

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW

June 28, 2023



TOM KIM

JACK RYAN: We would like to welcome Tom Kim to the interview room here at the Rocket Mortgage Classic. Tom finished seventh last year at this tournament to have enough points to secure his card for this season and went on to win the Wyndham Championship in his next start.

Tom, looking back at the tournament last year, what kind of memories come to mind?

TOM KIM: I mean, this event kind of has a special place in my heart because that's when I realized that my dream came true.

I made the -- I remember I just made the cut on the number and I had a really good weekend to give me a top-10 to secure my card. Great memories. It's kind of nice to come back to an event I've been to not being able to adjust every week, so it's been a nice easy week and hopefully I'll be able to kind of have a better week than I did last year.

JACK RYAN: And talk a little bit about the state of your game. T-8 at the U.S. Open two starts ago, just what form are you in coming into the week?

TOM KIM: Yeah, it's been some positive notes. Obviously I had a really great start to the year and had some ups and downs during the season, but obviously that T-8 at the U.S. Open has definitely got my confidence back up a little bit. Then from the west coast going to the east coast, had some decent rounds. It's definitely trending and kind of excited to see what happens this week.

Q. Tom, so your ball speed off the tee is up about six miles an hour this year, your driving distance has also increased. What exactly is behind both of those gains?

TOM KIM: Yeah, I've been -- I definitely spent a lot of time this year in the gym and my speed has definitely gone up, my numbers have gone up. That has been actually, my ups and downs this year has played definitely a role in that. Obviously gaining so much speed in a quick amount of time, just the positions that I'm in now, it's obviously -- it changes a lot in the timing of it. But it's not like I did anything crazy, I just got really strong. I spent a lot of time in the gym, I ate really well. It hasn't been crazy amounts of changes, but it's definitely in the long term I feel like the way I've done it is -- it's going to benefit me tremendously. Especially like playing like last week -- sorry, the previous week at the U.S. Open, on a long golf course, like that having 172, 173 instead of 165 is a lot easier coming into the greens with wedges instead of 6 and 7 irons.



Yeah, definitely spent a lot of time in the gym, got me a lot stronger to have that ability to hit it harder.

Q. Good afternoon, sir. It's great to see you again.

TOM KIM: Nice to see you.

Q. My name's Xeve Perez, I'm a junior reporter for the Rocket Mortgage Classic, and what I would like to ask is everyone has their favorite pair of kicks, like mine are these babies, the Puma Hoops, and I would like to ask what is your favorite pair of sneakers, sir?

TOM KIM: I think Jordans is probably my favorites. I've been kind of in that run of sneakers as well. Right now I like to kind of wear some nice Jordans.

Q. Thank you so much, sir, and thank you for your time. I wish you the best of luck this week. Thank you.

Q. Tom, we saw you celebrating your 21st with Scottie this week. I think back to last year and kind of the green kid that was sitting up on the stage and it seems like you've grown a lot. I'm just wondering how things have changed in that time and certainly what it's like to be friends with some of the best players in the world?

TOM KIM: Finally 21, I never really thought I would get here. No, it was cool. Obviously Scottie and I have a great relationship. He and I share the same birthday, so being at the Travelers and he was celebrating his 27th and I was celebrating my 21st.

It's really cool for me to be able to just be kind of close with the guys who are like just on top of the world rankings on the FedExCup. You get to learn a lot. I ask him a lot of things.

Obviously Scottie, he's very nice enough to tell me a lot of things just about golf and even outside the golf course, but it comes with a price where he can give me a really hard time.

No, it definitely helps me because I'm still trying to learn. I'm still in my early stages of my career, so to be able to kind of be around those guys, it definitely helps me.

Q. Obviously there's going to be a lot of birdies made this week, course is very soft. What is your preference as far as do you prefer the tough scoring conditions of the U.S. Open or do you like some of these birdie-fest events?

TOM KIM: That's a great question because I used to be in love with these type of golf courses where you can just land it right next to the hole and just have a birdie shootout. Like playing in Bay Hill, U.S. Opens, PGA championships, I've started to really like tough condition golf courses because it really benefits the guys who hit it really good and who



make a few putts, not where you might hit a wayward tee shot and instead of getting penalized so much, you can still make par, make a 60-footer.

Instead of that, I'm more in love with getting rewarded for good golf shots, getting rewarded for good shots. It's kind of nice to be in that soft conditions again. I'm really interested to see how low the scoring is going to be this week because it was a low scoring golf course last year with firm greens and it's soft greens now, so I'm kind of excited to see. I finally get to kind of hit shots that land next to the hole so I'm kind of excited.

JACK RYAN: Tom, those are all the questions we have. Thank you very much for your time and best of luck this week.

