

RBC Heritage
Sunday, April 15, 2018

Satoshi Kodaira

Press Conference



SHARON SHIN: Please help me welcome in the champion of the 2018 RBC Heritage, Satoshi Kodaira.

You won on the third playoff hole, in a pretty exciting fashion. Could you talk about the putt that you made that helped you win?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: I wasn't that nervous on the last putt compared to the first two putts on 18. I hit it exactly where I aimed and it rolled in beautifully, exactly where I aimed.

SHARON SHIN: With this win you have the opportunity to accept membership into the PGA Tour. Would it be too soon to ask if you're going to accept?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: This is a stage I've been dreaming about. And having this opportunity to play full-time is a dream come true. So, of course, I will accept the full-time membership.

Q. Your win will surprise a lot of people. But are you surprised at all to have won so soon?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Yes, to win this quickly is a big surprise to me.

Q. What was your process like after you finished your round and at what point did you realize that you might be having to have a possible playoff?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Yes, when I was playing I was not nervous. I kind of got nervous, actually watching him coming in on the 72nd hole, Kim coming in. And I started getting more nervous and started practicing. And I was kind of nervous also when Kim had the chance to birdie it. And yes, I was nervous coming in.

Q. Did you believe when the round began that you could make a run and get yourself close to the leaders and tie it?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: It was spread through by six strokes, so I was thinking mostly of getting in the top-10 so I can play next week. So I wasn't really thinking about winning.

Q. What do you think was more impressive, the 63 yesterday or the 66 in the conditions today?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: I think I played better today compared to yesterday. But there was two bogeys that I made and that was the only hiccup I had.

Q. You mentioned that playing on the PGA Tour has been a dream. And what was kind of your process toward coming out here? Did you ever think about coming to play the Web.com Tour or did you wait to get your ranking up?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Yes, five years ago I did try out Q-School here, but fell short there. So I played overseas and here with a sponsor's exemption. But, yes, I did always want to play here and I did play a few Web.com tournaments.

Q. Can you give us a couple of highlights of your round today, a couple of birdies that were really special?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Number one is, of course, that long putt on 17 to win it. That's my biggest highlight right now (laughter).

Q. Do you think that this is the start of something really big for you? Do you think you'll be able to now compete in majors and play with the best on the PGA Tour?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: I've been watching Hideki Matsuyama in Japan, and I've always looked up to him or wanted to play just as well. So I feel that I'm getting closer to that level. So I'd like to do my best in major championships and hopefully work hard at it.

Q. How do you like your new jacket?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: I will probably not wear it every day, but it is special (laughter).

Q. You have obviously seen all the attention that Matsuyama gets when he competes over here. What have you kind of learned from observing and are you ready for a piece of that, as well?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Hideki is a great player, and of course I'm not as good as him, but I'm getting closer. But his course management skills is what I'd like to learn from him or being better at management of the course.

Q. What about the attention from your countrymen and the media? Have you become a national hero today?

THE INTERPRETER: I can answer that one. Right now it's midnight, two or three in the morning, and also

we are on tape delay. So I don't think no one really knows until they wake up now and look at the news or the tape delay, that's when they'll probably notice.

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Yes, right now they're sleeping. But once they wake up and find out they'll be very surprised that I'm winning, with all the text messages and phone calls about that.

Q. What about your game fits Harbour Town?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: It's very similar to the course I grew up in in Japan, with all the tree lines, easy to pick targets. And the greens also, didn't have any major issues. So it's very similar to where I was playing in Japan.

Q. How conscious of the leaderboard were you as you were playing your round? When you were getting the scoring opportunities that you had, how encouraged were you by that?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: Yes, I was watching the leaderboard throughout the day. On 17 when I made the bogey I felt that maybe this is going to be a 4th or 5th place finish. But once I finished 18 when I was tied for second that's how I watched the leaderboard.

Q. Obviously you mentioned Matsuyama as someone you looked up to, but how aware are you of the quality of champions that have won here, American players in the past, and what does that mean to you to put your name on that list?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: I was aware that the first tournament was won by Mr. Palmer. And I understand there's a lot of great players that have won here. Being among that group is an honor.

Q. I don't know if you answered this question earlier, how did you spend your time before the possible playoff, what did you do after you finished your round?

SATOSHI KODAIRA: After the round, there was two strokes separating us, I was just sitting in a chair, just not doing anything. Then when it was one stroke different then I went to the practice range and started practicing. We didn't do anything special. Didn't even eat or drink anything.

SHARON SHIN: Your 2018 RBC champion, Satoshi Kodaira.