

2015 US Women's Open Championship

Tuesday, July 7
Press Conference

Lydia Ko

An Interview With:
LYDIA KO

MIKE TROSTEL: It's a pleasure to welcome Lydia Ko into the media center. Lydia is playing in her 4th U.S. Women's Open. Her best finish is 15th last year at Pinehurst. Lydia, you're off to a great start this year. Spent some time at No. 1 already. Two wins, two runner-up finishes and eight top 10s. How do you translate playing well on a week-to-week basis into a major championship victory?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's been a pretty awesome start to the year. I think ANA was really the first tournament where I wasn't top 10. It's been a lot of fun. I didn't play well the last couple of weeks, but it was great to finish with a low score on Sunday in Arkansas. Just I think that gave me a lot of confidence coming into this week. And I know that I'm hitting the ball good, that I can be confident and just trust my game.

MIKE TROSTEL: You're No. 1 this year in greens in regulation. How do you take that strength in your game and bring it out here to Lancaster Country Club, and this course, in particular?

LYDIA KO: You don't really want to be missing many fairways here. Just because of the rain, it's definitely going to be more stickier, more grabby in the rough. Got to keep to the fairways, got to keep to the greens. Even if you hit the greens, it's going to be tough putts, because they're quite undulated. I just have to position myself well. Some shots I just can't get too aggressive with it. But then some I need to go for, because there's only two par 5s, so you have to make those birdies along the way.

MIKE TROSTEL: Where do you see a green light opportunity where you can play more aggressively?

LYDIA KO: Really the two par 5s are the ones where you kind of have to come off with a birdie on at least one of them. There are some shorter par-4s along the way, but because of the rain we've had here the last couple of days, the driver is not running much, so it's really all carry distance. It really depends on how the



weather will be the next couple of days, if it will dry up or not. But here because of how undulating the greens are it really depends on the pin positions also.

Q. How do you avoid putting too much pressure on yourself after the last major and coming into this one and wanting to show everybody how well you can play in the big venue?

LYDIA KO: KPMG, obviously I was really excited for that week, disappointed with the way that it ended on a Friday. But I had a good rest the next couple of days. I had some time off. I think just playing well, getting that top 10 finish in Arkansas is definitely a good confidence booster for this week. Every tournament is different, week-by-week. You can shoot 20-under par one week and then shoot even par the next. I just kind of have to forget about it, just be excited again. And I can't believe it's really been a year since the back-to-back Opens we had last year. I think it's going to be a great week.

Q. The last tournament round you played, I think you hit 18 greens in regulation. What did you shoot? 63? It's got to be a good thing, right? Talk about how that boosts your confidence and positive stuff going forward that comes from that.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I had hit the ball really well between that whole week. That first day I hit a couple wayward tee shots, but from the second day I got it all sorted. I was hitting the ball good, but the ball -- really on the greens, they weren't dropping. At the end of the day, it's important for those crucial putts to drop. And that happened on the last day. When you finish well and have a low score in any tournament, you definitely know that you're going to go up the leaderboard. It was the right time for me because it was the last tournament before our upcoming major.

Q. This is a major and the ticket sell numbers are looking huge from what everybody is saying. In that type of environment, how do you prepare yourself for sort of the added attention that's going to be on every hole that week?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think there will be a lot of people here to watch us. That's the great thing about the U.S. Open. There are crowds not only supporting one group, but pretty much the whole way packed. It's part of it. It's going to be great to hear the crowds go wild when they see birdies on 18 or when we're teeing off

on 1 or 10. But I think it's going to be great. And it's really part of this major and what makes it so great about it. I think all the players are excited and also the spectators are excited to see some great golf this week.

Q. I've noticed over the past couple of days that you have spent a lot of time with your caddie, Jason, and your parents, on the putting greens and also chipping in the short game area. Do you feel as though if you get as comfortable as possible on the greens and also being able to pick short game shot lines to the greens, that that's going to be your best advantage this week?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think just the first thing is just hitting a good tee shot on the fairways is really a good start to any hole. And, yeah, just -- even if you are on the fairway, because of how sloped the greens are it's going to be hard to be close to the pin all the time. So trying to get a good understanding of the slope, obviously it's not exactly the same as the practice green to the golf course. But to get a much better feel of it, that's what we've been working on. It would be great to hit 18 greens in regulation, but if you don't you kind of have to make up and down. When you're just off the green, most of it is rough, so you have to kind of get a good feel of all the different lies in the rough, also. It's hard to say what part is the most important thing around this course, but you can just see at the end of the day the winner will have pretty much done great in not only hitting the ball great but for the short game, also.

Q. Obviously you've had a lot of success at an early age. Where did you learn how to deal with the mental aspects of golf and dealing with disappointments and bad breaks?

LYDIA KO: It's still a learning process. I don't think you'd ever be perfect at accepting the disappointments and going with winning and playing well and everything. I think I've got a great team that has always tried to keep me more grounded, keep me more in the present. And even if what had just happened wasn't the exact result you want it to be, you just kind of have to go with it. Because obviously there are going to be days where I'm going to play good golf, but then at the end of the day there are going to be some where I don't get what I want. You just have to kind of go with it. Golf is a game where we're going to play for many, many years. So there are going to be the good, but there are going to be some days where it won't be the way you want it to.

Q. You've already won seven LPGA tournaments in your career, Lydia. How has it helped you prepare to win a major championship?

LYDIA KO: I don't know. I mean, obviously here, for the

U.S. Open, it's not only the LPGA here, there are many tourists here, amateurs. It's, I guess, a little different in that sense. But I've just got to take it as just another tournament. I'm here. I didn't prepare differently, just because it was a major. At the end of the day I think I've got to think of it as just another event with a great field. And I think that will keep me mentally more stable, no roller coasters. It's not really that I won seven events, it's more that the situations I was, in playoffs or when I'm close down the stretch, I think those kind of situations will definitely help me if I ever get in the position of being in the lead or being in contention.

Q. Does it lessen the pressure to go from being No. 1 or does it motivate you to get it back?

LYDIA KO: I don't know how many weeks I was No. 1. How many weeks was I? 18, 17 or whatever. I thought I would have it only for one week, to be honest. I thought, hey, you know, I might be No. 1 for Bahamas, and then I'm going to be back to the original ranking. I had that ranking for longer than what I had expected. Obviously there was pressure coming along with it, but it was fun. I think the greatest memory for me was playing in my national Open, New Zealand Open, in front of the home crowd, being the world No. 1, that was a special moment for me. But obviously it does motivate me to play better, be a little bit more consistent. But when the other girls are playing great and I feel like I'm still playing good but Inbee is playing better, then I can't do much about it.

MIKE TROSTEL: With that, 8:02 off the first tee on Thursday. Best of luck this week.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.