

UNDERCOVER TOUR PRO, LPGA EDITION

A QUICK CUT ON CLIQUES AND MEAN GIRLS

If more golf fans made an effort to follow us, I think they'd quickly get over the fact our shots aren't always as far and fantastic as the men. We have a more diverse cast of characters. The LPGA Tour is quite the scene once you get to know it.

There are definitely a lot of cliques, though I try not to get too tight with any.

After a few seasons, I'm trying harder to be out here just for me. I'm polite to everyone, and I have only a couple of good friends, who are Americans.

I lived in the US for a while, and I suppose I just communicate with them best. They're the most friendly and outgoing. Though the mean girls are almost all Americans, but more on them later.

The South Koreans are, clearly, the biggest presence. They always stay in the same houses and eat together and are always sharing things.

A lot travel with their parents, and it can get crazy. Mums and dads hovering, giving their daughters candy when they make a birdie, accusations of hand signals from the gallery, like what club another girl hit on a par 3.

They root for each other to win more than any other nationality. Some of it is corporate-conditioned, too. A club company, for example, has a one-month retreat every winter where its players practise all day and eat meals and spend virtually every waking second with one another.

The devout Koreans who attend Christian Bible study are another contingent. I could name a few who

don't practise as well as they preach. When it comes to women who throw fits and curse at their caddie or the occasional volunteer, this clique is well-represented.

The Korean-Americans make a real effort to bridge the gap and come together on common heritage, but there's a limit when one person speaks the other's language at only a 5-year-old level, or not at all. Many of the Latin girls know a fair amount of English but won't speak it if you play a practice round with them.

THEY'RE ALL PRETTY, ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BLONDE, AND USUALLY DIE-HARD REPUBLICANS.

I wish I spoke a second language – but I don't – so it's just a fact that I'm more likely to hang with a woman like Ilhee Lee, who, by the way, is awesome. She moved to America all by herself, bought a house and a car, is doing it all on her own.

The Japanese and Chinese players, even the really young ones, usually



travel with just a manager.

Xi Yu Lin, who's 20, is super cool. The most amazing player out here, Lydia Ko, is 19. Lydia was born in South Korea but was raised in New Zealand, and I would say she hangs mostly with this young crowd.

The mean girls? They're all pretty, almost exclusively blonde, and usually diehard Republicans. These mean girls are nice to your face but then make a comment about you as soon as you leave.

If you're not wearing the right designer brands, watch out. Very few women have clothing deals with fully scripted outfits, so only in our locker room will you ever hear, "Can you believe she paired that top with that skirt?"

I always considered Cristie Kerr the queen bee. If she doesn't know you, she won't greet you.

Funny, though, just the other week I was sneaking off the back nine for

a practice round and there she was. Oh, no, I thought, Cristie Kerr. My stomach went into my throat. We ended up playing together, and she was actually very funny. We had a great time, so maybe I'm on her good side now.

Unlike the men, we can't afford to put our posers or litters on a private jet each week.

A couple of the top Asian players fly private now and again, but that's about it. Michelle Wie? If anyone could swing it, sure, but that girl would rather ride in the back of a Greyhound bus when Air Swoosh isn't paying. It's not that she's cheap; she's just down to earth.

So, yes, with the same flights, hotels, restaurants, sponsor functions with evening gowns and open bars, you better believe there are some players who are all up in each other's business.

— with Max Adler

Illustration by Carolyn Ridsdale

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