

U.S. Women's Open

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

San Francisco, California, USA

The Olympic Club

Brooke Henderson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome to the 2021 U.S. Women's Open interview area Brooke Henderson. Henderson will be making her ninth U.S. Women's Open appearance with her best finish a tie for fifth in 2015. She has 15 career wins worldwide including one major and ten LPGA titles.

Brooke, what are your first impressions of the golf course?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's definitely a monster. It's going to be really challenging, very tough, a premium to hit a lot of fairways and hopefully a lot of greens as well. I feel like it's definitely a ball striker's golf course. Staying patient and being resilient when you run into trouble.

Q. How do you feel your game suits this golf course?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Normally ball striking is a strength of mine, which I think is good. I think you kind of have to be prepared for everything, all the challenges. That's exactly what a U.S. Women's Open should do, should test you physically and mentally, and you should be drained at the end of the week.

Q. And what does playing in the U.S. Women's Open mean to you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's just a different feeling being here. It's an honor to be invited or to earn my place in the U.S. Women's Open, I guess, for the ninth time, which is really cool.

And just to be against the best players in the world competing for one of the best trophies in the world is pretty amazing. I'm just excited for the opportunity.

Q. Hi, Brooke. Many players stress the importance of enjoying themselves during a week like the U.S. Open, especially when the conditions are harder and the expectations are higher. What strategies do you use to try to treat the U.S. Open week like any other tournament?



BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, in a way, I think it's important to think of it like another golf tournament. It's four rounds of golf. But at the same time, it is something special, and I think you have to pay attention to that as well.

You know, knowing how demanding it's going to be and how tough it's going to be on you, I think it's important to recognize that, but also enjoy yourself. I think just being here, so many people try to make it to the U.S. Open, and to have the chance to compete for the trophy and be here I think is just really exciting and an honor, and I think it's really important to appreciate that.

Q. You said it earlier, but this is your ninth U.S. Women's Open. When you hear that, what does that mean to you, the fact that you've been able to rise to the challenge and be part of this prestigious major championship?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's pretty amazing. I did the Open qualifiers for my first two in 2013 and 2014, and 2013 I was 15, I think, and it was the first cut I ever made on the LPGA Tour.

This tournament has always played -- has a special spot in my heart. In 2014, I was low amateur, got to be on the 18th green when Michelle Wie was awarded her trophy, which is a pretty incredible feeling.

I got the little medal that day, but hopefully someday I'll get the big trophy.

Q. How much do you like being under the major championship pressure and rise to the challenge of what Olympic Club, but also other majors do for your game?

BROOKE HENDERSON: To be a major champion is pretty awesome. It gives me a lot of confidence because sometimes you wonder how you're ever going to be able to finish four rounds or be able to play well on golf courses this challenging.

Then you can kind of lean back on past performances when you have played well, and I have a T5 and a T10 here at the U.S. Women's Open, so you know it's possible, and you've just really got to stay patient and believe in



yourself and trust in the process and the hard work you've put in.

Q. I know one of the things you've been working on lately is the putting part of your game. Where do you feel in your game as you get ready for the Olympic Club?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Having that win in L.A., I guess around two months ago, was huge. It gave me a lot of confidence back and got me really excited for the rest of this season. I was able to have a few more top tens this season. I feel like overall I'm in a pretty good place. I feel like mentally I've made a lot of gains as of recently, and physically I'm always working hard to improve every day.

Brit, my sister, and Dad, my coach, who's back home in Canada, is always working with me trying to get a little bit better every day.

Q. Inbee Park said yesterday that hitting in the rough is an automatic bogey. How thick is the rough?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It is phenomenal how thick it is, and I feel like her statement is pretty true. Definitely a huge benefit to hitting a lot of fairways this week.

Q. Is this the most difficult test mentally for you? And if so, how do you approach that?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I would say so. Any major championship, especially here at Olympic Club, this course is super challenging, and when you look back at the scores of the previous tournaments that have been held here, it's pretty eye opening to see that the winning score was plus one after four rounds. You're not used to that. So it's a whole different mindset.

Normally, you try to chase as many birdies as you can, whereas this week, honestly, I think you're trying to chase as many pars as you can.

Q. Have you tried to prepare for this golf course any differently this week than other U.S. Opens?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think just spending time in the rough and on the short game, because you're going to make mistakes at some point and you're going to have to get up and down and you're going to have to be very resilient.

I think, when you run into trouble, just trying to not make your problems any worse and just play smart and hopefully make some clutch putts.

Q. When you just spoke of the mental gains you'd made this year, what does that look like?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think, for me, I'm just always trying to be a better person and a better golfer every single day. I've had a very successful career out on the LPGA tour and just trying to improve all the time. I'm excited for the future and what that holds and just trying to chase big goals and big dreams.

For me, I had to work on my mental game a little bit, and I feel like I'm continuing to do that, and it seems to be working out pretty well.

Q. You mentioned this earlier, but is it important to remember all the successes you've come versus only just chasing the next big title?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, to have ten wins on the LPGA Tour is pretty cool. I think you can lean back on those memories, and even like looking at old footage sometimes can give you a little bit of a boost and some confidence when you need it.

Q. You typically play a pretty busy schedule, but you took some time off recently. Has that approach helped you? What did you do on your time off?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes. So I decided not to go to the Asia swing this year. I spent three weeks at home in Florida, which was really nice to kind of get a break, especially right after the win. I'm not used to having a break after a win, so it was kind of fun to celebrate with my sister and my brother-in-law.

I think it's weird to have a break almost in the middle of the season, but I tried to use it to our advantage, just some equipment testing and trying to make some small improvements and get ready for a really busy schedule because I'm playing six in a row right now and pretty steady after that as well.

Q. There are three other Canadians in the field this week. Have you talked to them or spoken with them at all?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I haven't run into any of them this week. It's been pretty busy so far, but Becky is a great friend of my sister and of mine from back in the day. So I'm excited that she was able to qualify this year, and hopefully she has a good week.

Q. How do you feel your game is coming into this week?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I feel like it's in a pretty good place to get the top ten in Kingsmill was really fun two weeks ago. Had a bit of a rough week in Vegas, but I was able to come here early and walk the course Sunday afternoon, which was really nice, and get a feel for what this course was going to challenge us with.

Q. With your style of play, what are going to be the keys for you to succeed this week?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think I'm generally a pretty aggressive player, and I think if things are going really well, I'll keep that. At the same time, I think you have to play pretty smart. It might not be driver off of every tee. I think it's more important to hit fairways and maybe have a longer shot into the green. I'm working with my sister and my dad, who's back home, and just get some strategies together and be prepared for a tough but exciting week.

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