

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR PRESS CONFERENCE 16 October 2019



TY VOTAW
SUNGJAE IM

- Good morning everyone. On behalf of the PGA TOUR, it is a great pleasure to be back in South Korea for the third edition of THE CJ CUP @ NINE BRIDGES. Thanks to the vision and efforts of our title sponsor CJ Group, this tournament has very quickly become one of the most popular events on TOUR and its growing stature is reflected by the caliber of players who have assembled here at Nine Bridges this week.
- We are delighted to welcome back our defending champion and World No. 1, Brooks Koepka, who won THE CJ CUP so convincingly last year following a stunning back nine 29 in the final round. I am sure Brooks will be very keen to hold on to this prestigious title following another amazing season on the PGA TOUR. But he will have to contend against a very strong field, which includes 51 other PGA TOUR winners including inaugural CJ CUP champion Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth, Gary Woodland, Matt Kuchar and Phil Mickelson.
- I am also pleased to acknowledge that 20 Korean and Korean-born golfers will be featured in our 78-man field this week, and I believe the strong local presence is indicative of the growing strength of men's golf in this country. It would truly be amazing if a Korean golfer were to win THE CJ CUP on Sunday here on their home soil.
- Speaking of the incredible talent we're seeing on the PGA TOUR from Korea, it is now time for me to get into the main highlight of today's media gathering.
- Throughout our 2018-19 PGA TOUR Season, we were privileged to follow the exciting progress of Korea's very own, Sungjae Im, who coincidentally hails from Jeju island and won on the Genesis Championship on the Korean Tour on Sunday.
- Still only 21 years of age, he played in 35 tournaments – the most by any player during our 2018-19 Season – made 26 cuts, posted seven top-10s and became the only rookie to qualify for the FedExCup season-finale, The TOUR Championship. With his amazing run, our members voted him as the 2019 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year and Sungjae will receive the Arnold Palmer Award, which also makes him the first Asian golfer to earn this prestigious award. Before I present the Arnold Palmer Award to Sungjae, we would like to play a video for all of us to enjoy.

PGA Tour: Share with us your thoughts on winning Rookie of the Year.

Im : I'm happy to have been selected as Rookie of the Year. It gives me great pride to become the first Asian player to receive it. I hope to continue to show great performance on the PGA Tour.

Q: You hurt your arm at the pro-am event at last week's KPGA Genesis Championship. You played the pro-am game this morning. How is your arm?

Im: It's gotten a lot better since the last pro-am and I don't feel any serious pain right now.

Q: They just played a video clip. You were smiling while watching the video. What were you thinking?

Im: I was thinking it was amazing that I had two hole-in-ones this year. I mean it's really hard to get a hole-in-one. I was watching the video thinking it was amazing to get hole-in-ones this year.

Q: You returned to Korea after being voted Rookie of Year. Do you think people see you differently? You played in a lot of tournaments last year, do you have any injuries?

Maybe you're the type of person that doesn't get injuries easily?

Im: I went to a practice range and many people recognized me. It is different from last year. When I go to golf courses people recognize me. I've played tournaments this year and I don't think I've ever sustained an injury. With the exception of the Genesis Championship, I don't think I've had an injury.

Q: You played 35 tournaments last season and this season you said you were going pick and choose and reduce the number of tournaments you are going to participate this season. The Asian Swing is also important What are you plans for this new season?

Im: There are about 46-47 PGA tour tournaments and next year I plan to take part in 30-35 tournaments. I don't think my plans are that different from last year.

Q: There were many strong contenders but you were able to eventually be selected as the Rookie of the Year. How did you feel? Tell us your thoughts going into this week. You have a chance at winning the CJ Cup which is the only PGA tournament in Korea.

Im: I was really nervous when I received the call that I was one of the candidates for Rookie of the Year. When they told me, they had picked me I felt really great and nervous at the same time. Going into the CJ Cup I would love to win but I just plan to do my best each and every round. If I try my best on each round, I might get good results. I hope to be in the top 10.

Q: Congratulations on winning the Rookie of the Year. Can you elaborate on your goal and resolution? You are playing in the same group with Gary Woodland. Do you have any tips on how to play here on Jeju Island?

Im: I think there will be strong winds. Gary Woodland can hit great shots. If you want to hit a great shot, I think you have to limit the impact of the wind. You have to control the trajectory of the ball. When there is a headwind, hit low then maybe you can great many opportunities to make birdies.

Q: You played in 35 tournaments last year and you just mentioned you will play 35 tournaments this season. Last year you were a rookie so perhaps you needed to play many tournaments to adjust but is there a special reason why you are planning to play so many tournaments?

Im: As a young kid, I've always dreamed of playing on the PGA. If I don't play a tournament it seems like such a waste. I love playing in tournaments.

Q: You realized your goal of becoming the Rookie of the Year. I think you would've set new goals for yourself, are there any specific goals?

Im: I want to consistently play great golf and I also want to win next year. Last year I made it to the Tour Championship and this year my goal is to make it to the Tour Championship again.