

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2017

Tuesday, July 11, 2017

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 2017 U.S. Women's Open Championship. Very happy to have you all here with us this week. Look forward to a great week of golf, championship golf.

First up this week, it's my pleasure to welcome Lydia Ko of New Zealand. She's playing in her 6th U.S. Open already, if you can believe that. Finished 3rd at CordeValle.

Lydia is the 2012, U.S. Women's Amateur champion. At the time the second youngest women's Open Champion in history.

I know you came for media preview day and got to play the course. Can you give us a few thoughts about the golf course and the test that awaits the players this week?

LYDIA KO: The greens will be the biggest part of this golf course. It's super important to hit the fairways with any U.S. Open. The greens are really big here and even though they're big, just because you're on the green doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be an easy two-putt or a birdie.

So, I think getting the speed right and -- because you might be a long distance away, I think that's going to be super important. It's in really good condition.

When I was here a month or so ago it was in good condition then, too. I think it's going to be a great week for us.

THE MODERATOR: Seven Top-10 finishes this season. Can you talk about how you're feeling about coming into this week?

LYDIA KO: I've had a few solid finishes that I think have given me confidence for this big stretch of events. My last Top-10 I think it was at the Meijer, which was a few weeks ago, but, I've had those Top-10 weeks.

I feel like a few rounds I've been able to put it altogether and I think that's what I've been, a little less consistent this year compared to last year and with anything we're always trying to maintain and get better



and get more consistent.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it to questions.

Q. Lydia, you have been working very diligently on your putting. Can you explain to me what you are working on and you have a coach that I don't know that a lot of people know for your putting, can you tell us who he is and what you guys have been doing?

LYDIA KO: I've been working with Garrett the last few events. I first got to meet up with him and spend sometime with him at the Meijer, again, and I think that was probably one of the best putting weeks I've had all season.

That was definitely nice to see the results kind of kick in. But we did actually a lot of work on speed control and I feel like speed control is an aspect of my putting where I feel like can get better at and with every golf course the greens are different, the grass is different so it's important to be able to get there on Monday or Tuesday and be able to do some speed drills to kind of get used to what the green speeds are like and even if we have the perfect line, if you don't have the good speed to match that up to, there's no point in having the perfect line I think.

Even yesterday we did a lot of speed drills and just getting confident and basically balancing that with some shorter ones, too.

Q. (Inaudible). Does it bother you this.

LYDIA KO: I mean we had protesters before and in Phoenix and the LPGA and security and everybody was able to handle that. As players we were out there pretty much playing golf.

I think that will also be the same case here, everybody will do an amazing job to make sure we focus on our game and just practicing and playing and everybody has their own opinions. I have my opinion and everybody is free to have their own opinion but for me, I think I'm just going to have a great week here, enjoy it and I'm excited to play the U.S. Women's Open and not think it in a political way for me.

Q. Lydia, did you have any reservations going into the tournament about not participating or have you

heard from any of your peers that had any kind of reservations about participating in this tournament?

THE MODERATOR: Any reservations, any concerns about playing this week or anything else?

LYDIA KO: I've always been excited to play the U.S. Women's Open. I had my best finish at this tournament last year. I was leading going into the final round and it was an experience like no other, especially being a USGA Champion, winning the U.S. Women's Amateur.

To me it's more excitement. When I first got to see the course here through the media day I felt this was going to be a fantastic golf course for us and come in here this week and seeing it in such -- in a great conditions, I think I'm more excited than concerned about.

Q. Two questions. First, at this Open, how is your motivation back to No. 1?

LYDIA KO: To me, I'm trying to be more consistent, put myself in contention and put myself in better position. I think that's more on my mind than thinking about the rankings. The rankings and the awards at the end of the year I feel like they all come after, you know, how you perform at the events.

The girls that are 1, 2, 3, right now, they're playing such amazing golf and you can see that I think we've had 17 different winners out of the 18 events and just shows the amount of talent on the LPGA right now.

To me, I'm just trying to be more consistent and get better at the aspects that I think I need improvement in my game. So, yeah, to me I'm more focusing on myself and my game rather than the rankings.

Q. The second question is Ai Miyazato announced retirement. Do you have any impression or play with her that you would mind sharing with us?

LYDIA KO: I think Ai is one of the nicest players on Tour and really one of the nicest people on earth.

When I heard her announcement of retiring, there was a little aspect that we're all sad that we won't be able to see her but now -- I was excited that we'll be able to spend this much time with her in her last year on Tour. We're definitely going to miss her.

I think she's done a lot for golf in Japan and not only in Japan but in the women's game, too.

I think we've got a lot to thank her for and I think we're all happy for her and wish her all the best in what she does after this.

Q. Lydia, as you probably know Brittany Lincicome told the Chicago Tribune that she hopes Donald Trump stays away from the tournament this week so it won't be a debacle and be about us and not him.

Do you agree with her? Thank you.

LYDIA KO: Like I said earlier, everyone has their own opinion and I think Britt probably didn't say it so literally but, you know, I don't know exactly when or if President Trump is going to come here.

If he does, I'm sure he's here to see some great golf like he did before. If he does, that's cool. But everybody I think is free to have their own thought and to me I have no idea when or if he is coming so we'll just have to see then.

Q. I assume you and your team probably broke down the KPMG Championship and the week after and the weekend. I'm curious what y'all discussed and maybe what you and Gary worked on in preparation for this event.

LYDIA KO: There wasn't like a huge difference between like the first two days and the last two days game-wise but I wasn't able to get anything rolling with the putts.

All my par putts were rejecting the hole which is never a good thing. And, with that golf course, it's really important to stay on the fairways and I was missing some so it was just not a very good combination.

But, you know, Gary told me, hey, don't get too caught up with all the negatives because there are positives in there and I took a few days off.

We had some people come, friends come over for July 4th and to me I just took the first few days just to relax and not thinking about it. I found a new hobby. I build like Lego houses. It says for 6 to 12 year olds. I took my mind off of golf.

But then when I was training, trying to get prepared and play some different golf courses where I would be able to see different things and, yeah, I think it was good to take those couple of days off to refresh and then get energized for this stretch of events.

THE MODERATOR: We certainly look forward to watching you play this week. Good luck. We wish you well. Thank you for joining us today. Lydia Ko, thank you.