

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Chaska, Minnesota, USA

Hazeltine National Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Lydia Ko joins us now at the 2026 KPMG Women's PGA Championship. Lydia, welcome back to Hazeltine in your 14th appearance in this championship. What do you think of the golf course?

LYDIA KO: You know, the golf course is great. I think it is one of those courses where it's fair, everything is in front of you, you know, it's not tricked up in certain ways.

I think apart from the weather we had yesterday's it's meant to be really nice, and maybe a little bit of wind over the weekend, so, yeah, it's going to be fun.

In all honesty I really can't remember much of the golf course. I stood on the first hole on Monday, and if someone told me it was a redesigned hole I would've said, oh, yeah, that sounds about right.

So not many memories to kind of draw back from, but at the end of the day you just have to play really solid golf over the four days on any given golf course. Yeah, I'm excited.

Q. Talk again about the Hall of Fame. Wondering what it meant for you when it happened and if it changed your career in any way.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, you know, I was only one point away when Nelly and I were actually in the playoff in Bradenton. You know, just the way that I lost by three putting and the way she finished for us both to get into the playoff was a lot of drama in the span of like an hour or so.

Honestly, when that was done I was pretty heartbroken for feeling like you're almost there and you feel it in your hands and then it is gone. It's I think emotions that I had really never felt before.

After that I really didn't put myself in contention that much. Every time I sat in front of media that was the question.



Like you're only one point away. I feel like Nelly is going to handle that much better than I did, to be honest.

But would I have imagined myself to go into the Hall of Fame by winning gold in the Olympics, probably not.

So, yeah, you know, I think at the end of the day things happen for a reason. It wasn't my time in February, and few months later in the summer I was able to clinch that last point. I think when it doesn't happen you think your life will be dramatically different to be honest. That's how I thought.

I felt like, okay, me being in the Hall of Fame, that is like the ultimate thing. But when it does happen, you're obviously very grateful and it's a mix of a lot of positive emotions.

But really my life hasn't changed much just because I'm in the Hall of Fame. I'm not an inch taller. I don't walk around a little taller. I'm obviously very proud of my career, but it's -- it really hasn't been that dramatically different.

Yeah, just to be able to excel at your job and at your work at the highest level, not everybody gets to do that. I think that's probably the most grateful thing and the takeaway that I take from it.

But it is very exciting that Nelly is only two points away. I truly believe it's around the corner with the form that she's been in. That success is not only for her but a great moment for our Tour and women's golf and women's sports.

So, yeah, it's exciting. It's exciting to witness that. Inbee was the other player that I -- since I've been playing was in the Hall of Fame. So to see somebody else get into the Hall of Fame is really awesome I think.

Q. You have answered a good part of my question, but when you get a lifetime award like that, career award like that, how do you do not to feel like, okay, I've done what I have to do? How do you keep motivated? How do you keep wanting to compete and winning more things?

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

LYDIA KO: I think as long as I'm teeing it up whatever week it is, I do want to play good golf. I want to put myself more in contention.

I was talking to my mental coach about all this and where I am mentally, how I approach tournaments, how I approach rounds, the feedback I get from events. I think in ways I'm a little bit more open minded. If I'm not hitting the ball great or not putting well, I might try a few things new or try a few things on the golf course and figure it out.

Every round can be a learning opportunity for the tournaments coming up, so I think in that way my mindset has changed. But I still get nervous on the first hole and the last hole. You know, I missed the cut by one at both The Chevron Championship and the U.S. Women's Open.

Honestly, it sucks. I think there is no denying that. It doesn't matter how many times you play those championships, I know that there is less ahead of me than how many I played before.

So, yeah, I still want to play well. I don't think there is a secret on how I keep motivating myself. I do know that probably the time when I don't feel a lot of these emotions is probably when I should step away because I'm prioritizing other things. And that's not a bad thing, right? There are so many different cycles of life.

I think I'm still super excited for this week. Obviously this is one that I've never won before. Juli Inkster was like, are you going to be at the dinner? I was like, I haven't won this event. So maybe I could join her and Danielle and some of the other players at the table someday.

I know that just by me winning this week or this championship it's not going to be a big difference from me not doing it.

So, yeah, I think it's just a different mindset and I think that is just the nature of people's points in their careers.

Q. Has the grand slam become the new Hall of Fame for you? Is that the new question everybody likes to ask you?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's kind of -- and it's a weird kind of thing because some players played when there was only four majors; now we're playing in five. Is four a career grand slam? Like I think if there is five, five is it.

I've still got two to go and obviously one is already past, so I don't know. The Hall of Fame was probably not one of my biggest goals. I think when I got close to that, yes, that

was on my mind. I always thought the career grand slam was something that I really wanted to do.

Now thinking about it, it's very hard. It's hard enough winning five majors, to win all different ones is pretty difficult I would say. And to be at your peak at the majors every time it comes around in the span of four-ish months, it's hard. Nelly winning the first two is almost unheard of in ways.

Yeah, I think this is -- has always been a goal of mine, but like I said earlier, like if I get in -- accomplish the career grand slam I'm not going to be like oh, yeah, I'm better than myself two years ago or five years ago.

People are like, you can't retire until you do that. I'm like, I don't know if it's going to happen. If they told me if I played the next five years and I would do it, then, yeah, maybe I would.

There is no guarantees, and I might as well just enjoy it while I do get to play these amazing championships.

Q. How do you shut out the noise and put that to the side and focus on the task at hand?

LYDIA KO: I've had a lot of questions this way throughout my 13 years on Tour, and I think even as an amateur it was like, when are you turning pro? Are you turning pro now? Like it was like that. And then it's like, when are you finishing your first LPGA event as a member? And then it's like, are you going to break Morgan's record? There is always something.

I think it's great to have a goal. It's always great to have something to reach towards, too. I think that -- and that's the same for no matter what ranked player you are.

So, yeah, I think I have gone through all that so now I deal with it better and it honestly -- like I hear it and I'm not a robot where I can just let it go out the other side, but I just don't think I let that affect me as much on how I approach these events.

Q. What impresses you the most about what Nelly is doing right now?

LYDIA KO: I think her worst finish was at Dow, and like she had a 50% win rate and she won then went second, second; it was something crazy like that. It's pretty unheard of I know in this day and age. Scottie Scheffler probably is the only other player that has kind of had that streak.

Scottie is another one you're like, oh, wow he's



50-something-th and then you look on Sunday and he's one or two shots away from Rory at the Masters. I was like, how? It's pretty amazing.

She has I think a lot of like hard work ethic and I think that shows. But she does it very productively. I think Jeeno said in a press conference maybe within the last couple weeks. Kind of gets -- like Nelly gets her job done in the morning or afternoon and she's out of there, whether it's resting or working out, and I think that's a very good approach to things.

I think that's one of the secrets to having a very long, sustainable career. If you put in your 110% and being out at the golf course for 12 hours a day every day, like, yeah, it can work and I'm sure that hard work will pay off, but at the same time you have like no life.

I think that's what she does so well at. She's a great sister to Jess and Seby and I'm sure a great daughter to her parents. She goes to aunt mode to Greyson. I think having that balance is so important.

That's honestly something I've really learnt to do better the last few years, especially meeting my husband. I think you meet people along the way and things happen and it gives you a better perspective on how to approach things.

You know, I've gone from being a teenager where I hated myself for shooting 79 at the New Zealand stroke play; now I hate myself a little less. It's not like it hurts less, but I don't let that affect me as much. I still care, but it's just like I think with age and experience those things, like no one can really take away from you.

I think those are probably some of the biggest keys that I've learnt in these last 13 years than how to stroke a putt. You know, I think it's more complex than that. Now I can kind of understand when people say there is life learning lessons that you can get from golf outside of just being a good athlete.

Q. Curious, thoughts on the Hall of Fame, points system where it's in no one else's hands?

LYDIA KO: Someone much smarter than me came up with this 27-point system. I know it has changed over the years. Like even the World Golf Hall of Fame I think criteria has change, and I think that's why Lorena got in a few years ago, about the ten year stuff.

I have zero opinions because I don't even know where to start with all this. But I think there is a lot of players that have careers that are like Hall of Fame worthy, and, yeah, it's just really hard.

Like I have no idea like how this all happened and I'm grateful that I made it to the 27 point entryway and have won a couple more events after that, but, yeah, it's above my pay grade. I was never good at maths.

And all the calculations and all that, it's probably not something that I could even have an opinion about to be honest.

Q. There is people above your pay grade?

LYDIA KO: Maybe. I don't know. Yeah. It's personal, so I can't --

Q. Curious you mentioned February to December where you were a point away. I can look it up, but do you remember how many tournaments where it was in your mind you were one point away?

LYDIA KO: I was like two points away for a while. I had won the 2022 CME Group Tour Championship, which was our last event of the year; '23 was kind of like -- I was player the year for first time in seven years, and just that itself was a feat.

I think when I got that win that was when there was a lot more conversations about when are you going to get in the Hall of Fame. It was a lot of that. I was winless in 2023. Won once on the LET and that has no direct affect to our points system.

So, yeah, it felt like -- I struggled so much in 2023. I think I finished 100 in the CME rankings that year. I was honestly by the middle of the year not worried about being in the Hall of Fame because I was just trying to break par.

For a pro golf for say that I think it's -- people are like, what? But I was at a point where I couldn't even shoot 72 or whatever the par was.

So for me getting in in the Hall of Fame or being in the Hall of Fame, that player was very far away from that player that I was in that moment in time.

So it was like that was really like a far reach, but did I win the first tournament of the year in '24, our Tournament of Champions, and that got me one point away. It was from that point to like July, August, so like maybe six-ish months.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks Lydia. Appreciate your time.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.

