

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 9, 2022

JOOHYUNG KIM



MICHAEL BALIKER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will go ahead and get started with Tom Kim here in the interview room here at the FedEx St. Jude Championship.

Tom, first week as a full-time member of the PGA Tour after winning the Wyndham Championship last week and you begin the FedExCup Playoffs at 34th in the standings.

First off, what have the last 48 hours been like for you since the win?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Yeah, I still can't really wrap my head around of just what happened. It's been -- it's been a crazy month. Start of July I was planning on trying to get my card through Korn Ferry Finals and now one month later I'm a PGA Tour winner, so it's pretty crazy.

I thought I was going to get an off week this week, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen. Yeah, I'm pumped to be here and it's absolutely incredible.

MICHAEL BALIKER: You just got off the front nine here at TPC Southwind. What were some of your initial takeaways from the golf course?

JOOHYUNG KIM: It's great. I feel like it's very, very -- it's a good track. You need to hit good golf shots to get some birdies so I'm definitely looking forward to my first-ever Playoffs events.

Q. What would you have been doing this week if you weren't in the field?

JOOHYUNG KIM: What would I be doing? I was going to, I think I was going to go home for a week. I've been home two weeks this year, so it's been just travel, travel, travel. So I was kind of looking forward to that, but I mean, I'd rather be here than go home.

Q. And where's home now?

JOOHYUNG KIM: It was in Korea, yeah. It was back home.

Q. A couple of equipment-related questions. I know you have "radar" stamped on your wedges and I know JT has the same. Were you inspired by JT's stamping?

JOOHYUNG KIM: It was kind of half and half, but yes, it kind of was. Just I've been watching this tour for my whole life and I'm very, very interested in the players who are at the top of their game. I thought it kind of really, it was kind of matching of what I wanted to do as well. So I kind of did copy him a little bit, but I want to say it's kind of mine, too.

Q. And the putter, I know a unique kind of baby blue color scream. What's behind that? And then also the graphite shaft in the putter, why did you go that direction?

JOOHYUNG KIM: So the putter was just something I kind of wanted to do special last year. I asked the Scotty Cameron team to just -- I designed it on my own, but the color was something that the GSS just comes with and it was kind of a special one.

The graphite shaft, I need more weight on the shaft, I want it to feel a little bit more stable and I kind of went with it. I've been using it for the whole year, I won twice with it, I won my first PGA Tour event with it, so I don't think it's going to go anywhere soon.

Q. So not only have you playing a bunch of weeks in a row, but last week you had the stress of winning in a really hot environment and now you're coming to another really hot environment. How do you avoid burnout? How do you make sure you're ready to go and not in for a letdown this week?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Could you say that again? I couldn't really hear you midway.

Q. The whole thing or just the end?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Just the mid part.

Q. How do you avoid a letdown this week?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Oh, yeah. I grew up in hot weather, so it's not new to me. I'd rather have it kind of hot than freezing cold. I mean, just drink a lot of water, make sure you don't overdo, I feel that's going to be the key, and just grind your butt off really.

Q. And then another question, is there time in your life for any other hobbies besides golf? What does the downtime look like for you?

JOOHYUNG KIM: I love golf so much to a point where I enjoy not taking time off and just kind of thinking -- I mean, when I'm home, I'm thinking about how can I get better at this game. I enjoy the long hours of practice. For me, my hobby is also practice, so I don't really have a hobby than just again going on YouTube or whatever. I love golf and I spend probably, other than sleeping, I mean, 80 percent of it is just all golf. Don't really have much yet.

Q. Tom, congratulations. Firstly, you looked unflappable coming down the stretch there last Sunday afternoon. Can you talk us through your mindset, the mentality? Just so cool, calm and collected, haven't seen anything like it.

JOOHYUNG KIM: Yeah, I was definitely not calm. It was pretty -- it was pretty intense for me inside just knowing that having a three-, four-, five-shot lead, it actually kind of feels it's

more nerve wracking than having a one-shot lead because it's yours to win, it's yours to lose, it's one of those two things. I just told myself I've been in this position a lot of times, but it's just my first one on the PGA Tour. I just told myself not to get ahead of myself. That was the biggest thing I feel like, just playing one shot at a time and just again like starting with a quadruple bogey, it's hard to be in that position and just realizing, you know what, I have a chance to leave a golf tournament, just leave it all out there and just play with no regrets.

Q. Growing up for a little bit in Australia, can we claim you as part Aussie for us fellow Aussies?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Pardon? Can you say that again?

Q. Growing up you spent a bit of time in Australia?

JOOHYUNG KIM: Yes. I didn't play much golf. I did pick up the game there, but not really, really serious. It was more of a driving the cart type of golf more than hitting the ball type of golf.

Q. It worked out for you.

JOOHYUNG KIM: It kind of did.

Q. I know there's a lot of talk about your dad playing on the Korn Ferry Tour. Kind of what role did he have on your early career and I guess what inspired you to kind of make that change from driving the cart to taking the game seriously?

JOOHYUNG KIM: My dad, my parents never really forced me into the game, I just kind of followed just -- well, my brother is five years older than me, so he was more playing with my dad and I would just go as a family, I'd drive the cart. I think that's how I picked up the game.

But once I started to like it, so my parents kind of told me, hey, do you want to do this, and I told them, yeah, I would love to. My dad obviously playing for a little bit, he understands how tough it is to kind of play golf professionally. It's been a big help with my parents just traveling a lot since I was young, even through ups and downs just kind of being there for me and just kind of cheering me on, not getting myself too down. Every time I would go way from the straight path they would kind of guide me back in from technique points to mental points to just off the course kind of thing. They've been everything for me to be here, so definitely a big thing for me.

Q. And what led you to changing from, like you said, driving the cart and being interested in that to taking it seriously? Like what was the inspiration to start taking it seriously?

JOOHYUNG KIM: I'm not really sure, it's more of just a natural thing that as I got older, it just kind of blended in through time where I started playing more golf and I was -- I had a

sit-down when I was like 12 where I think, I want to do this full time and I want to play on the PGA Tour. My parents were like, OK. Yeah, I just started going 24/7 at it and 10 years later here we are.

Q. Tom, you're a young guy, but you happen to be coming into golf at a very strange time for the sport. I was curious if you have thoughts about LIV Golf or if you're following the court case that's going on today or if you generally had anything to say about that.

JOOHYUNG KIM: I mean, for me, our team, we've talked about this, but it's always about playing the PGA Tour. When I was younger I would see Tiger win on the PGA TOUR, not somewhere else, so for me that was always the goal. I felt like when I would one day get really old and not be able to play the game anymore, I would want to at least feel comfortable with retiring and say I gave it -- I played with the best players in the world, I've made decisions for my career and just leave no stones unturned, that was always the goal.

I'm not really focused on that right now like with the court cases and stuff. To be honest, I'm more worried about me playing better than now. But yeah, my goal and our team, the goal has always been to be here. I'm glad that I achieved that and hopefully I'll be here for a very long time.

MICHAEL BALIKER: With that, Tom, congratulations again on last week and best of luck this week.

JOOHYUNG KIM: Thank you, guys.