

CPKC Women's Open

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Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Earl Grey Golf Club

Lydia Ko

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the media center at the CPKC Women's Open. I am joined here by three-time champion, Lydia Ko. Lydia, just talking about this event, what are you most excited for, especially after being a three-time champion, having a lot of memories here?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I always loved coming back to Canada, one of my first few events as an amateur playing an LPGA event.

I was able to get a sponsor invite in 2012 and won in Vancouver, so that was -- winning in 2012, '13 was kind of like my route to the LPGA, so always grateful and a lot of great memories coming here.

The Canadian fans have always been very supportive. Yeah, love being here. It's a new golf course, so getting adjusted to this course.

Yeah, Canada is a very special place for me.

Q. Touching back on some of those memories you just mentioned, describe some of them to us, especially thinking back to your wins in 2012 and '13.

LYDIA KO: I think at that time in 2012 I had won the U.S. Women's Amateur a couple weeks prior. I was kind of on a career high and excited to play an LPGA event alongside the best female golfers.

I think the coolest things is Christina Kim came up to me on the putting green at Vancouver and gave me a big hug for winning the Women's Am. I was like, wow, I would love to be part of this I guess group of golfers.

You know, now I'm here today, and every time I come back I think the fans have been great and one of my best memories is I played last -- I played first as a one ball last year on the last day, and so many people came out to watch me play.

I honestly thought it would be just like my caddie and I and



my sister and husband that was there watching, and there were so many more people than I anticipated. I've gotten a lot of love in my results but also from the fans.

Q. We're also celebrating this year the 50th anniversary of this event. Talk about the importance of this event, especially like you said, all the memories you have involved with it. How important is this event to you?

LYDIA KO: I think Golf Canada and everybody involved has always put in a lot of effort to make this championship what it is.

I think we get to go and play some of the most beautiful and great golf courses all around Canada, and whether it's hospitality to the volunteers, to our dining and everything, and even the Golf Town trailer they have this week, I think they have continuously elevated this event.

It's definitely think it's one of the favorite spots for all of us players. Obviously a little unique this year with the Olympics in a couple weeks. All in all, I think this is one of the best stops for us on the LPGA.

It's great that we can celebrate the 50th year. I honestly thought the Canadian Open has been on for longer. Just feels like there is a lot of history. Seeing kind of the entryway into the putting green and all the past champion's names there is pretty cool.

To have the trophy next to my name on Paul's bib is awesome as well.

Q. I was in Vancouver when you won that first one covering you; one of the first people that talked to you after amateur and victory. What is it about Canada that just sparks you in these events?

LYDIA KO: I think Canada reminds me a lot of New Zealand, especially some of the rural, residential areas. I feel like when I'm in America I know I'm in the U.S.

When I go to some areas of Canada, it really feels like home. So I think that's always something that I've kind of



taken away from being in Canada. I don't know why Canada has given me so much love and given me the opportunity to be a past champion three times, but, yeah, I always love coming here.

Golf has grown a lot I think in Canada since even my first time here, and it's obviously -- that's the help of players like Brooke who are putting the Canadian flag up on the leaderboard week in, week out.

So there is just a lot more attention to golf. Yeah, I don't know what about Canada that brings out a lot of positive and smiles, but always enjoy my time year. There is always a lot of good food and food is a big key for me, so, yeah.

Q. What is your take on this course and what do you think it's going to -- how a winner is going to be delivered here this week?

LYDIA KO: I think the fairways aren't the narrowest I've seen, but they're on the narrow side. The rough has gotten thicker I think even since yesterday. So being on the fairways is key.

These greens aren't massive, so if you are in the rough it could be quite difficult to get close to them or get on the greens.

Yeah, I think being really consistent off the tee, that's going to just give you a better chance of hitting the greens. So tee shots are probably the most important factor around here.

Q. Do you feel like you maybe had a bit of a tale of two seasons? You came out of the gate so hot and maybe not some of the best results of late. Is it one of those things it's just golf and you go through ebbs and flows?

LYDIA KO: It's been weird. If I look back at my past 11-ish years I've had seasons where I don't really start great and then I start playing well more towards the fall.

And so it's kind of almost crept more forward as the years have gone by. But just to say you have a good stretch of events at any point in the season is very good. As players our goal is to be more consistent throughout the season and that's part of our job.

But even though the last few weeks haven't been great I feel like I've made a lot of progress since May where I was really struggling and had a lot of the questions.

I feel like I'm going in the right direction. We have our last

major and the Olympics coming up, so it's definitely moving in the right direction. With golf, I don't think there is anything guaranteed, and you could miss five cuts in a row and win the next week.

That's what Chanettee tee did I think winning Portland last year. That's just the beauty and cruel side of golf and that just shows how difficult it is.

Yeah, just going to keep working at it. Yeah, feel like I'm going in the right direction.

Q. Completely off the golf course, saw an in it Graham, you and your sister and Brooke and Brittany had a nice time over in Evian. Can you talk a little bit about your relationship with Brooke, friendship with Brooke, and maybe how she's been able to handle everything that comes with this tournament over the last couple years?

LYDIA KO: I was just talking to her agent, Brian. I was like, busy week? And he was like, yeah. You know, busy for him obviously means it's very busy for Brooke.

She is the star of Canada and I think she has the most wins or something of all the Canadian golfers. That's a lot of weight on your shoulders.

I feel like she -- when she won at, was it Regina, a few years ago, she was able to put all that pressure kind of behind her and just focus on her. She is an unbelievable golfer and unbelievable athlete, and one of the nicest players on tour.

And so it was nice for us after the tournament ended on Sunday for the Hendersons and the Ko sisters to go have pizza and go to Lausanne. We went there and just came back.

But I don't really go out and socialize very much especially during a tournament week, and they said they hadn't gone out once and we were on the same boat. So I said, hey, why don't we just go? We had pizza and they recommended going to Lausanne as well.

We had a great time.

I think she's one the players that I've known for a long time, even since we were amateurs. I feel like our friendship has grown playing alongside each other, competing alongside each other, going to dinner like this.

We haven't gone dinner very much. I think the last time was like probably seven years ago, so we're trying to make it a little less time than that one.

Always enjoy their company.

Q. You won twice at the Vancouver Golf Club and once in...

LYDIA KO: Royal Mayfair.

Q. Yeah. Yeah, in Edmonton, and then finished forth in Ottawa. Talk about this tournament. It spans all of Canada and playing at different courses all the time, the uniqueness of it.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, we have a few events where we keep rotating, like U.S. Women's Open, KPMG. A lot of the golf courses we have actually gone to play the Canadian Open has a KPMG Women's PGA Championship like kind of style golf course.

It's nice to get refreshing look at some of these new golf courses and also return to golf courses like we played at Ottawa Hunt. Last time I was there I missed the cut so definitely a much better result a couple years ago.

Yeah, but we get to -- like Canada gets to showcase their best golf courses all around the country and we get it experience different cities. It's a win-win I think.

Yeah, Vancouver has been especially nice, so I remember joking that Coquitlam should be K-o, not C-o.

Q. You talk about Ottawa; finished fourth there. Seeing this golf course, do you feel you can win again?

LYDIA KO: I hope so. I'm always competing every week with the intention and hope to be the one that's hoisting the trophy at the end of the week.

I think there has been some weeks where I feel super confident and it hasn't really gone my way, and weeks where I don't feel too good and I have a pretty good result.

So it's just I think when you're under the gun and playing in the moment, you're adrenaline, everything kicks in, it's a little bit different.

It is a really good golf course and I think you need to be really precise around this course. So I'm going to work on that a little bit more after all this, but I am excited to be here.

Q. History could be made for yourself being one of the youngest members to be eligible for the LPGA Hall of Fame with a win. You've talked about the success

you've had at the Canadian Open. What would it mean to put that feather in your cap on a course and an event you've had so much success and so much love from what we hear?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, you know, it's where it started for me, and if I can get that last point where it really started for me championship-wise, it would mean a lot. I think when I played the Canadian Women's Open at Vancouver golf club in 2012, I didn't know I was going to win.

I just wanted to make the cut and enjoy my time playing with the professionals. I almost wish I was a little older winning my first one because now every win is a little bit more meaningful; whereas then I was 15 and probably just excited to have dinner after the press conference and you guys asking me questions more so than the tournament itself.

So I wish in ways I could go back to that moment and really enjoy it and that feeling of walking down the 18th hole. But, yeah, if I can get my - not that it would be my last event - but like the last point to get into the Hall of Fame here at the Canadian Women's Open it would be very special.

At that point if I win one more time here, I should get like free citizenship or something, yeah.

Q. What memorabilia do you have sitting around the house from those wins in 2012 and 2013? Anything special?

LYDIA KO: To be honest I don't have anything special from then. I obviously have like my replica trophies, but I remember wearing red and black, especially in my first win, because of like it being Canadian colors, but also channeled the inner Tiger Woods in me or something.

So I remember growing up a lot of my passwords were mini Tiger. So I did put out a red and black outfit this week on Sunday. I'm not the type to like keep little things or badges from events. I don't really have anything else from it, but a lot of good memories in my head.

Q. I see Paris on your shirt there. When do you head over that way and who will be going with you? Do you plan on taking in any other sporting events while you're there?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I'm heading there on Friday next week and get there Saturday.

So, yeah, kind of even though it would be nice to go there early and experience the Olympic culture and maybe watch

a few different sports. Playing that week I want to make sure I've had enough rest before I got there. Make sure that when I'm there I'm also -- it's like any other event in trying to compete and just get ready for Wednesday.

I'm just going there with my sister again. She's been there at the last two. It was just us two and our High Performance manager in Tokyo. So honestly going to be the same team. There is two male New Zealander golfers competing, so probably go and watch them play as well. Yeah, keeping it simple.

As much as the Olympics is special and it comes only every four years, try to treat it not really differently, whether it's like my routine or anything to any other event. I think I still do the same preparation and everything.

You know, I'm super excited that this is my third Olympics, and I may not be very athletic, but I can say I'm an Olympian and Olympic medalist, which is something I'm always very proud of.

Excited to give it another run this year.

Q. Where do the medals sit?

LYDIA KO: They're actually -- one is in my parents' wardrobe cabinet, and one -- I think that's the Rio one. The other one, Tokyo Olympics bronze is in Korea.

So I haven't seen it since I've been on the podium -- in both cases. Yeah, I think when I finally get settled in and have like a real home-home base, I would like to kind of like put it out and make my little trophy room alongside the trophies for this week.

Q. Where is it in Korea?

LYDIA KO: At my sister's place. Yeah.

Q. Kind of like Brooke, you had the weight of the world on your shoulders publically growing up in this sport. Just how have you handled it? How have you sort of handled the mental element of it when there is that pressure on someone at such a young age and social media and all that comes with that?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think it's never easy. You know, you grow up playing the sport and all you're trying to do and you're ultimate goal is to try and keep -- compete at the highest, shoot the best score you can.

When you start playing well, there are other things that come into the equation. I think for most parts -- I'm sure Brooke will say the same -- we're very grateful for all the

love and support we've gotten. There might be a couple negative comments or extra things that you have to do during the week, but I think we're grateful that we're able to I guess compete at the highest level in our sport and have some of our dreams and goals come true.

I think for the 95% of the time, like our job is great and we get to travel a lot. So there are tougher moments, and especially by the end of the year there is definitely mental and physical fatigue.

But when you're at the tournament and you're focusing on your goals and what you're trying to achieve, I think you end up kind of riding that adrenaline so you're less worried or hindered by some of the extra things.

Yeah, I definitely know that -- probably by after the British Open I'll have three weeks off, it's going to be nice to just like have my legs up and not go, okay, I need to go to the gym at 9:00 and all these different things.

That's why -- the great thing about our job is we have the luxury to be able to pick and chose some events we want to play and times we want time off.

I think it's really important to be really smart knowing when your body needs that bit of a breather and you can be refreshed for the next event.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Lydia. Appreciate your time.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.

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