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Yeah, Nah: Is Lydia Ko New Zealand’s greatest ever sportsperson?

Theme:
Voice & Visibility



Co-authored by Fred Woodcock

Has the time come to suggest she may well be New Zealand’s greatest sportsperson?

This question was being pondered after she won gold at the Olympics in Paris earlier this month, completing a set of medals from the past three Olympic Games in a feat that is, quite possibly, never going to be achieved again.

We’re prone to hyperbole in the land of sports journalism, and one of the keys of our trade is to separate yourself from the emotion of moments to provide that objective viewpoint.

One of the niggling thoughts was ‘does she need to win another major’? Her first two majors came consecutively, at the end of 2015 and start of 2016. She was 18 years old when she won both of them.


There have been some major dips in form since, but some major highs, too - three Olympic medals, eight more LPGA Tour wins, a Player of the Year award in 2022, a return to the No 1 spot in the world rankings in 2022-23, and an induction into the Hall of Fame at 27 years of age.


If you need reminding about her career, **here are some of her significant achievements:**


- Three major titles (Evian Championship 2015, ANA Inspiration 2016, AIG Women’s Open 2024)
- Three Olympic medals (gold in Paris 2024, silver in Rio 2016, bronze in Tokyo 2021)
- 21 LPGA Tour wins
- 8 European Ladies Tour wins
- 125 weeks as No 1 in the world rankings (in three different stints between 2015 and 2023)
- 4th on the all-time women’s golf money list with US\$19.2m in earnings
- 3 Race to the CME Globe titles as the LPGA Tour’s overall champion (2014, 2015, 2022)
- 2 LPGA Tour Player of the Year awards (2015 and 2022)
- Youngest ever major champion, LPGA Tour winner, and world No 1
- No 1 amateur in the world
- One of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2014

The question is, if not Lydia Ko, then who is our greatest sportsperson?

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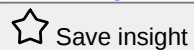
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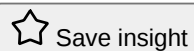


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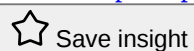


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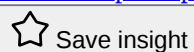


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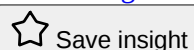


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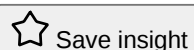


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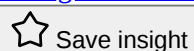


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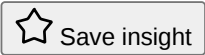
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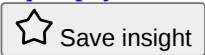
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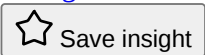
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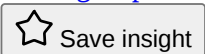
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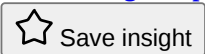
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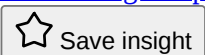
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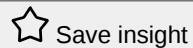


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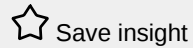


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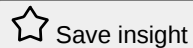


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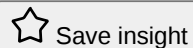
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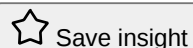
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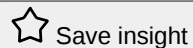


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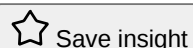
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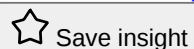
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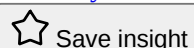
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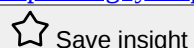
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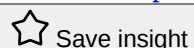
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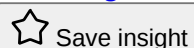
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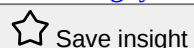
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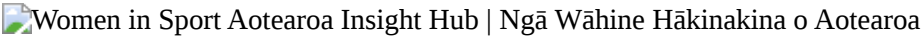
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