

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2016

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

Stacy Lewis

Press Conference

MODERATOR: It's my pleasure to welcome Stacy Lewis into the media center. Stacy is competing in her 10th U.S. Women's Open this year. She finished runner-up and tied for third the last two championships consecutively.

Consistency is a word that's been used to describe your game. Lydia Ko was here talking that she wants to have more of it in hers.

STACY LEWIS: I'd like to have a lot of her game, too.

MODERATOR: I think you have some sort of record, you've only missed one cut in the last hundred-plus starts. Obviously part of that is skill, but what else keeps driving you week in, week out, here on the Tour?

STACY LEWIS: It's just trying to get better, it really is. It's a game that is so incredibly frustrating, but then at times it's so much fun and it's so easy. You seem to have more of those frustrating days, and I guess that's what drives me. I love to play the game. I love how hard it is. I love the test of it. And I think that's what shows up in majors and in the big events.

MODERATOR: And you played very well here in the Women's Open the last couple of years, a runner-up and a tie for third. You said you played nine holes this morning at CordeValle. What do you think of the course so far?

STACY LEWIS: The course is interesting. It's very different than your typical U.S. Open. I would say it's close -- of the past few venues we've played it probably closest to like a Sebonic, more than any other golf course. You have to rely on some good bounces. You can putt from a lot of places, and it's just -- it's not a drive it straight, if you hit it in the rough you hack it out with your wedge and putt it good. You have to do everything well. You can't just drive it well and putt it good. You've got to be able to hit some shots and get some good bounces along the way.

MODERATOR: Since your win in Arkansas in 2014, you've had 11 runner-up finishes. Jack Nicklaus always talked about his 19 runner-ups as really a point of pride. Do you look at these more as missed opportunities or as very pleased you're able to put

yourself in that kind of position?

STACY LEWIS: It's playing good golf. There's so much you can't control. And that's what I've learned over the last few years is I can't control what anybody else does on the golf course. And you know, there's some of those seconds where I kind of stumbled my way into them. And then there's some you play really good and you battle to the end and a putt doesn't go your way. They're all different and they're all good golf. That was the thing about it.

I see it as a good thing. I think there would be a lot of people that would like to have that record. And to win tournaments, to be in contention, you have to be willing to finish second, be willing to finish third and to accept it. Because that's the only way you're going to win.

MODERATOR: And another runner-up last week in Portland. It seems like your game is in pretty good form. How do you feel like you're playing coming into this week at CordeValle?

STACY LEWIS: I feel good. Portland was actually a really good test to come here playing. The greens were as firm as I've ever seen them and fast. I think the greens were actually faster last week in Portland than they are here this week. So it was definitely a good warm up to get ready for here, because you have to drive it straight there and hit good shots.

I like where my game is at. We're constantly working on it, and trying to go back to some of the basics of what's made me successful over the last couple of years. And I think we're getting closer to finding that.

Q. Camilo withdrew from the Olympics today --

STACY LEWIS: First question. Couldn't even wait.

Q. I know, I'm sorry. When you see another male player bowing out of the Olympics, what goes through your mind?

STACY LEWIS: It's disappointing, but now the reasoning is more the guys want to keep their PGA Tour card, which I completely understand. That more falls on the PGA Tour for scheduling tournaments the same week as the Olympics.

We probably could have, we probably could have put a



tournament the week of the Olympics, but we didn't for the fact that our players will be able to play in it and not have to worry about their status. So it's just -- it's disappointing, but I don't think you're going to see as many on the women's side. You may see a couple here and there. But, in general, I think most of us want to be there and want to represent our country.

I think it's arguably the greatest sporting event ever, in history. I want to be a part of it. I just think it's too cool that you can call yourself an Olympian. I want to be a part of that.

Q. A quick follow-up, is there anything you can foresee that would keep you from Rio?

STACY LEWIS: The only thing that I'm looking at is the safety issues, and that's going to be something that I watch all the way up until the day I leave. That's not going to -- if something happens next week, I'm not going to pull out. It's going to be something that I monitor the whole way. It's hard -- I think the best thing, though -- best thing for us is that we're playing the second week. So they'll hopefully have the kinks and have a few things figured out, where the guys are kind of going in there blind and don't really know. We'll at least have things figured out by the time we get there.

Q. You mentioned that this is not a typical U.S. Open venue. What requirements of the game do you think this has that, say, Lancaster did not?

STACY LEWIS: I think this one you can get away with some tee shots a little bit more. We've got some definitely bigger fairways to work with. The greens, with the greens there's just some hole locations you're going to play away from, which you have at most U.S. Opens, but I think even more here, depending on how firm the greens right get. The greens right now and the fairways are really pretty soft and a little bit inconsistent, too, in parts.

So it really depends what they do with the golf course over the next four days. If they don't water, like they have been the last few days, this golf course gets real hard really fast and it's hard to hold greens.

So I just say that the firmness and severity of all of the slopes. You can hit some drives that just roll for miles. And it's really almost more linksy than it is -- than a U.S. Open.

Q. In the 2008 U.S. Women's Open, your first as a pro, you finished third. What do you remember most from that championship? Did your performance there make you think not that it's easy, but a win might be closer than you thought?

STACY LEWIS: What I remember from it, I just -- I

remember my dad was there caddying for me, and just the final round being so nervous. I didn't know what the heck I was doing there, leading the U.S. Open. I just remember -- the biggest thing I learned from that day, I think it was the third or fourth hole, hit a bad wedge shot and made double, and it kind of sent me in a downward spiral. I learned at a U.S. Open, you can't let that happen. If you hit a bad shot, it's got to go bogey and you have to move on. I let that one swing kind of stay with me all day. So I learned a lot that day.

But it definitely -- it definitely gave me some confidence going forward. It wasn't an automatic I was going to get my Tour card. That was all up in the air. So it didn't really open that many doors for me, per se, because it didn't automatically give me status or anything like that. So I had to still go forward and work my way to what I wanted. I still had to work for my Tour status. But, if anything, I guess it helped pay for all the bills. In one week I was off my dad's payroll. I got, okay, your insurance is this much, your car is that much, so I was off the payroll pretty quick.

Q. The magnitude for a player of an event like this, just discussed. But do you get a sense of what it means to a course like this that's a relatively new course, and the people, the members, and how important it is for them to see you guys on their venue?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, they've been excited about this from the get-go. We came last spring with the Solheim Cup team and got to check out the course. Everybody was so excited. They want to tell you about the golf course and all that, and you just want to learn it yourself. It's great that we're able to come play these new golf courses and different ones and ones that have never had a U.S. Open on before.

The guys have obviously been here with the PGA Tour. But just to see, too, how we play versus the guys, I think is always an eye opener for especially the members. Because we're probably playing the golf course more like the members play it. So for them it's probably a good learning week.

Q. This is Se Ri's last event on American soil. Obviously she's meant a lot to Korean golfers. Can you talk about what she's meant to the LPGA Tour, in terms of economically what she's done with TV contracts, tournaments?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, she's basically changed the face of this Tour. Without the Korean and the Asia TV rights, you know, this Tour four or five years ago might not be here anymore. We were at a point where we had 23 events and I think half of those were in Asia. So the Asia market basically supported us there for a couple of years and allowed us to get to where we are

now.

Se Ri's a huge part of that. She created this generation of Inbee and So Yeon and all those girls. Now you've got the even younger ones coming out that are inspired by Inbee. And Se Ri's the one to thank for it all. She's the one that came over by herself and didn't speak much of the language and figured it out and kind of became the mold to all the other players to follow. And all those girls realize it. They're always thanking Se Ri, and they know it, and that's the coolest part about it.

Q. If it gets really firm and fast, can a long hitter who is having a really good week, can they get a huge advantage here, or are there other equalizers?

STACY LEWIS: I think if it gets firm and fast, it's more of an equalizer. If it stays the way it is, I think the long hitters definitely have an advantage the way it is right now. There are some par-4s, if I don't get the release I need, I'm hitting hybrids and 4-irons and some pretty long clubs in. So right now length is an advantage. But if it gets firm and fast, I think that's to my advantage.

Q. On the Zika virus, is there disappointment among the women that the men might cost the women the Olympics, if there are too many withdrawals and it lessens the event?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, that's definitely there. It would be disappointing for golf to not be in the Olympics, I think. I know there's -- people say that golf shouldn't be there in the first place, but I just think it's such a cool honor to represent your country in that manner and to be a part of that that it would be a shame if we weren't a part of the Olympics going forward, I think.

I don't know, I think, you know, it's hard, those guys play for so much money, and I think you kind of get lost in that at times. Because if I knew that I had a potential of a \$10 million paycheck at the end of the year, I'd probably do my schedule a little bit different, too.

But you become a product of that environment. You have that opportunity to win that that money, you become a product of it. And you can't blame them for being that way, they're basically -- they're bred to be that way with the amount of money that they play for.

And on our Tour, while we have some pretty good paychecks, I'll give us that, it's nowhere close to what those guys are playing for. So to me, the opportunity to play in the Olympics and to represent your country is probably worth as much as winning a U.S. Open or winning a Kraft or winning any of those big majors. I don't know, I mean, to me it's up there. Winning a gold

medal would be up there with winning a major championship to me, and that's the difference of the men versus the women.

MODERATOR: Stacy Lewis, 8:39 a.m. off the first tee on Thursday. Best of luck.

STACY LEWIS: Thank you.