

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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TOM KIM
JEENO THITIKUL

MODERATOR: I am joined here by Jeeno Thitikul and Tom Kim, teaming up this week. Just talk about competing this week, both your first time, how excited you are. Jeeno, if you want to go first.

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, pretty excited, especially here in Naples again. The course we know well and also having my partner here on my side just make it a little extra special.

MODERATOR: Tom?

TOM KIM: Yeah, it's really cool. I've known Jeeno for a long time now. We've known each other before. She was famous when I first met her, but to be able to kind of be on -- me being on the PGA TOUR and her having a lot of success on the LPGA Tour, to be able to be in our positions and kind of compete together is really cool.

MODERATOR: Just to go a little deeper into that, can you just talk about first getting to know each other and kind of watching each other grow through golf? Just give us a little bit of the back story there maybe.

JEENO THITIKUL: For Tom is really special to me. Yeah, you go first then.

TOM KIM: It's easier for me because again, she was really, really good from a young age. She was really famous already, so she was always in that spotlight.

I think the really cool part, she won -- she's the youngest winner on the European Tour. She got to the LPGA Tour and the spotlight's been on her for such a long time and she still consistently finds joy outside of golf and doesn't let work overwhelm her. I think that's really, are really cool and I've been able to learn that a lot.

For me, again, I was kind of like a nobody for a long time, so I'm sure she doesn't really know exactly like how I grew up, but I've been a fan for a long time for sure.

JEENO THITIKUL: No way. At least he remember, at least.

Yeah, like for me, before I met him when he was 14, I was 13 and I have no idea who he was at that time. Like the Korean guys grew up in Philippines and live in Thailand and my manager, who's the one who took him here, I was like OK, it's Tom. I think after like a few years he still like Asian Tour, I know he's doing well there, but like after like a year he just won the PGA TOUR, I was like dang, that's how it happens.



I knew that he worked really, really hard, especially when we were so young. Then he walked by his bag, not waiting for his parent to walk to practice by himself, which I think that's the part that's got him here today.

MODERATOR: And Tom, I have one more question for you before I open it up. You knew you were partnered with Jeeno, you saw her win a couple weeks ago here at the CME Group Championship. How excited were you to see that and what was your reaction?

TOM KIM: Yeah, obviously super happy for her to win such a big event. I found out, my caddie texted me. I had just landed in the U.S. and my caddie texted me saying she won on the course that we're going to play at and I was just super pumped for her. Obviously she's been battling through some injuries and to win the final event of the year and the way she did it, she shows a lot of class. Definitely -- you know, she says she's going to trust me this week, but I'm definitely piggybacking off of her this week. The putts that I've seen that she's made, yeah, she's definitely going to lead us on. No pressure.

Q. For both of you, kind of a different skill set for men and women in golf. What can a man learn watching women play and vice versa, what do women -- what do you take away when you play with a man?

TOM KIM: I think the big thing is you can always learn about how different players prep and how different players go around the golf course. Yeah, like just because of physical, we might hit it further, we might do certain things, but there's so many little things that I felt like women golfers were better at than men and I think this week will be really cool to be inside the ropes and kind of competition pressure to be able to see those things.

JEENO THITIKUL: Yeah, the same. I think on the men's side we kind of learn about not hitting far because the girl not hitting far definitely. I think most of the short games that we're going to learn from the men is pretty interesting things to learn because men can do more shots and then can do more special like chipping shot more than the women do because they're stronger. Then also the shaping shots is the one that's the women have to learn more from the men because we usually hit it straight and then just keeping on a track, not like men hitting, you know, playing some shot on the course. I think those two things is the one that I really interesting to see how's Tom doing. And yesterday we play a round like nine holes and I see him the short games, how he played a shot, it's just interesting.

Q. Next week, next month you're starting on something totally new with TGL. Can you just talk about what your expectations are and what you think is -- what it's going to be like. And also, if it was any -- if it was difficult fitting it into a PGA TOUR schedule the way that schedule is.

TOM KIM: Yeah, so the first question, I think it's a very, very different dynamic. I think it's very good for the game because a lot of us, golf tournament-wise, a lot of us are spread out, so you'll have a really good group go out in the morning and you'll have another group go



out in the afternoon, so they kind of have to be there the whole day.

With this format, it's two, three hours, I think. We're all in the same room and you have live betting, you have live audiences. I think basketball, soccer, you're always kind of -- everyone's in one room and I think for the first time golf is going to that.

It's going to be really good for the fans. I think it's going to be really cool for us players because it's more of a team event. This is an individual sport, so to be more inside a team environment is going to be really cool.

Secondly, it is kind of difficult because a lot of it is on the Monday and Tuesdays of our normal tournaments. If it's not the weeks that we're playing, it's really easy, but some of the events where it might be an elevated event, you have to go all the way to Florida to play, it is difficult, it's not easy.

I think it's our job as players to figure that out. And I talked to Tiger last week about it and that was a big thing for him like growing up and becoming the best player in the world is despite those situations, kind of adjusting and proving that besides going through all that, being able to go out and still win, it gave him that edge. Try to use that mentality to try to use everything to my advantage.

MODERATOR: Thank you both.

