



August 7, 2007



Southern Hills Country Club

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	464	488	451	372	653	200	384	245	374	3,631	366	173	458	537	223	413	507	358	465	3,500	7,131
Par	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	35	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	35	70
Score																					

An Interview With:

K.J. CHOI

KELLY ELBIN: K.J. Choi joining us at the 89th PGA Championship. This is K.J.'s seventh PGA appearance, and last year, he tied for seventh at Medinah Country Club outside of Chicago.

Obviously you're coming into this championship playing very well, having won the Memorial Tournament and the AT&T National earlier in the year. Manager and interpreter Michael Yin will help us facilitate this interview. Welcome to Southern Hills and your initial thoughts and having played the golf course.

K.J. CHOI: I played here a few years ago at the U.S. Open. Back then, I remember the course being very tough, and so I missed the cut.

But this week I feel very good. My game is a lot different than when I first played here. Back then, I had just come over to the U.S.

There was a lot of things that was going on for me; adapting to the new environment, being my first year on the PGA TOUR. There were a lot of things I had to get adjusted to. But this week I feel very good.

The weather is very hot, but I live in Houston, so I'm used to hot weather. So it's similar. So I think -- I'm looking forward to this week.

KELLY ELBIN: K.J. shot 78-70 at the U.S. Open here in 2001. Open up for questions.

Q. Two-part question. One, how does your game fit this course; and two, building on your success in majors and in tournaments in general, does that give you a lot of confidence coming into this major championship?

K.J. CHOI: I think this course requires, from what I remember a few years ago, having played this course, it requires a lot of high height, high fade shots.

Back then, when I first got, when I first arrived here, my ball flight was very low. I wasn't able to hit those technical shots that I needed to. The courses here in the U.S. were very different, much more difficult than what I was used to playing back in Korea and on the Asian Tour.

However, now, my ball flight is a lot higher. My distance, driver distance, is a lot longer. And I really think the shots that I have right now really fit this type of a course. My ball-striking, just my ball flight is a lot better.

And I think having played well in the major tournaments and the big tournaments this year, it's just given me a lot of confidence and it shows that I've really come to adjust to the touring on the PGA.

And just all these years, just looking at, watching other players play and how they adjust to the tours, all these factor into my confidence.

Q. This is the major you've played the best in over the past. I want to know why you

think you had more success at the PGA than you've had in the other majors and what you like about it or thoughts on that.

K.J. CHOI: Nothing really special, except I think one thing is the way this tournament is positioned in the schedule, being the last major tournament of the year. It's given me enough preparation and experience throughout the year, having played three other majors early in the year through playing the Masters, British Open and the U.S. Open; it's given me the experience to prepare for the last major tournament of the year.

And because it's the last major tournament, I think my focus level is a lot more intense. I'm able to concentrate a little bit better, and that's why my results are probably better at the PGA Championship.

And I think, I don't know if it's by chance or anything, but all the PGA Championship courses throughout the years, I think, have fit my type of game. And I was just able to adjust better on the PGA Championship courses.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record K.J.'s best PGA Championship was a tie for sixth at the 2004 PGA Championship at Whistling Straits.

Q. Could you go back and review your decision to come to the PGA TOUR in the first place, and how difficult was it early in a strange country without knowing a lot of people to adjust to the life here and how difficult were those days when you look back on them?

K.J. CHOI: Yeah, back then, you know, being the first player from Korea to come to the PGA TOUR, I think I just thought that I had to survive here out on tour; there was no turning back for me, going back to Asia.

I felt that I had a lot of responsibility, and not only on myself, but just being the first Korean to come over here, I wanted to succeed here. And I felt very strong about that.

So what I did was I studied other players. I looked at other players to see what they did different than me. There were days where I would just not even practice. I'd be on the driving range or on the putting green, just watching -- watching other players how they prepare, how they practice, and just studying them, I guess I realized what they did different. And I felt like I had to compete and just try to emulate what they did in order for me to survive out here.

Just touring on the PGA TOUR, just the language difficulties, finding places, it was all very -- it wasn't easy. But there are a lot of the tournament people helped me around. Other players helped me. They remembered me.

So all of the support from people that really care for me, I think, contributed in me adapting to life on the PGA TOUR.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about the 18th hole here at Southern Hills and how it's very difficult. Kind of going off of that, what's your favorite finishing hole that you've played on any course?

K.J. CHOI: Just from my memory, the 18th hole here is a very difficult hole. And I think on any tournament course, the last finishing hole should be difficult to the players, because if it's too easy, there's no excitement; people tend to forget the tournament. But to make the tournament memorable, I think it has to be difficult.

I remember back when I played in the U.S. Open here, as I said, my ball flight was very low. Therefore, it was hard for me to really stop the ball on the green. But now my ball flight is a lot higher. And I think the 18th hole is a hole where you have to -- you can't be too long, and if you're too short the ball's going to spin back off the green.

So you have to have a high ball flight in order to stop it on the green. And just I think this 18th hole on this course and Carnoustie, it's probably my two favorite finishing holes in any tournament.

Q. This year we've had Zach Johnson, Angel Cabrera win majors for the first time. We also come in with Tiger having put on a dominant performance last week. I wonder what's the stronger message come into this tournament: The fact that guys have been able to break through and win majors for the first time, or the fact that Tiger appears to be on top of his game and very sharp coming into this tournament?

K.J. CHOI: Yeah, this year you've seen a lot of first-time major winners. I think it's changed a lot since the past. The competition is so intense. There's so many good players out there now. Tiger obviously has influenced that. A lot of players are taking the same routine and competing at the same level with Tiger.

But just watching Tiger last week under the same conditions, playing the same course, he was just so much better than the other guys out there. He made so many great shots. So that says a lot about Tiger. Although a lot of players have caught up, I think he's still at another level.

The competition is going to be tough this week. Who is to say I don't have a chance. This could be my first-- I could be a first-time major winner this week. I'm going to try very hard at it, and I think if I do, good things will happen. I just need to stay patient.

It's probably the same for other players, too. They've just got to be patient with this course, and you never know who is going to end up winning this tournament.

Q. Who are some of the players that you looked at when they were practicing and learned from, and also who were some of the players who took you under their wing and took care of you when you first came out on the PGA TOUR off the course?

K.J. CHOI: I used to watch -- I remember specifically, I think it was back in 2000 at the Bay Hill tournament, I would just like stand there on the driving range just about 40 minutes just literally just watching Tiger, Ernie, Phil, Retief, just watching them practice and hit balls, and I learned a lot. I remember thinking just watching them, I remember thinking, wow, wow, they're good. They're really good. And I realized that I had to step it up to another level for me to survive here on the Tour.

And luckily a lot of the players help me around. They gave me advice. If I had to name some people, you know Tiger helped me a lot; Fred Funk, Tom Pernice, Jr. and Vijay and Jim Furyk, they all gave me good advice. I appreciate their help.

KELLY ELBIN: Any particular part of your game that you're playing well right now coming into this week?

K.J. CHOI: Overall, my driver, my putting, just overall, I feel very good about them right now. I think the important thing this week is just maintain your body, your condition, so that you don't get too dehydrated. Just try to maintain yourself under the hot weather.

So I'm going to try to manage my time in order to prepare myself very well for this week, and I really hope to have a good week.

KELLY ELBIN: K.J. Choi, thank you very much.
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