

# U.S. Women's Open Championship 2016

Saturday, July 9, 2016

## Lydia Ko Press Conference

MODERATOR: It's my pleasure to welcome Lydia Ko into the media center. Two-time major champion winner, shot rounds of 73, 66 and a 70 today for a 54-hole total of 209, 7-under par for the week. Currently holds a one-stroke lead over Eun Hee Ji and Sung Hyun Park.

Playing in your fifth U.S. Women's Open and obviously a great round today. You were 2-over for 20 holes, and then you've been 9-under the past 34. What did you do to kind of stay in the championship early on when the weather is a little more difficult playing in the afternoon and things maybe weren't going your way, to stick around and then obviously make your charge here lately?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I took advantage of the calmer weather in the morning yesterday. I didn't start off very well, making a bogey on my first hole. And I think making that birdie on 3, and then -- on 4, kind of got my round going.

But the birdie on 5 got me a little bit excited because I was the first time I was under par in this championship.

And even though I didn't play that great on Thursday, I don't feel like I should be nine shots behind. Mirim had just an impressive round. Just because somebody, I think a player shoots 8-under on the first day, doesn't necessarily mean the tournament is going to end up with 32-under par after Sunday.

There's still a lot of golf to be played. There's a past U.S. Open champion, just a shot behind. Because there's so many great players out there, especially at a course during these majors, you never know what's going to happen.

MODERATOR: Let's get into your round today. Very consistent day, you birdied the third hole, the par 5 for the third straight day.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I didn't really -- I hit it close yesterday and the day before, so today it was just like maybe 25 feet away, and I was above the hole. So I was trying to be a little cautious, but ended up being the perfect pace. And to kind of put myself under par early in the round definitely got my round going a little bit.



MODERATOR: You bogeyed 9 but then came back with a really nice birdie putt on 13, a big left-to-right swinger.

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I wasn't expecting that to go in. I have all my reads. I put a stroke on it, and then I looked to my left and the ball was way above the hole. So I said, oh, I over read it again, huh? And that's what I was doing the majority of the day. I said, oh, man. And then I was kind of walking a little bit and then I saw the ball drop. So it kind of took me by surprise. So it was a lucky one.

But I almost think my par on 14 was the more meaningful putt of the two. But either way I'll take them both.

MODERATOR: Great par on 14 after it looked like you short sided yourself a little bit. Great par there. Coming down 18, the par 5, great to finish with another birdie.

LYDIA KO: No matter what position you're in, it's always good to finish off on the last hole where there is a lot of the crowds out there watching to support us. So it was really cool for our group to all make birdies and for the fans to get excited.

It's a great finishing hole. I always say that, especially when it's a par 5 finishing hole, you never know what's going to happen. I know a two-shot swing can happen if somebody makes an eagle, too. It makes it very exciting. I was happy to finish off with a good putt on the last for that birdie.

MODERATOR: In your two major wins, you came from behind. When you did hold the 54-hole lead, played a really nice last round, but Brooke Henderson shot a 65, and ended up beating you in a playoff. Do you prefer to have the lead going into the final round or do you like when the pressure is off a little bit coming from behind?

LYDIA KO: I'll take it. I'll take any shot advantage I can. Because there is still a lot of golf to be played, you just never know. But I still played -- I thought there were so many positives, you know, from that final round at Sahalee. I just say all I can do is try my best. If somebody plays better than me, I can't do much about

it.

And that was the perfect example of that. Brooke just played so impressively on that Sunday. And for her to win the playoff hole with that birdie, I think just kind of summed up her day.

But I'm happy with my position and I know that -- because we've still got 18 more holes, I've just got to focus on my game. And I think that's the key. I'm going to just try and enjoy it, just focus on the shot I have in front of me and not think about what everybody else is doing. If I think that way, I won't get too carried away with what position I am at certain parts of the final day.

MODERATOR: Certainly well positioned through 54 holes.

**Q. In watching you now for over three years, I don't know that I've ever seen you hit a putt at the wrong speed. How do you do that? And as the pressure intensifies, the putting gets a little flinchy, but you don't seem to. What is it about your putting stroke that allows you to get every putt at the right speed?**

LYDIA KO: I wasn't putting that great on Thursday. I felt like I left a lot out there. But I hit a few putts after Thursday first round, and I think going into the Friday I think I found my stroke again, kind of found my rhythm.

I think I just try and concentrate on that putt and just commit. At the end of the day, I've just got to trust the line I have in front of me and put a good stroke on it. Sometimes the wind might blow it and it ends up being a little short or ends up pushing it both ways.

I think the big thing is for me to just trust my game and just commit to it. And that way I don't need to think about the what-ifs. What if that happens or what if it misses.

**Q. Do you look at a particular part of the hole? Do you envision the ball rolling over the front edge?**

LYDIA KO: I've been trying to do a little bit more visualization, where I can kind of see -- I kind of look at the hole as if it was a clock, and say if it's a swinging putt, I might say, hey, maybe it should go in at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock. Sometimes the wind might blow it and it might go in from 12 o'clock, who knows.

I've been trying to visualize a bit more, so I can kind of match up my lines with the speed. Sometimes they don't match up. But I think that's what I've got to do, just visualize how it's going in, and then I can kind of decide what speed I want to hole it at.

MODERATOR: 25 putts yesterday, 25 putts today, tied

for the lead in the championship in putting.

**Q. Brittany Lang was asked about how calm you look, and she said there's no way you can be as calm as you look on the outside. How calm are you on these stages and what do you expect in terms of nerves tomorrow, obviously the final round and a chance to win the U.S. Women's Open?**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think I'm -- I look a lot calmer than what goes on in the inside. I definitely do get nervous, but I think that's part of it. Nerves are good, actually. I feel like if I'm not nervous it's because -- I think nerves are good because it means you're excited. You're ready. It means a lot to you. Obviously nerves you've got to be able to control it. But a little bit of nerves I think is always good. And it can end up being a little bit of adrenaline. But I just try and take deep breaths.

My caddie, Jason and I, we kind of like to talk, so I'm a little bit more calm. But I think nerves are good. But I think the most nervous I've actually ever been at any tournament was this event, the U.S. Open, when I played for the first time at Blackwolf Run. On the first hole, on the first day, I went out to the green and normally I line my putt up with my line. And I couldn't line it up at all. My hands are shaking that bad. And I think that's -- at that time I said, man, why am I so nervous? Why am I not able to control my hands? It's connected with me. But I think when I look back it's because it meant a lot. And I was super excited to be there playing the championship.

**Q. Sort of related follow-up question. First couple of years you were doing very well in regular events, but weren't doing that well in majors, you struggled a bit in majors. And obviously the last four or five majors, you've been in contention every time. What's changed in these events doesn't it is just being calmer or something about your game that is more suited to majors now than it was two years ago?**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I always said my goal, when I sum up all the majors, is to be more consistent. To be able to put myself in contention or put myself around the lead. And I think that's always been my goal. I don't really like to set goals on saying, hey, I want to win a certain amount of majors because sometimes it doesn't end up going that way.

So I think winning the Evian Championship has given me confidence playing the majors, seeing that I can win a major championship. I can put myself in good positions and have a really solid, final round, to end up holding the trophy.

Winning the ANA was another confidence booster because it was a course I never really played well at

before. So to say that I can go back to a course and play well at a course that I didn't really do well before gave me confidence in that way.

But I think just being able to be in this position, sometimes you end up holding the trophy, sometimes you come a little short. But they're all learning processes. And I think you're always learning from tournaments. And I think age is just a number, but experience is another thing. And I feel like the Evian definitely gives me confidence and I've learned so much since then.

**Q. I am reminding myself that you are still young, but is there -- has there been anything that's frustrated you by the fact that this is probably the biggest prize in women's golf? And you really haven't been able to play your best coming in this week, has there been a particular frustration in that at all?**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I think I've always come off after a U.S. Open and said, hey, I could have done a little better. I always felt like something was missing.

Like last year was the best U.S. Open finish I had. I played really solid on Thursday and the weekend, but nothing was really going on Friday. So there were those frustrating rounds. And even this year, the first round, it was a little frustrating.

But the things I'm learning is it's never the end until the very end, until that last putt drops. I think Lexi winning the ANA Championship a few years ago, when I think she started off with an even par the first day and then just blitzed the course up the next few days, it just shows that you never know what's going to happen. That's why I say there's still so much golf to be played.

But I'm happy with the way I've kind of progressed playing these U.S. Open championships. But the most memorable of them all is at Blackwolf Run when I first played, because I was so nervous, I couldn't control it at all. And that's why when I look back, it just shows how much this championship means to me and means to the women's game and how important it is for I think any player and what big of an honor it is to be holding the trophy at the end of Sunday.

**Q. Along the lines of the experience that you've had compared to someone like Park, have you learned over the years how to spend the night before a final round and do you have any routine you go through to try to get yourself either relaxed or in the right shape to play?**

LYDIA KO: I go partying. Partying all night (laughter) and come straight to the course, yeah.

No, I think the best thing is to not get out of your routines. It doesn't matter if it's the first day or the last day or the third day or an extra day. I think it's always good to stay within the routines and then that way I don't get too ahead of myself. I love my sleep, so I know that I'll have a good night sleep. But nothing different. Nothing special to eat. I want my mom's cooking, and that's it. And that's what I look to do. That kind of makes it more relaxing that I'm not doing something new and trying to create something that did happen before.

**Q. What will you do tonight?**

LYDIA KO: What will I do tonight? I'm going to get some physio just to loosen up the body. And whatever Mama Ko is cooking up, it's good to my taste buds to have that. And just before I leave maybe hit a few balls or maybe a few putts. But not do anything crazy. Yeah, just maybe watch a program, a TV show, yeah, just something relaxing.

**Q. So is this the Major Championship that means the most to you? Is that what you're sort of saying here?**

LYDIA KO: I mean it's so hard to say one means a bit more. I've come so close at KPMG Championship. Before winning the Evian and apart from the Evian Championship, I think the British Open was the best major finish I had, aside from the Evian. And Evian I had my first win. And to be able to win the ANA Championship. So everything ends up meaning so much. But I think people think maybe because it is a U.S. Open, oh, it means so much to the American girls. But I think it just means a lot to any player. To be playing on the LPGA, on the Tour that I've always dreamt of playing, and for it to be the biggest championship on the mainland, in the States, that's huge.

When you see the big names that have held the trophy at the end of Sunday, to have my name alongside their names, I think would be an honor, too. And there's just so much history around it. And no matter if you're playing golf or tennis or any other sports, to say you're a U.S. Open champion, I think, it just kind of brings a special moment to you.

I always say just every championship is different. Every championship is special in its own way and unique in its own way. But this tournament is very unique, and there's just so much history. For me to be in this position right now, going into the final day, I'm proud to be here and I feel very fortunate, too.

**Q. Have you ever partied all night?**

LYDIA KO: The closest was at -- actually this last off-season. I think you guys will know Psy, the Gangnam style guy. He does concerts in December. And I think

I went to his concert on the 23rd, midnight, yeah, December.

**Q. It started at midnight?**

LYDIA KO: It started at midnight. He did two concerts that day, I think one at 9:00 and finishing at 11:00. And his concert started at 12:00 and ended up at 2:00. And then there was an encore, and that encore went for an hour. And I ended up coming home at 5:00 a.m. I went with my sister and her friend and Su Oh actually. We had a good time.

My throat was a little weird the next day. I don't think I've sweat that much in my life. I had a seat, but there was no point in having one, because you were jumping up and down this whole time. I had a good time.

And when you're on the road it's hard to do that. So I think that's when I took advantage of the off-season. Yeah, I kept myself busy in Korea. Christmas Day was the only day where I did nothing and just chilled out. I'm too young for clubbing here, anyways.

MODERATOR: Lydia Ko, don't party too hard tonight. You're the 54-hole leader.

LYDIA KO: Thank you.