

**ROUND 4 PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**July 27, 2025**

**KURT KITAYAMA (-23)**



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**MODERATOR:** Evening, everyone. We would like to welcome our 2025 3M Open champion, Kurt Kitayama.

Kurt, congratulations on capturing your second PGA TOUR victory highlighted by a third-round 60. How does it feel to get it done and across the finish line?

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Thank you. It feels amazing to come out on top. It's awesome.

**MODERATOR:** And how meaningful to have your brother on the bag this week? What was that like?

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Yeah, this win's going to be extra special having him on the bag. Very cool experience and really happy he's part of it.

**MODERATOR:** Does this boost his resume for future weeks, next week in Greensboro?

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I think so.

**MODERATOR:** What was that like helping you get down the stretch especially on 17, do you kind of lean on him?

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Yeah, of course. You know, he helped me stay calm out there, make good decisions, and yeah, just helps having family on the bag.

**MODERATOR:** Brother here, but other family members were watching from home. Made a phone call with the parents. What was it like kind of seeing their face and their reaction?

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Really cool to see them. Well, my dad -- my mom didn't answer so I called my dad. I assumed they would be together. My dad tells me my mom couldn't watch, she was I think out somewhere so she couldn't be too nervous watching. Then called my girlfriend and she was ecstatic. Stressed. It's really special to be able to call them and see how they are.

**MODERATOR:** I may have a few more at the end, but we'll open it up to media.

**Q. Of all the big shots you had today, was the one on 14 maybe the most important?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Yeah, that was a very big shot, fairway bunker from 190 and to hit it how I hit it was unbelievable. I also think the bunker shot on 18, making sure I get that on the



green and give myself a decent look to easy two-putt that, those two shots were really big.

**Q. What club did you hit on 14?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I hit a 7-iron.

**Q. And then tied for sixth last year here and now obviously a win, what suits your eye so well about this course?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I'm not too sure. I think that some of the courses you're just comfortable with, and having that result last year definitely helps coming into this week knowing that I can play well here, and I think just being comfortable like that is what helps.

**Q. Yesterday you described your game as more complete. How would you say you are as a player today compared to when you won in 2023?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Sorry, can you repeat that?

**Q. Yes. Yesterday you described your overall game as more complete now than in the past. How could you describe yourself as a player compared to 2023 when you last won?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I think just what I've been working on is starting to kind of show overall. I feel like my ball-striking kind of dipped a little bit earlier this year and now it's starting to come into form, I think. That's kind of been -- last year I felt like I hit it really well and my putting kind of let me down last year. Now it's starting to feel a lot better, starting to see some results there. That's been the last probably month or two months that I've kind of noticed.

**Q. And the win moved you into the top-70 heading into Playoffs. Is that something you were thinking about going in or what does that mean to you now?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Yeah, I mean, that's always been the goal. I've been pretty far out this entire year, and with only two events left, I just keep looking to improve and try and make my way in. Lucky I was able to get the win and that jumped me up huge.

**Q. Five birdies in the first six holes, how did that establish your confidence for the remaining final 12 holes to set up this winning performance?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Getting off to a start like that kind of helps settle you down. Final round, second last group, there's definitely some nerves. To come out like that will definitely help kind of settle the nerves a bit and get you more comfortable throughout the round.

**Q. What did you think -- you played everywhere obviously, what did you think of the atmosphere here this week?**



**KURT KITAYAMA:** The atmosphere? The fans were amazing, especially yesterday when I was -- you know, 59 watch, everyone was cheering me on. Today to get off to a fast start, everyone was cheering me on. A lot of positive energy out there, which was amazing.

**Q. Kurt, yesterday on No. 18 you theoretically had a chance for a 59 coming in. Today you had a second shot that you had to play pretty delicately. Talk about 18 yesterday and today and kind of what your mindset was on those holes.**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Well, 18 yesterday, I just didn't have the lie to go for it. Going for it to try to shoot 59 or lay up and try and make birdie and keep myself in the tournament was kind of the ultimate decision there.

And then today being in the fairway straight downwind to try and take water out of play, I knew what I needed to do to win, so took a little extra club there to make sure I took the water out of play.

**Q. Yesterday and then the first nine today, that's got to be the best 27-hole string of your career. Take me through kind of what do you think triggered that stretch of golf?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I just think I was in control of my irons, especially getting off to the start today was my wedges got me into those positions. I hit them tight. Kind of trusted that early on and took advantage of the shorter holes with the wedges. You know, you don't expect to come out like that after shooting 11 under, and to come out like that was special.

**Q. So yesterday you talked about this was your brother's second time on the bag this season. What factored that caddie change, and how do you expect to -- how do you work as a team going forward to make yourself more of a complete player like you talked about yesterday?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** You know, the caddie change wasn't my choice actually and so I had to find someone that I knew -- I had to find someone that I trusted and my brother's been on the bag before. We won twice in Europe. He's always been around me at tournaments and whenever he can, so I figured that was going to be the best fit to finish the season.

**Q. Nationally, Minnesota's not known to be a hot weather state, but are you ever surprised when you come in here now and it's this hot in late July and did you do anything special to handle the heat today?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** I remember last year it was fairly warm, so I kind of was expecting it. You've just got to just stay hydrated, that's the biggest thing. I try and drink as much water as I can, that's just kind of the focus.

**Q. Can you take us through the bunker shot on 18? The TV analysts were wondering if you would consider playing it out to the right to take water out of play. Was that**



**even a thought for you?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Walking up I was kind of looking at it, but when I got up there with the lie, I figured if I can just chunk it out, I knew it wasn't going to spin, and having the wind into I could be fairly aggressive. So I did kind of keep it a little right. I knew if I just got on the green it would roll out to however far, you know, and that was kind of my thought process on it.

**Q. When you're preparing for a championship, what do you learn during the week about the rough and certain spots that you can take chances on certain holes over others?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Yeah, there was some rain earlier this week so we knew it was soft. I think early on this week you could be more aggressive at pins because if you were in the rough, you had enough -- it was soft enough where you could be short sided and still get it up and down. And like today we tried to be a little more strategic, play a little more on the safer side. That's kind of what you go through in the practice round, you notice how thick the rough is, where you can be, where you can miss it. That's kind of the preparation that goes in.

**Q. What are your thoughts on Blaine, the Twin Cities, this tournament and how they throw this event?**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** This tournament's amazing. I thought the fans were awesome. The course is in amazing shape. It's just a great venue, great atmosphere, great setup. I thought that last year. It's a place that I would want to keep playing.

**MODERATOR:** Perfect. **That's all the time we have for questions. Kurt, again, congratulations.**

**KURT KITAYAMA:** Thank you.

