



PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: MICHAEL KIM

Tuesday, January 21, 2014

MARK STEVENS: I'd like to welcome Michael Kim. Michael, big week for you making your pro debut here at the Farmers Insurance Open, a place where you grew up, actually at Torrey Pines. Why don't you make a few comments about your thoughts coming into the week and then we'll have some questions.

MICHAEL KIM: Yeah, very excited to be playing this week. Obviously grew up here, went to Torrey Pines High School and, you know, watched the tournament for years now. To be playing here and making my professional debut here is a pretty surreal feeling.

Q. Michael, what favorite memory from just coming out here to watch? Is there anything that stands out? Did you watch Tiger quite a bit? What stands out about just being a spectator?

MICHAEL KIM: Probably, you know, after the U.S. Open or even the Farmers, just playing the golf course right after and then, you know, hitting the putts that Tiger did to win the tournament or something like that. Just pretend like --

Q. Did you make them?

MICHAEL KIM: I think I made a couple but not all. Just trying the shots that those guys were hitting. Yeah, stuff like that.

Q. Michael, when you played this course before it was, like you said, after the tournament. What's it like right now? Have you played the South or the North yet in practice?

MICHAEL KIM: Yeah, I played both courses. I played 18 Sunday and 18 Monday. Sunday, North course; Monday, South course. I've gotten longer since high school, but I had never played from all the way back on every hole. Just realized how long this golf course is. I didn't even play the far-back tee box on 13. But yeah, it's still the same golf course and still really excited to play.

Q. Can you just talk about the decision to turn pro and how tough it was to decide to leave Cal and come out here?

MICHAEL KIM: Right. Right after Q School ended, I thought real hard about it and it just seemed like it was the right time to move on. I felt like I've accomplished as much as I can throughout my amateur and college career. You know, that phone call I had to make to both my coaches and the guys on the team was probably the

hardest phone call I've ever had to make. But it is what it is and I'm happy to be here and playing the tournament.

Q. Could you ask for a better situation where you're coming out and a course that you know so well is going to be the first time that you're playing it officially as a pro?

MICHAEL KIM: Right. Yeah, I couldn't think of a better scenario really to have my first tournament here, the one I've watched the most and played this golf course probably the most. Yeah, pretty excited.

Q. Michael, I was talking to Pat Perez earlier and he was saying how much the older veterans helped him out when he got on TOUR. Have you been seeking any help and who did you play your practice rounds with?

MICHAEL KIM: Today I actually played nine holes with Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas, a couple guys I've grown up playing junior golf, college golf with. Just talking to them about stuff here and there. Obviously Jordan's been playing great as of late and last year also. I've gotten to know Rickie a little bit, Rickie Fowler. I played with him in the final round of the Open. He's obviously a great guy and just talk to him when I have some questions.

Q. How's your schedule shaping up for this year after this week?

MICHAEL KIM: Right. So, well, hopefully I play well and get into next week. If not, I've got -- I want to thank Mr. Brown at the Web.com, got me a sponsor's exemption to the one in Columbia. So we'll see how it goes this week, but that's the plan for my next tournament.

Q. How did your experience playing in the U.S. Open and all that help you to kind of gain a little more confidence coming into this tournament?

MICHAEL KIM: Right. You know, well, they say the U.S. Open is the toughest tournament to win or the toughest tournament or golf course. I know it's probably not going to be a much bigger stage than that or a bigger tournament. I'm just trying to stay relaxed and take it as any other tournament that I've played in. I'm sure I'll be nervous on that first tee, but it will be a good nervous thing.

Q. You talked about the length of the South course in particular. Tell us about playing some of those holes out there. A hole like 12 or 4, what are those holes like for you? What are you going to be hitting into them? And is ultimately Torrey maybe not the best venue for you maybe in the long term?

MICHAEL KIM: Right. Yes, it's obvious I'm a pretty short hitter. I'm not the longest guy out there. It's definitely -- 11, 12, 4, 7 here, they're all pretty long holes, but I just

feel really comfortable out there knowing I've played probably this golf course more than anybody out here. It is long and I'll probably have hybrids and maybe 3-wood into some of the greens. But yeah, I've played that way my entire career, even in college. It is long. It's probably not the best golf course for me, but I still feel really comfortable out there.

Q. (Inaudible)

MICHAEL KIM: I don't know. Yeah, I've had to rely on those longer clubs more than guys like my teammates. They just absolutely bomb it. You know, it's something that I'm used to and, you know, I'm pretty confident in the longer clubs, so we'll see how it goes this week.

Q. Michael, with these drought conditions, are you getting a little bit more roll out of your drives? Have you noticed that a little bit?

MICHAEL KIM: Yeah, a little bit. This golf course, I don't think I've ever seen this golf course play the way it has actually. The rough is up, greens are actually really firm, and the fairways are running out. It is a bit different. The course is in great shape.

Q. Can you give us an idea how many fans you're going to have in your gallery, how many folks?

MICHAEL KIM: I'm not sure. I know a few of my buddies are coming out. Hopefully, the more the merrier.

Q. Now that you're going pro, what sort of expectations do you have for yourself this year?

MICHAEL KIM: You know, I've noticed I play my best when I don't have too many expectations on myself and just feel relaxed out there. Hopefully I make the cut, but that's about it. I don't really have too many expectations or anything like that. I'm just going out there to have fun and be relaxed.

Q. What were your thoughts when you got the call from Peter Ripa to get into this tournament?

MICHAEL KIM: It was probably one of the best things I ever had, getting that call. I asked him a couple times just to make sure I actually did get the exemption. Just super excited. To be out here with like guys like Tiger and Phil is pretty surreal.

Q. Michael, with regard to yourself being so young, are you still young at heart? You like playing video games? Tell us a little bit about that.

MICHAEL KIM: Yeah. I'm still a college kid, I guess. It's more than video games, I just love watching TV. Sports Center, I could watch Sports Center all day if I had to. Talking with Jordan and Justin today just felt like a normal college tournament round really with Texas, Alabama, Cal guy, like my freshman, sophomore year. It was good.

Q. Do you like the Chargers?

MICHAEL KIM: Love the Chargers. A little disappointing towards the end, but yeah, real big Chargers fan.

MARK STEVENS: Thank you for your time, Michael. Best of luck this week.

MICHAEL KIM: Thank you.