

# Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

## Superintendent Eric Ruhs Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen welcome to the first press conference here in the media center to the 2022 CP Women's Open. Very special presentation on behalf of the Canadian Golf Superintendent's Association. Please to be joined by past president, John Scott, who is the superintendent at the Summerlea Golf & Country Club to make a special presentation to our superintendent here at Ottawa Hunt, Eric Ruhs.

JOHN COOK: Thank you. Thank you to Golf Canada and the Canadian Pacific for this opportunity to honor one our members today. The Canadian Golf Superintendent's Association represents approximately 1000 individuals at the national level across Canada. Our mandate is to support and promote the profession and to provide education and research resources for golf course superintendents.

As part of the ongoing effort to recognize the role of the superintendent at the golf facility, the CGSA sponsors an national tournament program for members that host these prestigious events.

Our members are an essential part of the team that ensures the golf course provides fair and consistent conditions for competition. Eric Ruhs has been superintendent here at The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club since 1987, and the member of the CGSA for 37 years.

This is his fourth LPGA tournament he has hosted. Eric was a 2005 recipient of the George Payne Memorial, which is the highest award designated by the Ottawa Valley Turfgrass association, and was awarded the member of distinction from the National Golf Course Owner's Association of Canada.

Preparation for CP Canadian Women's Open is a lot of work in a normal year. This year on May 21st a storm went throughout the Ottawa Valley and seemed to target the Ottawa Hunt Club with devastating damage.

I got a call from Eric on the night of the storm, and I could hear the concern in his voice. He said that there was about 500 trees damaged, but after a couple days of assessment the numbers doubled.

Eric and his team stepped it up, and now you have this spectacular golf course ready for the world's best golfers. It is my pleasure to call upon Eric to accept this CGSA national tournament award in recognition of his efforts in hosting one of the most prestigious events, tournaments, the CP Women's Open.

Congratulations to Eric and all of his staff.

(Applause.)

THE MODERATOR: Eric, maybe just a comment. Certainly don't go looking for it, but the honor of being recognized by your peers, maybe just a comment before we open to questions about the recognition of your peers with the CGSA.

ERIC RUHS: Certainly one of the highest honors is when you're recognized by your peers. It takes a lot of work to get this far, and when your colleagues recognize that as well and you achieve some of the standards we've tried to achieve and they recognize that, it's truly an honor.

Thank you very much to CGSA and CP Golf and the LPGA.

**Q. Eric, can you believe you got to this day and now here we are, on the eve of the tournament starting looking back at that weekend in May?**

ERIC RUHS: Certainly if you had asked me immediately after and for several weeks thereafter, there was a lot of doubt in our minds. Clearly with a lot of support and a lot of help from not only our staff and some outside of the community, we had strong support from industry members as well. We had assistants come up from Hamilton, Mississauga. We had some local golf course superintendents assistants join us. Industry related members joined us. Some alumni joined us. Clearly the membership was involved.



We seemed to make some good traction three to four weeks in, and then it felt like we were going to get there.

**Q. When that happened, did every tree on this property pretty much have to be checked after that? You're going to have people wandering through the woods. How much went into getting this course back to being safe?**

ERIC RUHS: Clearly the Ottawa Valley was struck heavily, so get climbers and bucket trucks wasn't easy. We were able to source a company out of Kingston that basically moved in. They rolled in on the 27th of May, and we saw they're taillights leave a week ago Friday.

So every single tree line was reviewed; some of them twice. Yeah, we're confident that things were safe, and we were very cognizant of that as well.

**Q. Just a question, we were talking a little bit about the materials afterwards. Can you just share when you have 1,100 trees that come down, do you keep any of them? Can you repurpose any of these activities? What do you do with all the wood that was essentially left over?**

ERIC RUHS: Yeah, the volume of logs, some had value; some didn't, depending on how it landed or shattered, those sorts of things. We did find home for much of it. Unfortunately given the timeline we were under, we had to move the material fairly rapidly to get our land back in order for Golf Canada and the likes to have staging areas.

So really a cost-neutral solution was our objective. The volume of mulch was astronomical. Everything that could go through a tub grinder did. One particular pile was 254 feet long and 28 feet high, and that was less than half the volume of mulch that we had.

It took a number of days with tractor trailer loads to haul that off. It all go recycled to the best of our knowledge. Was landscape repurposed and/or goes to pulp and paper mills, those sorts of things.

From our perspective, to have it removed on time was our primary goal.

**Q. How long was the course closed after that storm?**

ERIC RUHS: We were closed for 16 days. We're probably about six weeks behind on your cultural practices and course maintenance issues. But a full 16 days closed.

**Q. That's a lot. Just a general question about staging**

**a tournament like this. The membership has to really buy into something like this because the course, in addition to being closed for those 16 days, has to be closed I imagine several days if not weeks before the tournament with all the tents and stuff being built. This is a second time, 2017, and I think 1994 you also hosted it. I mean, do you get resistance from the membership or is it full buy-in?**

ERIC RUHS: I think most of the members are very excited. Like anything, you got a large crowd, there is the odd contingent. But the members have been incredibly supportive.

To answer your question about closure, the course stayed open until Friday, so really members had access to the facility. It does take a while it set up the tents and the volume of infrastructure that goes in, so they're in three weeks to a month early, but they're very good about staying out of the corners and ensuring members have access.

So like anything, it's a big event and we're excited to have it.

**Q. Just what kind of conditions do you expect for the players out there, and what kind of challenge do you expect this layout to be this week?**

ERIC RUHS: Clearly we've had a little more rain than we would like and we're in a high humidity, so we prefer things dry, we prefer to control the water, not have Mother Nature control it.

But I think from a tournament perspective it's going to be premier tournament conditions. We'll be ready. We got a couple days of mowing and some rolling and cutting. We'll be in premier condition.

**Q. How were the members involved? Were they involved in any of the cleanup? How did you keep things safe with all the chainsaws and things going on? I didn't hear any accidents or anything like that. How do you keep control and make sure everybody was safe in this craziness of the cleanup?**

ERIC RUHS: Good question. First of all, we had about 15 chainsaws running for the first five days and no access to members. First thing we did was get everything on the ground so anything that was aerial or hung up or diagonal we could get to a safe point. We did a reassessment at the end of each day.

We had close to 100 members per day and on weekends 150 to 200 members per day come out to join us. Clearly



they want their property back and there is a lot of emotions tied to the loss.

And then we basically reassessed every day, and then sent members up into quadrants. Any areas that we were concerned about or were unsafe we highlighted those as no-go zones, and then we systematically brought things back to the south end. Did one area at a time.

Sort of an evolution as you get into it. The first four, five days you're a deer in the headlights. You don't know where to stop or start, and then it starts to make more and more sense and soon it was well organized and everything came together. As you can see, we're pretty happy with current conditions.

THE MODERATOR: Close off with a comment from CP Women's Open Ryan Paul.

RYAN PAUL: Just a comment. Thank you. You said your six weeks behind in cultural practices. It doesn't look that way out there. Looks great. Brought it back to championship conditions like we knew you would.

So on behalf of the tournament and I'm sure all the players, too, thank you.

ERIC RUHS: Thank you, Ryan.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us, everybody.

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