hole, and I don't remember how long we played it, and I didn't think I was going to get there in two and I actually did and I was a little bit surprised. I was like, it seems a lot further, but like I don't know, I feel like the fairways are a little bit narrow this week, so I feel like accuracy would obviously be very important. They grew up the rough and I would say that those are spots that you really don't want to be in. So I guess there are a few holes that I might be able to use that to my advantage, but, yeah, I guess a lot of accuracy and target golf would be a pretty important deal.

**Q. Yuka, are there any holes that particularly fit your eye that you think you might go well on?**

YUKA SASO: Yeah, like Bianca said, the course is pretty narrow and it's pretty long for me too. So stay in the fairway and get on the green and make the putt.

**Q. Yuka, in what way and when did you make a decision to represent Philippines rather than Japan?**

YUKA SASO: I've been always representing Philippines since I have an amateur, it's in the records. I grew up in Philippines, I was born in Philippines. You know, I wish I could represent two, but I think in the world right now I think it's impossible. So you know, if I can represent any country then I would, yeah.

**Q. Are you feeling any difficulty to play for Philippines in front of the Japanese people? Because obviously you have lots of thoughts for Philippines and at the same time for Japan. So how do you balance the feeling for both countries?**

YUKA SASO: Well, I think I -- no, no, I don't get that feeling. I chose to be with the Philippines and I don't think it's the -- I don't think when we are here we think about, oh, like, oh, Japan team is here, I don't want to be here. We don't think like that, right? We came here to play golf. We're not here to think about, we are here in Japan, I feel conscious, we don't feel that way. So, you know, just trying to enjoy and forget about those that and think about playing golf.

**Q. Curious for the two of you, when you guys were kids growing up obviously golf wasn't in the Olympic games yet. But did you guys like had any Olympic memories or grew up wanting to become Olympic swimmer kind of thing, you know, do you have any stories that you can share with us?**

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN: Growing up golf wasn't in the Olympics, so I wasn't -- I mean I would watch like a couple of sports, I enjoy watching swimming, but I wouldn't say I dreamt of being a different athlete. But when I was in college and they first or I think I just graduated from college in 2016 when they first brought back the golf I was like, that's kind of cool, maybe one day I'll get to represent the Philippines. And I didn't think that I would be able to do it this soon in my career, but I mean, it's such a great experience just being out here, especially growing up I just used to watch the Olympic games on TV and now I'm actually in it playing in the event, so I think that's a pretty cool experience, just looking back on my whole journey and where it's taken me.

YUKA SASO: For me, to be honest, I've never really thought about being in the Olympics, so growing up I always watching golf majors, so I think it's a different major, it's more than golf, I think. So try to enjoy the Olympics, yeah.

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