

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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MIN WOO LEE

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Min Woo Lee into the interview room, our defending champion of the Texas Children's Houston Open.

Min Woo, welcome back. You've got that beautiful trophy sitting next to you that you won last year. Talk a little bit about what that meant to win this tournament and then about your preparations to defend.

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, one of the best feelings in the world, work hard and then hold that trophy towards the end of the week.

Yeah, it's nice to see a beautiful thing, so hopefully I can do that this week and defend. But very excited for this week, playing very good golf. Had a nice week off last week. Yeah, it's going to be a warm one, but I'm ready for it.

MODERATOR: You beat Gary Woodland and Scottie Scheffler by one shot. What was it that you remember about the final round that really led to the victory?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I know I played really well. I had it under control up until 16. Obviously hit into the water, then it got very tight. I made a decent bogey, birdie with my second ball. Scottie made birdie as well, so then it became one shot.

You can see 17, so I was looking over at 17 and I knew he didn't make birdie. It was a sigh of relief because you hit 4-iron and then you have a 7-iron in. That's still a great birdie if you do make one.

It was nice to have a bit of a cushion in the last two holes. And then yeah, holed a -- not holed, but nearly holed a really long putt on 18. It felt like I holed it. Yeah, it was just a nice sigh of relief having a tap-in. Yeah, hold the trophy at the end.

MODERATOR: You mentioned playing well this year, runnerup at Pebble Beach and then T-6 at Bay Hill. How close have you been to winning and what are you hoping to improve on coming into this week?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, Pebble was a very nice week, felt like I put four good rounds together. That's all you have to do, you've got to put yourself in contention. I feel like I've been doing that, just getting a lot familiar with my game, putting well and doing everything pretty solid.

You've got to do that to win and put yourself in that spot. Yeah, it's not rocket science,



you've got to play very good. You feel like you can't miss many shots over the course of the week to end up on top, and especially with great players like Scottie and Gary. Especially Scottie, he just doesn't make a mistake. He rarely makes a mistake and just plots along and makes a lot of birdies. That's what we're all trying to do, and we're getting there.

Q. Last year everything kind of came together for you here. Was it a combination the fact that you were playing well when you got here and played well here or was it the course itself that you really like about it?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I think it was the course. Obviously one of the longer hitters on Tour and the rough isn't as thick, so it's quite nice to be a bit free when you're out here. If you do miss the fairway, you can still hit your approach shot pretty tight.

I think my approach play spiked up, I guess, and my putting was really good this week last year. Yeah, obviously not too much trouble with driver, and then if you can attack the pins and hit it really well, it helps.

Q. When you came in here last year, you hadn't won yet on the PGA TOUR. What were your expectations coming in last year?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, no, I mean, same as every week. You try to prepare as good as you can and go out and hopefully you get off to a good start, which I did.

Yeah, it's just something about this course I really enjoyed and really liked. I think I had a bit of an advantage hitting it quite a long way. Again, just a great week to putt well. Yeah, it was just a great combination of those two things.

Q. This is one of only two municipal courses the PGA TOUR plays on. I was talking to the director of agronomy. Last year drew a lot of great comments. He said, I actually think this year the course is in better shape. What are your thoughts on the shape of this course?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I played nine holes today and it was great. The greens, greens -- I think it rained last year so it was very wet. This year it's a lot -- not a lot firmer, but more up to the standard that it was before the rain. And it's nice, it's got a good green speed to it, you can still be aggressive, but also got to be careful with the downhill, down grain putts.

I think there's still going to be birdies out there, but it will probably be a little bit tougher than last year.

Q. We got the news officially that Scottie will not be here. Can you assess the field? This is still a very strong field we have here.

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, obviously Scottie not playing hurts that. I guess a few of us are saying, nice that he's not playing.



He's a great player. And obviously I'm not sure what was the reason, but yeah, again, it doesn't matter if he plays or not, we again try to do the best we can. We're trying to set up for major tournaments and big tournaments. He's going to be there, so you can't fear him or anything.

Yeah, the field's awesome. I mean, a lot of the guys, big hitters I guess come and play this event, so it's fun. It's one of those courses where it's not penalizing, but it's fun. Like I think it was a good ending last year. Scottie up there, Rory up there, and I was just trying to keep in front. It was tough, it wasn't easy. Winning's definitely not easy. I was saying it a lot after the win, it was exhausting but it was just an amazing feeling.

Q. You mentioned your consistency to start this year with six straight made cuts and T-2 at Pebble Beach. Is the consistency, does that suffice for you, does that make you feel good, or do you think back to those couple weeks at Arnold Palmer or Pebble Beach where a shot here or there could have been the difference between winning?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, you always look back at the week and think that three-footer that I missed could have made a big difference towards the end of the year or stuff like that.

I mean, yes, that's something that you get feedback from, but you've just got to move on and do the best you can. Just consistent play. I mean, it was something with my coach and my team that I needed to do with my approach play especially.

I thought that I was good enough to be out here and play, but the Signature Events beat me up last year. I needed to get a lot better and a lot more stable. A lot stronger, too. Yeah, it was just a good period of time after the fall we really had to do something about my game.

Yeah, it's starting to pay off now, which is great. It's one of those moments where you don't want to, but you just have to. We're trying to play good in the Signature Events and the big events. So yeah, it was all part of the plan, which is nice, and coming along good.

Q. Any Signature Event or a specific tournament where you kind of had that realization where maybe I need to get a little more help or prepare more?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, if you look at my average finish in the Signature Events, it was like 50th. Just not that good.

It was at a point where I'd rather play not the Signature Events and play well on courses that weren't maybe as tough. You play Bay Hill, you play any of the Signature Events, the rough was three, four inches long. If you just missed the fairway by a yard, you're hacking it out, which I thought was pretty tough.

It penalizes longer hitters because we're not as accurate. I kind of slowed down my swing to be a bit more accurate, which is hard because a lot of other sports, everyone evolves, right?



And in golf it seemed like it went a little bit backwards.

For me, I felt like I went backwards, which wasn't I guess the right way. These young kids are hitting it long and pretty straight. You've just got to hit it straight at Signature Events. I mean, rough, we thought that it was -- yeah, I mean, I guess everyone says the scores are too low, so then we have to make the rough really thick. But that gets away of a skill which kind of hurts me, which did hurt me. Like I said, it was a blessing playing well now and a lot more accurate, which is great.

Q. I know obviously a tournament to play this week, but they announced the Chevron Championship will be here next month. Has Min Jee already reached out to you about some tips getting around this place or do you think she's going to be doing that here soon?

MIN WOO LEE: I don't need to tell her anything, she's very good. She will probably hit 90 percent of the fairways at least unless they grow the rough and put it, you know, more narrow. I think I did pretty good last year and I'm a lot more wayward than her. She's a lot like a robot and accurate, so she'll be just fine.

Q. Texas Children's does so many good things with this community. Before you won, did you know anything about what Texas Children's did, and since you won, what have you learned?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, no, not really. I mean, I don't really have that much affiliation with Texas. I didn't know too much. I know a lot now. It's great what they do. They help a lot of families, and the support they give back to the hospital, it's amazing. I'm glad I'm somewhat a part of it now obviously with the trophy and the winner.

We're doing something actually pretty special, one of the patients painted on my shoes, on a pair of shoes, so hopefully we can raise some good money for that and hopefully help out.

Q. Can you just talk a little bit about those shoes? Is that something you're going to wear or are you just going to --

MIN WOO LEE: We're still deciding on that. I may wear it, I may wear it. Probably not. I think it looks amazing not worn. I want to keep the shoes.

Yeah, hopefully it goes to a great owner. Yeah, again, raise some money. It's a very -- it will be showcased I'm thinking very soon. It's a very cool shoe, I don't know how they painted it, but it's amazing.

Q. After your win here last year, you pointed to your mental strength as a key to your victory. Is that something that you're going to really lean on coming into this week?

MIN WOO LEE: Yeah, I don't know. Something about last time I was here, I was very head



down and just focused on the process and hitting the next shot, which I think that's why it was very, I guess, exhausting because I didn't -- normally I would look around, look at the crowd, but not last year. I was very head down and just kind of did my thing.

Maybe I should do it every week, I don't know. But it is, yeah, it's tough. Like I said, Scottie and guys that win a lot, they must do it a lot. Yeah, maybe I do have to tap into that space more often, which I think I have. But just gentle reminders along the way, a lot of positive talk, that was probably more of the mental strength that I gave credit for, yeah.

Q. Why do you think that week was different?

MIN WOO LEE: I don't know. I think I was in contention and I was there, and I don't know. I just felt like it was a great week for me, I don't know why. I just loved the course as soon as I got on. We can hit driver a long way, and I was hitting it good I guess, and then I was putting really well, too.

Something about just the positive birdies, I made a lot of birdies. And you don't make too many bogeys out here, so there was a lot of good stuff.

I think as soon as you make a bogey on a tough course, it's very hard to make a birdie. It's a course where you can make a low number, you just -- I don't know, I just locked in a little bit and yeah, it turned out well.

MODERATOR: Min Woo, we appreciate your time and best of luck this week.

