

# Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Saturday, 7 August 2021  
Saitama City, Saitama, Japan  
Kasumigaseki Country Club

**Nelly Korda**

**Mone Inami**

**Lydia Ko**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. Two time medal winner, Lydia, take us through the day and then also what it means to be here again on this stage as a medal winner.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, overall I felt like I played really solid today. There were a bunch of us at tied third and with this beautiful weather I think you've got to expect that everyone's going to play well so I think I tried to play my best out there, have fun and before I teed off today Sean my coach said something along the lines of, what's meant to be is going to be. So I think that's what I tried to think today. The Olympics is a very special occasion where obviously, yes, we play for our country on a daily basis, but we're really playing for them, this means so much then just for us. So yeah it's a huge honor to be able to bring two medals for New Zealand and to be a two-time medalist in the last couple games. It's a very, it's safe to say I've really enjoyed my two times at the Olympics.

THE MODERATOR: Mone, with all the pressure and all of the excitement around golf here in Japan, how satisfying is it to be here silver medalist on the stage?

MONE INAMI: This Olympic games was held in Japan and I'm so grateful that the Japanese to win this medal. I'm so happy.

THE MODERATOR: Nelly, the incredible season continues. You came in as the No. 1 player in the world with lots of momentum, but you were able to sustain that and win the gold medal. Now that you have the gold medal around your neck, how does that feel?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, honestly amazing, it feels amazing. After today Lydia was playing really well, so was Mone, they both played super well, so we were all bunched up there. It was very stressful, but I kept it together, I

fought pretty hard. And as you said, I've had a pretty good stretch of events, but it doesn't mean necessarily that you're going to play well, so you kind of try to put the expectations to the side and just go out and have a nice fresh week, enjoy the Olympic experience because it's such a unique and fun experience now doing it for the first time. And as Lydia said, you play for more than just yourself, you also play for your country. So safe to say I really enjoyed my first Olympic experience.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Start of the year if you would have been told that you would win your first major, go to No. 1 in the world, become an Olympic champion would you have thought that possible?**

NELLY KORDA: No, I would tell the person to leave. (Laughing) Yeah, honestly, it's crazy. I think about it now and it's -- you know, with sports it's so different because you're constantly looking ahead, you're constantly looking ahead for your next event, one event you finish and next is like it's British or it's Scottish. So like it never really gets to kind of sink in in a sense. So I think I'll look back at the season after the season is done, but right now there's still a lot of big events coming up, but when I do look back it's just crazy.

**Q. Secondly, since you mentioned the word stress, I wonder if you could just talk about, A, what it's like having Mone make that big run, Lydia side by side, and you're coming up to a reachable 17, storms, how you dealt with the whole last hour and a half or so, even though it was only two holes?**

NELLY KORDA: Obviously I was nervous, but during the rain delay I was just with my sister, we were relaxing, kind of chit chatting on the ground, in the clubhouse and I think that really helped a lot just to kind of not think about it and just to kind of take a step away in a sense during that rain delay and have some fun.

**Q. What were you guys chit chatting about?**

NELLY KORDA: Everything, honestly. She played really



well today, so we talked about that too a little.

**Q. Along those same lines, when you, after the delay and you went back out to 17 and you watched Mone make the putt, what were your emotions at that point?**

NELLY KORDA: I was just focusing on kind of executing that. I kind of had to hit a soft flop shot over the ridge to kind of get it close and I was just really focusing kind of on executing the shot and just trying to stay as focused as possible on myself and to stay present.

**Q. Lydia, how does this feel different if at all from 2016?**

LYDIA KO: I don't think it feels like that different. In the sense that I'm very honored and privileged to be able to bring a medal and for New Zealand. I think we just had, we just broke our last record, which in 2016 I think that was the most medal count we had within New Zealand and then a couple days ago we just broke it and then for me to be able to add to that is obviously a huge honor. Yes, I wish I could have brought a different color medal, but all, overall just to bring the medal for New Zealand I hope everyone back home is proud and I felt so much love and support for them, so this is for New Zealand.

**Q. When you were first starting out in your golf career I know you got to wrack your mind maybe a very long time ago, when did you first learn how to maintain your composure, even when you had some chasers starting to come up toward the end of the tournament?**

NELLY KORDA: I'm still learning. Honestly every situation I guess is different, you're put in a different situation each time you're in contention. So I don't know, my -- it's kind of funny, but my parents always say that I'm a lion because I've always ever since a young age I've always been super determined and super focused on what I want. So I think I've just in a sense I feel like it's built-in side of me.

**Q. Mone, what club did you hit to the 18th in regulation and what did you think when you got to the bunker and saw what kind of lie your ball was in?**

MONE INAMI: My second shot went over, so I had that in my mind. So that's why I could not make a full swing, so I think that was why the distance was short and it went into the bunker. So I regretted why did I not make a full swing. However, I tried to determine the situation to make up for that.

**Q. We're going to focus in the end on the medal and all that stuff like that, but coming off the double at 7, to run off three straight birdies, what kind of pride do you**

**take in that and how big of all of them was that putt on number 8?**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I think I was very frustrated with myself and it was, I was not happy at all, so I told myself there's still a lot of golf to be left and I'm very proud of how I handled the next three holes or even just the entire round after that.

**Q. The Olympic games you said it was a dream of you for a young girl, but back then golf was not part of the Olympic games, why did you want to be in Olympic games with golf?**

MONE INAMI: Well I wasn't really specific about golf, but I thought that it would be really impressive to participate in Olympics. I never thought I would play in Olympic games with golf.

**Q. At what point did you realize that you had a one-shot lead on Mone, if at all, if you ever had a chance to look at the leaderboard toward the end there?**

NELLY KORDA: A one-shot lead like going into 18? Well, we waited on our second shots so I think as I walked on to the green that's when I realized it.

**Q. What would you like to say to your grandfather who gave you the inspiration?**

MONE INAMI: I got the word perseverance from my grandfather and I always have that in my heart. There were a lot of pars that saved that margin and also there were many important shots that I had to hole in. So I reminded myself of that word and I was able to execute on my play. I would like to tell my grandfather, I'm still hanging on and doing great on the course.

**Q. Lydia, you've played some pretty magnificent golf at times yourself and I just wanted to see where you would put what Nelly's done this summer compared with things that you've done with what In Bee's done, and so many others over the years?**

LYDIA KO: I think it's really hard to compare what one player's gone through and what one player's done to another. I think at the end of the day what, how Nelly's played all season has been absolutely amazing. Winning three times this year and then on top of that being a gold medalist here in Tokyo and a bunch of Top-10s and all that. I could go on and on and on. I think it's been super impressive. I was just talking to Nelly earlier today that I played with her quite a lot this year, I played with Nelly and a few weeks after I'll play with Jess and then I'll be back

with Nelly. So I've been getting the Korda sandwich, but I love it. And sometimes I'm playing with them and I feel like I'm spectating, it's super impressive and I'm sure she's going to keep going on this hot stretch and I think it's great for women's golf and it's not easy playing as the No. 1 in the Olympics, I did that in Rio and for her to fight through those kind of pressure and expectations and to end up winning the gold, I think it shows what kind of class player she is. So, yeah, I'm sure this is the start of many more majors and many more wins for Nelly.

**Q. Is this the biggest win of the year, biggest win of the career?**

NELLY KORDA: I think every win is special in its one way, I wouldn't say one win is more special or one win is bigger. Each win has a significant meaning to me, something that I've gone through or whatnot, but I wouldn't say -- I mean obviously it's amazing to be a gold medalist, to even just be an Olympian is and to represent your country, I mean you have to be the top of the top to come to the games. So but I wouldn't say one win is more special than the other because they all are special.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MONE INAMI: I wanted to win the better color, that means silver. So at the very beginning I lost the opportunity to win the gold because of my failed shot and so forth, but still I'm delighted.

**Q. Also, since this Olympic game is held in Tokyo and you win the medal now, for the future of the growth of the Japanese golf world, how do you evaluate that?**

MONE INAMI: For me I don't feel this is real, still kind of can't believe this game was held in Japan and Japanese player win the medal. So for the future of the golf players for the younger generations who wish to play the golf I hope such a generation of younger golfers will come out. Thank you.

**Q. Before the playoff today I think you got stronger when you were on the edge. Today you knew that you had won the medal and it was a playoff to determine the color of the medal, so in a way was the playoff today different from the previous ones?**

MONE INAMI: Well, compared to the previous playoffs I wouldn't change any of the moment because I knew I got the medal and it was either I'm going to win or lose for different colors with the medal. And I was able to do the playoff with Lydia Ko, who is my favorite player and it was an honor.

**Q. What kind of off-season did you have last year and what do you think it will look like after November?**

NELLY KORDA: Honestly, I didn't have an off-season because our season ended so late in December and then the Tournament Of Champions was held in January, so I honestly probably took a couple days off and then got back to work. So and I was injured before that, so I was injured from KPMG and I didn't come back until U.S. Open. So I kind of had an off-season then. But, yeah, I mean usually what off-season consists of is you just evaluate how your year went and see where you can improve on. So that's usually how I do it. But in a normal off-season I would take two weeks off and then kind of start thinking about golf again.

**Q. I'm blanking on the injury and the schedule. So you would have missed a month and a half? I'm trying to think of from KPMG to Houston?**

NELLY KORDA: I think I missed over a month KPMG to U.S. Open. But don't quote me on that, I don't really remember, I tried to forget about that.

**Q. What were you recovering from?**

NELLY KORDA: Just a low back injury that I tweaked at KPMG.

**Q. After the first round.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. First round. I was playing with Lydia too.

**Q. Secondly, I don't know if you have a good answer for this, but if you think about either post U.S. Women's Open and what you're doing now, what triggered it? What are you doing well or what has led to this do you think?**

NELLY KORDA: I honestly have no idea. I don't know. I hope I find out because then I'll keep doing it. I don't know, you get on these waves in sports where sometimes everything's just going well and then sometimes you're working so hard and nothing is going well. So right now I'm riding it out and see what obviously there's always going to be a challenge, golf always humbles you, so I'll see what I can always improve on and go from there because the game's always -- the game's always evolving, players are getting better, so you're constantly learning and you're constantly working harder and harder every year.

**Q. Next week, who is all there?**

NELLY KORDA: Just my sister and my family. Not my

parents, unfortunately.

**Q. I know you said you don't want to compare victories, but you talked about stress. Can you compare the stress you felt today to anything else or everything else?**

NELLY KORDA: I was pretty stressed in Nona. That was probably the most stressed I've ever been in a final round. Yeah, I mean, no, I can't compare it not at all because it's different. I don't know, I had a -- it was a different kind of stress in a sense. I don't know how to explain it, I wish I could. The most at ease I've been has been at Meijer with that win.

**Q. Do you think it was different because it's the Olympics or was it something else?**

NELLY KORDA: I mean, yeah, I mean you're playing for something way bigger than just yourself, you're playing for a gold medal, you're playing for your country and I mean it's an amazing achievement, so obviously that kind of, it was in the back of my head, yeah, so it's a different feeling, but I feel like as a golfer or just an athlete you go into every competition or every whatever tournament wanting to win, you have a one goal and that's to tee it up and hopefully make the last putt on Sunday. So that's every tournament I feel like is kind of in a sense you stress yourself out the same amount. I'm going to grow old very fast.

**Q. I have a question for Lydia. So I was thinking about because many South Koreans are still considering you as Korean so I thought maybe there is something like interesting dynamic when you won a medal and you kind of like taking medals away from Koreans. I thought that was some kind of interesting or awkward feeling. How do you feel about that?**

LYDIA KO: I don't think I'm taking medals away from South Korea. I'm very proud to have my South Korean background. Most off-season I go back to Korea and I get to see my family, most of my relatives are all there, my parents are right now in South Korea. Every time I go play in South Korea I get so much love and support from them, so, yes, even though I am playing under the New Zealand flag, I feel very grateful that a lot of the south Koreans still support me. And I say I'm a Kowi, like a Korean/Kiwi and I'm very proud of that and I think both cultures, they have helped me to grow to be the person that I am today. And no, I will never forget like where I'm from and where my roots are. But, yeah, no, it's I guess an iffy situation, but, no, I'm both proud to be a South Korean born, but I'm also very proud to represent New Zealand and have this medal for them.

**Q. You made such a charge today, was there a moment when you felt like, Okay, I've got Nelly here, I've got this and if not, how impressed were you with the ladies sitting next to you performance?**

LYDIA KO: I don't think there was any performance where I said, Well I got Nelly. I think at the end of the day I was just trying to focus on the best golf I can play and in my mind I kept saying what's meant to be is going to be and I just got to be fully committed and trust my shots and just execute the way I am trying to envision in my mind. When I'm out there playing I wish, I hope everyone's playing well and I think that's just great for golf. The golf fans and everyone watching, they want to watch good golf and I think that was kind of the case this week, the finish was exciting, there was a playoff, there was a bunch of birdies coming in and that's what they're looking for, right? So I feel like we put on a good showcase, I got hot in the middle stretch of my front nine to kind of put myself in a position and in any other circumstances if you come fourth, fifth or whatever it's a really good result, but because you know that there's only going to be three medalists I think you're grinding a little harder and you're like every shot really counts. There were moments that, man, I said, Man, I wish it had gone better, but no matter what you always feel like you can do better. But to be able to stand on the podium at the end of the day, it's a huge honor and to be able to do that for New Zealand I'm very proud of that.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MONE INAMI: When I was playing or when I'm playing I really do not feel pressure or jitters, but at this time Tokyo 2020 was hosted in Japan and winning the medal as a Japanese golf player was a huge honor for me. Also to the future golfers, I think I was able to show them some good dreams. For next week I will be on the Tour again and when we have a spectators, those new golf players I hope that they will come see the tournament and I look forward to their support and cheering at the golf course. Also, this.

**Q. This morning were you able to have fun, were you able to enjoy the moment?**

MONE INAMI: Yes, I had fun from the morning, but before the start my right back was hurting a little bit, so there was a little bit of an awkward feeling in my back. It was a little hard to breathe for me. So I had to have that massaged right before the start. So that's why in the front nine I wasn't able to do as well. So I didn't think I was able to go on the podium, but for the back nine my putting became better and I was able to get some birdies.

**Q. Talking about your future you talked about the future expectation but once again can you remind that**

**you want to pursue the Japan No. 1 and then later on you want to focus on the next step but today you won this medal with the global top players, do you have any kind of mind change going forward about your future expectation?**

MONE INAMI: Well, I am not thinking that way now because I pursue my golf here in Japan and would like to establish my position as the superior seeding forever, that's my goal, but if this is not the situation, and if, yes, I would like to participate in the majors, the golf majors.

**Q. The putt at the 17th hole after the rain interruption, I think all the players were able to hit the green. Did you want to put more pressure on the other golfers by making good putts?**

MONE INAMI: Not really, I was just focused on trying to improve my score instead of trying to put pressure on the others. So today we're once again reminded of their great shots.

**Q. Did you do any extra training when you were younger to have those precise shots?**

MONE INAMI: My father, who has always been by my side always says that shots are important, so from the first day I took my shot, my club I was able to make a good shot without seeing any shots. So I always loved doing the shots.

THE MODERATOR: That concludes our press conference. Thank you.

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