

**January 4, 2007**



An Interview With:

## **K.J. CHOI**

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: K.J. Choi, thanks for joining us after a first round 69, 4-under par. You're the current leader in the clubhouse. Maybe talk about your start to your day, obviously a good one. Maybe some comments about your day and about your round.

K.J. CHOI: As far as my swing, everything was feeling good, stroke was good, windy conditions were definitely prevailing. However, it's a very important day for the FedExCup in 2007 and I'm glad I finished the first round real well.

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: Now, you hold the course record out here. Obviously there's something you like about Kapalua and the golf course here at the Mercedes-Benz Championship.

K.J. CHOI: I always like to remember about the 62, 11-under every time I play.

However, conditions then were a bit more fair, less wind. I keep that in mind, in my thoughts, and try my best every time playing the rounds here.

**Q. Your first tee shot today, did it feel like you were making history or did it just feel like another tee shot?**

K.J. CHOI: I hit it just like a regular shot, you know, with a mind-set that I've got to hit the fairway. It would be like any other first tee shot in any other tournament.

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: 5-wood?

K.J. CHOI: 3-wood.

**Q. How important is familiarity with the wind and the possibilities of the different conditions, and having played this course a few times, how important is that here this week?**

K.J. CHOI: I live in Texas, and the wind -- there's a lot of wind in Texas. More than familiarity; I think it's how the body adjusts when

you're playing and practising against wind. With me, it's just always how I feel when I'm playing in windy conditions.

**Q. With the wind and the rain, did you think maybe you were in the British Open and not in Hawaii?**

K.J. CHOI: Yesterday during the practice round, I opened the umbrella seven times and closed it seven times. That's Hawaii's weather, and I enjoy Hawaii's weather.

**Q. If conditions remain like this, what sort of scores are going to win this thing?**

K.J. CHOI: I can't really give you a score. You know, you've got the best players here on TOUR, and I think that every day, regardless of whether it's windy or rainy, you've got to shoot under par, and that's going to be the trick to win here.

**Q. What did you take from the tournament four years ago when you played in that final group with Ernie Els?**

K.J. CHOI: After I shot that 11-under, I set a certain standard, and I've always -- since then, I've been trying to accomplish that or better it, set the bar higher.

But I've gotten to realize that I've just got to play one hole at a time, and I should be able to play my game.

**Q. With the FedExCup starting this week, and you being the very first player to tee off, I know you didn't feel a lot of history there, but if you were to win and be the first FedExCup points leader, would your attitude change a little bit on being a history-maker?**

K.J. CHOI: I feel what's best for me is to keep that same rhythm, routine, and absolutely, winning the first tournament in the FedExCup, setting history, hey, why not, it's great.

**Q. I know you've been asked this before, there are so many fine women golfers from Korea and very few men, and of course,**

**you're the top. Why is that, and are there others coming along?**

K.J. CHOI: As far as the women's side, besides the language barrier, they received full support from their family. And also, the conditions as far as tournament-wise, there's not that much of a difference. There is a difference, but it's not as much of a difference with the men as far as yardage-wise and greens speeds and whatnot. It's easier for them to get used to the conditions in America.

As far as the men's, you also have to think about the military service that men must attend; it's mandatory. And they also have to take care of their own family. So receiving that support, where on the female side, it's a bit different.

**Q. Following along on Art's question, there have not been quite as many men either coming out of Japan – and I've done a lot of interviews on the Japanese male players, partly because they don't travel as well abroad, and that's what some of the female players told me. Now, do you think that they also don't feel comfortable with the food, change of environment, constantly being on the road, etc.? And this is what I've heard from the players over the years, and the female players tell me they love the food when they go abroad, particularly when they get to Evian in Europe.**

K.J. CHOI: With my personal experience, obviously when I first got here, the English barrier was a big problem for me.

But as far as what you mentioned about hotels, accommodations, food, I mean, obviously I enjoy Korean food, but I enjoy American food, as well, and if that's not available, there are other alternatives like other Asian foods.

As far as environment, I was able to adapt really quick.

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: If we can go through your score card, birdies and bogeys, the yardages and clubs on those.

K.J. CHOI: First bogey on No. 3, over the green, 60 feet, and I hit a sand wedge. Then I 2-putted, first putt is 20 feet, bogey.

Five, I hit a drive and second shot in two, 5-wood to 20 feet and 2-putt birdie.

7, I hit a driver and second shot was 170 yard 8-iron to ten feet and one putt, birdie.

No. 8, 6-iron, 182 yards and maybe one foot, birdie.

Then 1-iron and second shot, 3-wood to 160 yards, and 45 yards in with a sand wedge to two feet, birdie.

No. 10, driver and second shot, 134 yards, hit 7-iron to ten feet, 3-putt. The first putt, was a great putt, wind blowing and four feet on the left side; 3-putt.

12th, I hit driver almost to the edge and chipped to three feet, one putt.

The last was driver, 294 yards and 3-wood, just missed on the right side. I chipped from 25 feet to three feet and one putt for birdie.

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: K.J. Choi, thanks very much.