

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2016

Tuesday, July 5, 2016

Michelle Wie

Press Conference

MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome the 2014 U.S. Women's Open champion, Michelle Wie, here into the media center. That year Michelle birdied the 71st hole and parred the 72nd hole to win by two shots over Stacy Lewis at Pinehurst No. 2.

Michelle Wie is playing in her 13th U.S. Women's Open this year, coming off an 11th place finish at Lancashire Country Club last year. Michelle, it's been 24 months since your win at Pinehurst. I've heard from those in your inner circle just how happy you were after that win, and seeing the big smiles you had holding up the trophy. Looking back, what do you remember about that week?

MICHELLE WIE: I'm really happy in my intro you didn't talk about the 70th hole last time.

I love the U.S. Open. It's definitely one of my favorite -- it's my favorite tournament of the year. Just any USGA event, ten years old, growing up with these rules officials, and I'm excited to see who is going to walk with me on Thursday. It's such a special experience to be back in the Bay Area, to be at CordeValle. And I'm just really excited.

MODERATOR: You mentioned being back in the Bay Area, we're only about 45 minutes from your alma mater, Stanford, have you had a chance to go back and visit.

MICHELLE WIE: Yes, I went on Sunday morning, I took a little quick jaunt around the campus. It's just amazing every time I go back. I feel so blessed. I just remember visiting campus when I was four years old, five years old and telling my mom I want to go here. And to actually achieve that dream, to have graduated from there, it's an amazing experience every time I go back. I love it.

MODERATOR: And this year, one top-25 so far. What are you working on to get your game back on track to maybe where it was a couple of years ago?

MICHELLE WIE: Yeah, it's definitely been a struggle this year, not the year that I had planned. But I still have half the year left. It's very early in July and I'm just -- I've been working on my game. And I've just



been trying to build confidence. I'm still having fun out there. That's the most important thing, just keep grinding, keep believing in myself. And I know I'm going to turn it around.

MODERATOR: From what you've seen at CordeValle so far, what do you think of the course?

MICHELLE WIE: It's amazing. Every time I walk out there, I spend at least one hole just wandering around and kind of getting lost in all the scenery. It's so amazing. I'm also thinking about how good the wine is probably here. I've been thinking about that.

It's such a beautiful setting. I think the staff and the people at the golf course have been so kind to us. We came here last year for Solheim Cup practice. They've been so welcoming ever since. I think it's going to be a great venue for the U.S. Open this year.

Q. Give us a physical update. You've had a bunch of injuries over the last couple of years. Where do you stand right now with your health?

MICHELLE WIE: I feel like pretty good. I was definitely struggling a little bit here and there. It's just a little bit of a struggle. But I'm feeling good as of the moment, which I'm very excited for, that I can enter the U.S. Open pain free. That was my number one concern coming into this week. But I'm feeling good. I want to keep that going.

Q. You mentioned confidence earlier. Do you feel like that's an area that you're kind of struggling with the most or do you look to assess the last few weeks?

MICHELLE WIE: Yeah, for sure. Confidence definitely takes a hit when you don't play as well as you know you can. And you're just going out there and it's a grind, honestly it is. It's a very hard game sometimes. And it's a brutal game. But at the same time, it's still fun. I enjoy the challenge, that's what brings me back to the game every single time, no matter how hard you're struggling. That's the fun part about it, is that the game is so hard. You want to do anything you can to shave off a stroke, and get your game back.

I've been slowly building my confidence back. Even though the results haven't been showing it, I do feel I'm making a lot of forward progress. Like I said earlier,

with my body, as well, just really getting to the point where I can enter the week pain free. That was the most important thing for me.

I think over the last couple of practice rounds I've had this week, that's going to be my main focus entering on Thursday, slowly building up my confidence and going out there and just try to kick some butt.

Q. I was talking to Stacy yesterday and she said she recently watched footage of her victory at the Kraft in 2011 to see what she looked like. Have you looked at footage from the win at Pinehurst?

MICHELLE WIE: Yeah, I definitely -- I look back at clips on YouTube. I think it's definitely very important. You forget. You definitely forget how good you are. And I just would be like, oh, I'm not that good. But your friends say, you're amazing. You forget that when you have a tough year. But it really does help to look back at clips. Oh, I actually did that, I remember that.

That's why I think coming back to the U.S. Open, it was really cool. Driving in seeing the picture of me holding the trophy, I think that was pretty awesome and I hopefully build on that confidence.

Q. I know that your health can affect your confidence, too. This year, was it a neck injury that you had earlier in the year?

MICHELLE WIE: The list goes on. Yeah, I mean it's just been tough, you know, last year with my hip and everything. I had to change my swing so many times. And that's just been the main thing with me, I just haven't had a consistent swing that I can play upon and play pain free. I've been tinkering so much to try to figure out how I can play without pain.

And I think that's why, you know, just looking back at 2014 swings and figuring out how I can get back to that swing, how I can get back to that comfortable feeling has been my number one priority, and also just making sure that I'm pain free this week. I feel pretty good. And definitely health is the most important thing for me, and mentally, as well. I know that I can actually produce that same swing, finally, without any pain. So hopefully that will get me going, as well.

Q. It was mentioned about looking back on your 2014 victory. In 2006, you had three top 5 finishes as a teenager in majors. Do you look back when golf seemed at times very, very easy for you?

MICHELLE WIE: That's just life in general, I think when you're a kid. Everything seems easy. You haven't had the failures yet. You haven't come across obstacles. And I think every adult can say, oh, I remember when I was back in middle school or in kindergarten or something, I was so fearless. That's just the nature of

life, I think, that you learn to come across obstacles, you come across hard times, you come across lows. But I think that's just also the thing I'm grateful in my life, as well.

I've come across a lot of highs. I've come across a lot of lows. I've also gone through it, and I've overcome a lot of stuff. And I think that I know that I can overcome this, as well. I'm confident about that. I enjoy the game. I love the game. I love the challenges and I'm working through it.

Q. When you won at Pinehurst, there was a lot of talk to the springboard to the next level for you. Did you feel that way at the time? And now that you have the distance of two years with all the injuries, how do you look back on the scope of these last two years?

MICHELLE WIE: I'm very grateful for my win at the U.S. Open. It was really a dream come true for me. To win another U.S. Open would mean absolutely the world to me. I definitely still feel that I can build momentum on 2014. I don't think two years is too long of a period. I think that everything comes in waves.

And what I just need to do is just keep my head down and keep working hard and keep grinding. I know the results are going to come. I've put in the work. I've put in the long hours. My coach believes in me. My family believes in me. It's one foot forward at a time. One step forward at a time. And I'm definitely going to look back at the memories from 2014 and hopefully that will help me this week.

Q. How often have you played here? I know you mentioned last year you guys had, I think, a Solheim Cup function, right?

MICHELLE WIE: Yes.

Q. How much history do you have here and what kind of course do you think -- what kind of player will this course favor?

MICHELLE WIE: I played it a couple of times in college, but I don't really remember it too much from back in the day. But I think playing it last year kind of helped.

Going out there, I came here on Friday, I walked the golf course a couple of times, so that was helpful. But it's such a great golf course. You definitely have to have a lot of strategy. It's playing long. So I think it's a good golf course. You have to be smart. But also you have to be aggressive at the same time. So I'm going to take today and tomorrow to really finalize my game plan for this week.

Q. When did you first feel pain free? What event

did you enter that there was no pain?

MICHELLE WIE: Can I say Saturday of last week?

Q. So has it been neck injuries that's still lingering or was still lingering?

MICHELLE WIE: You know, I think I've been keeping that at bay. I think just other stuff. I'm feeling good now. That's the most important thing.

Q. It's a pretty exciting time to be a sports fan in the Bay Area. Obviously this is the first time this area has hosted the U.S. Women's Open. From your time at Stanford, did you become a fan of any of the teams, Warriors, Giants? Do you keep tabs? What would it mean -- obviously KD was big news yesterday here in the area, but what would it mean for you to win the tournament here where you went to college?

MICHELLE WIE: I love the Bay Area. I think the Bay Area is definitely my second hometown. I was so stoked about KD coming to the Bay Area. I think everyone was. It was exciting. I was really bummed at the Finals this year, the NBA championship.

But I love all Stanford sports. I follow really heavily on Stanford football, basketball, everything. Definitely Bay Area sports is something that I follow, and it would mean a lot. I think just winning the U.S. Open in general is just so -- it's so amazing. But to win it here, it would be amazing.

MODERATOR: 1:41 off the 10th tee on Thursday.
Michelle Wie, best of luck.