

2015 US Women's Open Championship

Tuesday, July 7
Press Conference

Inbee Park

An Interview With:
INBEE PARK

MIKE TROSTEL: It's my pleasure to introduce Inbee Park into the media center. Inbee is playing in her 10th U.S. Women's Open. She's a two-time champion in 2008 at Interlachen, where she became the youngest champion at age 19 and again in 2013 at Sebonack. You've played the U.S. Women's Open so well, six top 10 finishes in just nine championships. What is it about this championship or major championships in general that seem to bring out the best in your game?

INBEE PARK: I think as a golfer you want to do good in major championships, and obviously that's the tournament that you put 100 percent of your energy and strategy and everything. So I definitely really do care about the major championships. When I come to major championships, I work extra hard and I try to look at the course a little bit better. But I don't know what, just I like the atmosphere. I like the little bit extra pressure when we start the game. And obviously having good results helps, that gives me a lot of confidence going into other major championships thinking that I've done good on major championships so I can do well in another good one.

MIKE TROSTEL: It should be another great atmosphere this year. It seems like the fans are coming out in force. This year you're playing well, three wins already. You're back to the No. 1 ranking, seven top 5 finishes. How do you feel about your game heading into the championship this week?

INBEE PARK: I feel really good about my game. Although I missed my first cut of the year last week, two weeks ago, but my ball-striking was still great and I shot 1-under par but still missed the cut. I putted really bad two weeks ago, and that definitely gave me somewhat like a wake-up call. Because I haven't really had a bad tournament or a really bad week. Two weeks ago before this tournament, I had a bad week, and that definitely made me practice harder and gave me a lot more motivation coming into this week. So hopefully that's going to work nicely playing this week.



MIKE TROSTEL: Some courses you see year in and year out, going there on a yearly basis, this one, this is a new course. The U.S. Women's Open has never been here before. What do you think of the course seeing it a few times earlier this week, and do you think it suit your game?

INBEE PARK: I played here five weeks ago, it was really dry then and now it's wet. I feel like I'm playing two different golf courses. Back then it was running hard and fast, so it was a little bit different. The greens are very slopey here, so when it gets hard and fast it gets really tough, I think. We have a little bit softer greens right now and softer fairways, so it's plenty longer, but the sloping on the greens are playing a little easier than when it was really hard. Obviously they've had a lot of rain here the last few weeks and that has kind of softened everything up. Yeah, it's long, but it's playable right now. The greens are going to be really the key this week. The breaks are huge on the greens. Even if it's a short putt, you have to aim it a cup outside or two cups outside. Yeah, there will be some really tough putts when the greens get really quick.

Q. You have a knack for hiding your emotions or keeping them under control when you're on the golf course. Is that something that you consciously worked at or is that just your natural personality to be so even tempered on the golf course?

INBEE PARK: You know, I don't practice for that, that's for sure. I just try to play my best golf, and I try to stay calm on the golf course because I want to play good. I think when I try to play good, I just kind of know that I have to be that way, a little bit more calm, not express too much of my emotions. I think that's how I learned to play. I didn't try to do that, but that just came naturally to play well.

Q. You have 15 career LPGA victories, six of those are major titles, that's a 40 percent clip on major championships. What do you think makes you step up and play so well in golf's biggest tournaments?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I don't really know how I do really well in the major championships. But like I said, my first win came on a major championship. And I kind of think -- always try to think that I play good on the major championships. I am good at the tough golf

courses. I am good under the pressure. I just try to keep talking to myself that way and try to give myself the confidence coming into the major championships. So, yeah, I think that's how it's really worked the last few years. And I try to just keep that going.

Q. I normally don't like to jump Tours and ask questions, but there really isn't anyone else who can answer this question except for you. In 2013, you won the first three majors of the season, decided to go home before going to St. Andrews. Kind of looking at Jordan Spieth and the fact that he is playing this week, comparing it with yourself, in retrospect, would you have gone to St. Andrews earlier to prepare for the British?

INBEE PARK: You know, the St. Andrews golf course was the course I looked at in 2007, so I kind of knew the course. And I don't really want to go to the tournaments too early because you kind of get burned out. You kind of just get tired. I like to go probably the Sunday before the tournament. I mean, I don't want to go there and spend the whole week before, I think it's just too boring. You get the feel of the tournament, I'd rather do that. It's up to the individual, obviously, but it's just not my style. I like to go home and relax or play the tournament.

Q. With the perspective of time, in 2013, what did you learn during that run of winning three majors? Looking back, what is the takeaway from that?

INBEE PARK: I think I learned a lot of things. The first is I can do some things that I didn't think I can even do. And probably the second thing is playing under the pressure, not everybody gets the chance to go for four in a row in a major championship, and I've done that before. I try to give myself a lot confidence over that. When I have really pressure conditions, like on the final round going head-to-head or like when I have a lead and stuff, I just feel a lot more comfortable now after having to deal with a lot of pressure conditions. I think it's just those things. I think it's all experience.

Q. I don't know how much time you've had to spend away from the course here, but if you've seen any of Lancaster, what's your impressions of this area?

INBEE PARK: I think it's really special, because I've never been to Amish town before. So I actually had a tour when I came here five weeks ago. I went to their house and had a tour around the house. It was just cool. It's different way to live. So I think the buggy rides were really cool. It's really different. I've been to their markets. They have really good food. It's different. I like the atmosphere.

Q. There are a handful of players, 20 or so or more, that will be playing in the U.S. Open for the first

time. What advice would you give them this week?
INBEE PARK: I want to give them maybe -- par is good on the U.S. Open courses. And obviously just try to enjoy. If it's your first U.S. Open, what you want to do is just enjoy the atmosphere, enjoy the players, enjoy the venue. Everything about this tournament is best, so it's the best players in the world, the best venue, the best courses, the best staff, so just try to enjoy the week.

Q. For a lot of fans, they tend to target practice rounds to come out and enjoy them. For you, what is the practice round experience like and how much do you consciously interact with the fans that may be following you along the way?

INBEE PARK: You know, the tournament days, it's kind of tough to sign autographs and take pictures and that, because you're running in really tight times. But obviously the practice round you have a lot of time to yourself and you can kind of interact with the fans. You can take photos with them. You can do autographs with them. You can talk with them. So I think it's a lot better to come and watch on the practice days. Obviously a tournament is fun. But you don't really get to know the player. But obviously I've seen a lot of people here today at a practice round, and I signed a lot of autographs and took a lot of photos. It was fun. It was good to see that many people came out for the practice round.

Q. You took back the No. 1 ranking from Lydia Ko recently. You had a lot of success as a young player and she's doing that now. My question to you is, does Lydia remind you of yourself? And what impresses you about her?

INBEE PARK: One thing for sure is I didn't play that well on that age, for sure. I was going through some tough times at that age. And obviously she's a very talented player. Yeah, she's just really good, I mean for her age. I just can't believe how mature she is and how mature her game is. Obviously she has a long ways to play and many more tournaments to play. One thing for sure, she has plenty of time, definitely more than me. She's a very talented player.

Q. You've spent a lot of time of course as the No. 1 player in the world. Do you find there's a tendency to put pressure on yourself to live up to yours or other people's expectations?

INBEE PARK: You know, at first, when I became No. 1 player in the world, I felt a lot more pressure and I felt like I have to show something to other people that I'm the No. 1 player. So I probably felt more pressure, I felt a little bit more like maybe I'm not good on the spot. I feel more comfortable on the No. 2 spot. Sometimes thinking like that when I became the No. 1 spot for the first time. But the second time I was there, I felt a little

more comfortable and I thought maybe I can probably treat this somewhat similar to No. 1, 2 and 3. But now it's my third time being here, I don't feel that much pressure anymore. I feel like No. 1 or 2, what's the difference, I'm just playing good golf and I don't need to show anybody anything. I just try to play my own golf and just not try to do something for other people. The more you get to experience this spot, the more that I experience it, you're just another golfer.

Q. We were talking before about why you're successful at majors. When you played at KPMG, the final round, it looked like you were locked in a zone you weren't going to get out of anytime soon. What was it like to play that last round as you did, and what can you take from that into this event?

INBEE PARK: I think it's so much fun being in contention in major championships, in the final rounds, when you play for the trophy. I just had so much fun at KPMG, where I knew I had the lead in the final round and I never really let it go. I just try to think that -- try to not feel too much pressure, tried to really enjoy that day, the opportunity I have. Just really try to appreciate what I had, just not -- I try not to think about so much of the score and I just try to play some good golf. My goal was to not make bogey on the final round. Even if Sei Young made six or seven birdies and if she ended up winning, it didn't matter to me. I just tried to do my own thing and not make any bogeys, and that's what I did in the final round, so I'm just really happy. You kind of just have to set your own goal and stick to it in the major championships, I think.

Q. When you see what's happened with Yani and how she's sort of fallen a little bit, is that the scariest thing for a player who at the top of their game like you are, that you have it one day and it disappears and never comes back?

INBEE PARK: Well, I guess if you think about it that way. I mean the No. 1 spot, itself, is that there's nowhere else to go but down, you know. So you're going to come down at some point. But the thing is that I don't think you have -- you don't have to be scared to go down, I don't think. That's the only place you can go. What you're trying to do is just stay there as long as you can. I'll probably have time where I'm going to go down, as well. I'm just not going to be scared for that. I'm just going to try to enjoy while I'm here. It doesn't matter when I go down. I just try to stay here as long as I can, and try to enjoy while I'm here.

MIKE TROSTEL: Inbee Park, 1:58 off the first tee on Thursday. Best of luck this week.

INBEE PARK: Thank you.