

KPMG Women's PGA Championship 2015

Sunday, June 14
Press Conference



Inbee Park

KELLY SCHULTZ: Good evening, everyone. We'd like to welcome the 2015 KPMG women's PGA Champion winner, Inbee Park. Inbee, we kept talking about it all week, a chance at a three-peat, and you actually did it. What does this actually feel like? What is it like to win three of these championships in a row?

INBEE PARK: It feels amazing. It feels amazing to win three times in a row. Obviously putting my name alongside like Annika Sorenstam or Patty Berg, legends of golf, just being a part of history of this golf tournament, I feel extremely honored, and I can't believe that I just did it. I mean, it has not really sunk down yet. It will probably after I sleep tonight. But yeah, this is really a great accomplishment in my career, and obviously there's a lot more things to do from now on but this is definitely one of the greatest accomplishments I've ever had.

KELLY SCHULTZ: Mike Whan was joking, we had to add another vase because we ran out of space on this championship trophy, but he said we didn't need to add that, we could just add check marks to this. But you will be the first name on that vase and the first champion of this newly rebranded championship. What does it mean to be walking away the first time of this championship, which is now all about elevating women both on and off the golf course?

INBEE PARK: This definitely really elevated our major championship for sure. This tournament's been really a true major golf tournament for us, for the LPGA. The golf setup, the venue, everything, the facility, the fans, everything has just been phenomenal for us. I just want to mention one thing. When I was a junior, I played in their Junior PGA Championship when I won twice, and it was -- we usually just play in the junior tournaments. And the setup they did, The PGA of America did was quite different. As a junior, we get like free drinks, we get free food, we get like big scoreboards, big stands. It was just so cool for us to play in that event. Winning that event was obviously really special for me and that really inspired me into the game. Obviously now winning another PGA of America tournament is such an honor for me.

KELLY SCHULTZ: This win also puts you back in the

No. 1 spot in the Rolex Rankings. We've been asking you all year what it would mean to get back into that No. 1 spot, but now that you have it, what does it mean to be No. 1 again?

INBEE PARK: It feels great. I mean, I feel probably more happy about winning the major championship than probably being No. 1 back again. Because No. 1 spot, I had opportunity every week pretty much, and it just happened this week. I really just wanted to be No. 1 when I was really ready, and this is like the perfect tournament, perfect timing to go up there, so, yeah, really happy.

Q. With six majors, you now have won more than Se Ri Pak, and the most of any South Korean woman. What does it feel to have eclipsed a mark of someone who was such a motivation for you?

INBEE PARK: Right, she had great accomplishments in women's golf, inspired a lot of young Korean golfers like me. To win more majors than her, I never thought I would be able to win more majors than her or or tournaments than her. The accomplishments that she's had, it was just nearly impossible to get, but slowly getting there. I'm not quite there yet but yeah, I feel like I'm just taking still baby steps but obviously I played really good in major tournaments. I feel comfortable in the major tournaments. She still has a lot more wins than me and a lot more accomplishments than me, so, yeah, I've still got a long ways to go.

Q. I don't know that five majors in three years is baby steps, but how have your goals changed, and what will you try to accomplish in the future, with six majors already, Annika, next modern player would be next to catch at ten. Do you set your sights at things like that since majors seem to be your thing?

INBEE PARK: There is no number of majors that I really set for my goal. I said I always liked to win the British Open, which I never won before. Just not try to go by the numbers but just going by tournament by tournament. I know I played good in the major championships, but I've still got to be consistent every week and try to win a lot of golf tournaments. But for this year as a goal, I mean, having three wins already this season and winning a major championship already, and it feels like I've done the homework for this year. So I can play without the pressure a little bit from now

on and hopefully that brings a better results.

Q. We kind of have a hard time reading what your emotions are. From last night, were you nervous, what you felt this morning, and then just can you describe what you were feeling inside when you finally raised your hands on the 18th green?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I mean, I slept really good last night. I thought I would be pretty nervous last night thinking maybe I won't be able to sleep. But yeah, just last night, I really just slept really good and not so nervous last night. But this morning, I had a lot of time. I felt a little bit nervous this morning, a little bit of sweat on my arms before going to play before I got to the golf course. Just tried to concentrate on the golf swing and putting stroke and pressure kind of went away a little bit. But when I had the big lead going into the last six, seven holes, I just kept thinking about the results, kept thinking about what if, what if I win this tournament, I just think about so many what ifs. It's just hard to concentrate last few holes, missing a couple birdie opportunities that I could have made. But I mean, I didn't need that at the end, so it was good.

Q. You've had the ability to hold a lead, five times, you're four out of five and holding a 54-hole lead. Can you speak about that steadiness and just the way you approach being in the lead in a major?

INBEE PARK: I think it's -- I don't know why people like about in the lead in the final round. I think it's just the best spot to be in. You've just got to think the other way around I think. People say you just feel a lot of pressure when you're leading. But then, you know, at the same time, you're in the best position for a trophy. Even if you shoot the same number with other players, you win. So I just take it that way and I just try to keep up with whoever I'm playing with the final day and it's always done the job for me.

Q. With six majors now, you rank with Kathy Whitworth, Pat Bradley, Patty Sheehan, Betsy King. You mentioned some names on the trophy. Your place in history does that matter to you? Are you driven to have a place in history?

INBEE PARK: Well, I mean, playing golf, playing professional golf, you always -- I think I always dreamed myself being a part of history, leaving my name, even before I die, there is my name on this trophy. There's a name on the U.S. Open trophy. There's my name on great championships. People remember me still. I think it's just, you know, great to do things like that, and it's just so much fun to do something like that. I mean, for now, I probably don't really -- I probably won't really realize what I'm doing right now. But I look at the names like on this trophy, like, you know, all the legendary players and we still remember them. So I think it's just one of those things

that people will still remember me that I was a good golfer.

Q. The majority of your majors, four of them, have come in this part of the world. Why do you play so well in New York?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, I just said that when I come here to my parent: My odds in New York is pretty good, maybe if I win this week in New York, maybe New York is a lucky town for me. Maybe I should move here or something (laughing). Just the golf course styles, it's old-style golf courses and people, the atmosphere around here, I just love it. I love the food here and I love the city. It's just great to be here and great to have good results.

Q. You had three bogeys the entire tournament, none over the last 56 holes. Can you just talk about how you were able to do that and what it was about your game that allowed to you do that?

INBEE PARK: Putting really improved a lot since the first day. Starting the second round to the final round, I had not many mistakes in either the ball-striking or putting. I mean, I had a little bit of like a neck injury earlier in the Pro-Am day, and then I really doubted myself if I can play this week. So Thursday, I've got to say, I wasn't in my full condition, so my ball condition just got better and better. Obviously getting to know the golf course better and better as the day goes on definitely helps having no bogey results.

Q. Some of golf's greatest champions have said a head-to-head duel on Sunday is what you live for. What was that like today with the back and forth with Sei Young? It was quite a battle, especially on the front nine?

INBEE PARK: Yeah, it just kept reminding me of a couple tournament the that I played with her. She holed a chip, she holed out from the fairway when I played with her the last time. She made four birdies, was it, four birdies in a row, and it just reminded me of the bad memories. I thought, surely, she's not going to do another miracle again, like nine birdies in a row (laughter). I just tried to stay calm and not see so much what Sei Young is doing. Yeah, it was always good to have a lot of cushion in between the third places and down. I mean, I only had to think about kind of Sei Young. So it's just like I said, there's always -- first time I lost to her two times when I played with her in the final round. This is the first time.

Q. After your first major, then you struggled to try to live up to that. What got you to this point? What's the secret to kind of going on to win five more majors?

INBEE PARK: It's going back to six years ago, seven years ago, when I really started struggling, which was

2009. Just, you know, overall swing and just the mentality. Everything was going down. Obviously I didn't have good enough swing to be on the professional tour, but since I met my husband and really gone through major swing changes, and ball-striking's been improved probably 300 percent better than what I'm used to. So he's been really the key factor, and the ball-striking has been really the key factor for my career. My swing change obviously was the best thing that I've ever done.

Q. When did you come here earlier? I know you were here for Media Day. But how often did you play this course in advance and how much did that knowledge help you for this week?

INBEE PARK: I played here three weeks ago. Yeah, three weeks before Atlantic City, we came here and played a couple times here. Obviously being a first-time golf course, I thought, you know, because we were on this side of the town, we thought we should just go visit here and go visit a couple times in Lancaster where we are going to play the U.S. Open. We did two rounds here and there. A course like this, knowing it I think is very important. You're on this side of the town; why not look at the course more times and try to look at every break or look at everything that you have to avoid.

KELLY SCHULTZ: Inbee, congratulations. Very impressive three-peat and we look forward to seeing you next year at Sahalee Country Club.