NATS: Good luck this week. Good morning.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I am really happy to be playing my first PGA TOUR tournament in Japan. I’m really excited.

NATS: Good Morning.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Last year I tried more to just enjoy myself and have fun, but this year I really want really play well and win.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: When I made my pro debut, Hideki messaged me telling to just one there, “there’s going to be a lot of tough times, just hang in there.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I’m so excited, I just hope people will be there cheering me on.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: The PGA TOUR attracts the attention of golf fans all over the world, and having an event here in Japan is a really big deal for Japanese players and golf fans alike.

***21-YEAR OLD, KEITA NAKAJIMA, IS THE FIRST TO ARRIVE AT ACCORDIA GOLF NARASHINO COUNTRY CLUB ON THE MONDAY OF HIS FIRST PROFESSIONAL START ON THE PGA TOUR.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I’m just prepping like I would any other week.

NAT: Let’s try and go at it around 80, 204 yards from here.

***IT’S A DAY DURING A TOURNAMENT WEEK WHICH IS TYPICALLY A PEACEFUL ONE OF PREPARATION***

***THOUGH THAT QUICKLY CHANGES FOR THE FORMER WORLD NUMBER ONE AMATEUR.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: It's the first time for me playing in Japan and having so many fans out here during a practice round and thinking about how many more people will be here once the tournament starts makes me really excited.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Producer: Did you see Matsuyama’s win last year?

Keitha: Of course I watched it. Despite having all that pressure and with the gallery feeling like they’re closing in on top of you and to be able to make such a pure swing was just unbelievable.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I want the fans to see that I’m giving it all I’ve got, but also having fun.

NAT: From Japan – Keita Nakajima.

***A COLD, WET DAY WELCOMES NAKAJIMI TO HIS FIRST COMPETITIVE START.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I made a lot of bogeys, but I did a pretty decent job recovering by making some birdies as well. One the back nine got off to a really poor start going bogey, bogey, par, bogey, but after that I made a string of birdies so I feel like I was being really persistent throughout the round.

***NAKAJIMA PERSISTS THROUGH THE ROUND TO FINISH EVEN PAR AND SIX SHOTS OFF THE LEAD.***

NOBUAKI SUGISAWA: When you have a strong player, they can really stay within themselves and play even better. That's something that really impressed me about Nakajima today. Even though he wasn’t playing that well today, he was still able to come away at even par.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Putting the ball in the fairway is huge and will help in keeping a rhythm and getting on the green in regulation is key, especially given how long the course is playing. If I can do that and get on the green with a chance to make some birdie put, I feel good about shooting under par tomorrow.

***WITH A GOOD MINDSET AFTER AN UP AND DOWN DAY, FURTHER INSPIRATION AWAITS FOLLOWING THE START OF HIS COMPETITION.***

NATS: Welcome Keita Nakajima.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: It's crazy to think how things have changed and I really want to do my best to become an athlete that others can look up to.

***HE INSPIRES THE PEOPLE OF HIS HOMELAND WITH ANOTHER WHO DID THE SAME FOR HIM.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I, of course, love his swing and they way he plays golf. But the thing I like most is his sportsmanship and the way he treats his fans. The way he treats other people is quite admirable to me.

NATS: Crowd Cheering

KEITA NAKAJIMA

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Before I became a pro golfer, I was really taken care of by different junior golf organizations and to be able to now pay it forward in any way to junior golf in Japan is something I definitely want to focus on moving forward.

NAT OPENING TEE SHOT

NAT OF KID CHEERING ON KEITA

***NAKAJIMA CONTINUES TO INSPIRE THE JAPANESE FANS WITH HIS RESOLVE.***

***ESPECIALLY AFTER FIVE BIRDIES ON THE FRONT NINE.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Despite the bogey on 1, I just tried to not let it get to me. I was just trying to hit greens and leave myself putts for birdie and believed if I did that, I'd make some and that's exactly what happened.

***HIS STRONG PLAY COULD ALSO BE DUE TO HAVING AN ESTEEMED CADDIE, NOBUAKI SUGISAWA, ON HIS BAG THIS WEEK.***

***WHO WAS CRITICAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE STARS LIKE SHIGEKI MARUYAMA AND HIDEKI MATSUYAMA.***

NOBUAKI SUGISAWA: When Keita was 19, I first started hearing about this promising young player that was in the field at the Japan Tour's Diamond Cup. That was the first time I ever purchased a ticket and went to watch a golf tournament on my own, that’s how intrigued I was to see him play.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: He has caddied in the PGA TOUR and has been seeing a number of top-ranked players in the world, so it is advantageous for me to listen to the stories he has experienced.

***THAT WAS EVIDENT EARLY IN THE WEEK AS THEY FINE-TUNED HIS GAME TO PREPARE HIM FOR COMPETITION.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: He checks golf courses in detail, and he can answer whatever I ask for. I am a person who wants to know detailed information on golf courses so I am happy to receive what I want to know.

NAT ADVICE ON THE COURSE

NOBUAKI SUGISAWA: He's very balanced all around. I'm really impressed by his iron play, I think that’s where he really excels.

NAT IRON ADVICE

NOBUAKI SUGISAWA: And while he really strives for perfection, he has a smartness about what he can and can't do as a score maker, and as a golfer, that's something I really respect.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: He also gives me the information I could not be aware of and where to target my tee shots. I think everything will be beneficial to my future golf career.

NAT TEE SHOT ADVICE

NOBUAKI SUGISAWA: Not only during the tournament but also in the preparation, I will do my best so that I will be a benchmark for him when he are to choose his caddie by himself. I believe he is a player who will create a new era of golf. He will try and create something new rather than replicate something from the past. It's like they say, the sky's the limit. He really has no limitations.

ANNOUNCER: *What a pitch in there! Things improving quickly for the young Superstar.*

***NAKAJIMA ADDS FOUR MORE BIRDIES ON THE BACK NINE TO FINISH HIS SECOND ROUND IN 5TH PLACE AT 7 UNDER PAR.***

***WHICH CAUSES MASS HYSTERIA AMONG THE JAPANESE MEDIA FOLLOWING HIS ROUND.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: It's quite flattering to be someone that they are paying attention to and I'm sure there will be more fans coming out for the weekend so I just want to enjoy it the rest of the week.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: It's still early in the tournament so I'm not feeling too much stress, but there's still two days left, but I'm doing this now in order for me to try and stay loose for the rest of the tournamemt.

***TO MAKE SURE HIS SUCCESS CONTINUES THROUGH THE WEEKEND, NAKAJIMA STICKS A REGIMEN TO KEEP BOTH A SOUND MIND AND BODY IN TUNE.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Feeling nervous makes my muscles stiffen on the course. I stretch myself in the game and take massage after the game to get rid of pains.

HIROKAZU SUHARA: Recovering legs is prioritized. He often got pains with neck and back, so manually treat as with massage when his muscles stiffen. Also to keep a range of motion.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: As soon as I finish the round and put the data into phone, I can do the round again in my head. It is good to review. Every single shot with the situation, results to review by myself, and check today's stats. It is important because I can use the data for the next day and I can understand myself with over hundred rounds.

***AS NAKAJIMA ARRIVES ON SATURDAY MORNING, THE FOCUS IS BACK TO FINE TUNING HIS GAME AS HE LOOKS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE ON MOVING DAY.***

***THOUGH HE CAN’T FIND MUCH MOMENTUM THROUGHOUT THE DAY.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Although I struggled to make a birdie, I kept par even on tough holes.

ANNOUNCER: He hasn’t been far off, he’s had a lot of good looks, he’s actually hit the ball quite well.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Green was tough to play. You need to make both your putting touch and reading greens correct, otherwise you won't be able to get the ball in a cup. However, I am not disappointed as at least I created many chances for a birdie putt.

***YET AN OPPORTUNITY ON 18 BRINGS A GLIMMER OF HOPE.***

ANNOUNCER: They will go nuts if this eagle putt drops. Yeah, why not! The young man giving the crowd exactly what they came to see. And a sigh of relief.

***WHILE HIS SCORE ON THE LEADERBOARD IMPROVES, HIS POSITION DOESN’T, AND HE NOW SITS TIED FOR 14TH.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Though other players was going low, I was focused on what I had to do, which is to play my golf. I managed to finish Saturday as under-par and in good contention ahead of the final round, so I will keep playing in my own style.

***AS NAKAJIMA ARRIVES FOR A FINAL PUSH ON SUNDAY, HE’S GREETED BY A JAPANESE LEGEND WHO REINFORCES KEITA’S MINDSET.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Every time I see Mr. Aoki, I always tell him I'll try my best, and he always tells me, "Don't try your best, just play your own golf." and that really is the most important and often the most difficult thing to do, but that's what I tried to do.

ISAO AOKI: I talked to Keita briefly this morning. While feeling the nerves, I can still see the growth and determination in Keita from the experiences he has gained from playing abroad. He is one of the players that will represent this upcoming era of golf.

***NAKAJIMA TAKES THE WORDS OF AOKI TO HEART AND PLAYS HIS WAY UP THE LEADERBOARD EARLY IN THE ROUND.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I got off to a great start today with a couple of birdies and even on 9, I got into trouble off the tee and still managed to make a good bogey so it didn't really feel like I was getting off pace, but on the back nine I just couldn't get anything going even though I was hitting the ball well and was happy I didn't make any bogeys.

***HE FINISHES HIS PGA TOUR PROFESSIONAL DEBUT TIED FOR 12TH PLACE***

***AND IT’S THE LESSON’S HE LEARNED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, AS WELL AS THE IMPACT HE HAD ON HIS COUNTRY, THAT PROVE TO BE THE MOST FRUITFUL.***

KEITA NAKAJIMA: On the back nine today, it was really an adrenaline filled kind of numbing scence, but was also really fun, and also to have the PGA TOUR hold this event in Japan this week and to be able to play inside the ropes with all these fans watching was really fun.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I think it's a huge event for not only for Japanese golf fans, but to the other Japanese professionals playing this week. The Japanese guys playing in the event really special with all the attention they receive and I would love for this to continue to grow the game of golf in Japan even further.