

Dana Open presented by Marathon

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

Sylvania, Ohio, USA

Highland Meadows Golf Club

Paula Creamer

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the virtual interview room at the Dana Open presented by Marathon.

I am pleased by joined by the 2008 champion and in her return, Paula Creamer. Paula, welcome back to the LPGA Tour. How are you feeling as you got ready for your first start since last year?

PAULA CREAMER: I feel great. I'm just really excited to be back. It's definitely a different feel obviously be a mom now and coming back out on tour, but I actually left on Sunday, and I don't think I've ever left that early before for a tournament.

But I knew that I needed to get out here and see a lot of the faces that I haven't seen for the last year or so.

But I am. I love coming to Toledo, so this is a great spot and return for me to start my comeback after maternity.

THE MODERATOR: Before you we had Aza in here as well, kind of poking her brain about what the journey was like going from getting back to competition mode. What was the journey like for you getting back to this event?

PAULA CREAMER: Well, it's a lot of work I would say. Motherhood is amazing. It's great. Getting back into golf, I had to have a C-section, so took me a little bit longer to pick up a club than what I thought, what I planned.

But everything went well. Still, just watching what my body has been able to do just through pregnancy and after pregnancy and then after that as well, it's remarkable. I feel really good. I feel strong.

I've been able to put in a lot of good work these last four, five months with my coach, Grant. Being able to balance the mom side of it and also the golf has been a challenge at first, but now I definitely am able to go out there and focus on golf and not really worry about Hilton at that moment until I come back.

Then it's mom mode.

THE MODERATOR: What were some of the challenges? Picking up the clubs again? There is physical, there is mental, there is missing your baby.

PAULA CREAMER: Right. Picking up the club was probably the easiest part of it. The mental side of it took me a little bit, but I was able to be able to -- we live so close to the driving range and practice area where I could bounce back home. It's only 20 yards from where I live, so I was able to be check in and out.

At the same time, I had to tell myself, she's safe, she's good, she's fine, go and do my job. Nobody knows what you're doing really. I don't care how many people I've talked to. Everybody is different. Every mom is different.

Just have to figure out what works best for you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How did you know that this was the time? When did you know it was time?

PAULA CREAMER: You know, I actually was going to try to come out earlier than Toledo. I wanted to get out. With my schedule and just I really wanted Hilton to travel with me as well, and you know, kind of trying to figure out that. She would've been a little bit too young in my eyes and what we wanted for her to be able to travel with me, so I -- because of that, I had a little hunger to practice and I got my game a little bit better from what I wanted.

And then I've had such great memories here. I'm kind of all over the place with my scores and how I finished, but I love coming to Toledo. I also knew that was going to be a comfortable place to start. I know the golf course so well.

So that kind of played into the fact, too. Mentally and physically, my body, I knew I was ready now.

Q. Who is here with you?



PAULA CREAMER: The whole gang. Whole gang is here. Shane, my parents, and they have baby duty right now, so they're watching her right now, grandma and grandpa.

Q. There a time where you had a total lay off where you didn't touch a club.

PAULA CREAMER: Right.

Q. How long was that period?

PAULA CREAMER: Well, I practiced probably -- I was almost around nine months pregnant still. I was still hitting some balls, at least for 30, 40 minutes just doing fun stuff.

And then so I probably stopped -- she was born January 7th, and I probably stopped middle, beginning of December, and then after my C-section I probably started back up in I would say -- January, February -- March, beginning of April.

So I didn't do anything. Nothing. Just walked around the neighborhood. That was about it.

Q. Did it feel good to come back or did it feel right?

PAULA CREAMER: It did. You know, I have been through injuries before and I've come back way too soon, so I knew this was a little different than the wrist and thumb surgery, and I was not going to take any risks with that.

I definitely had to listen to -- my doctors made me to weeks longer than most people with C-sections because they know I was itching to get a club back in my hand. I just really listened to my body, and I started working out after that.

Like I said, once I got into the rhythm my body actually reacted and responded really, really well. Like I said, I feel strong coming back. My gym workouts, all of that have escalated, and I'm lot stronger now than I think I was before I had a baby.

Q. Paula, you've been such a huge part of the LPGA Tour during your career. Now there is bigger picture of a rivalry tour. What do you think just the right solution, if that does happen for the LPGA Tour and maybe the Saudis to work together? Or not. What is kind of your big picture thought?

PAULA CREAMER: I mean, this is my first week back, so I'm glad to be back on the LPGA Tour, that's for sure. Obviously there is going to be chats of what's going to happen and what's going to be the best for both sides. Hopefully they can come up with a good decision and a

good plan on that.

When that time comes, I guess we'll have to have that discussion again.

Q. As you come back on tour now, is your mindset different from when you came on the tour as a rookie?

PAULA CREAMER: I actually feel like my mindset is more like when I was a rookie than even when I came back after last year, when I didn't play and I came back.

I just feel very in control of my golf game, very motivated. It's a different mindset than I think what I've had in the past, and I truly believe that is also because of Hilton. Just you feel stronger I think as a mom. I definitely want to play well for her, not only for myself.

But I've always loved the game of golf. I definitely have been -- I play golf because I enjoy the sport. Now I truly believe that I can go out and try to compete and be on the leaderboard or else I could be at home, too.

I'm not trying to do that. I'm trying to come out and play the best I can play and be in contention.

Q. I was going to ask, you could quit tomorrow and still have had a great career.

PAULA CREAMER: Right, but I'm not satisfied with that, no. I'm back to try and get some better golf in, and the day that I want to step away is my decision, not because of golf or any of that. It would be because of my insides, what I feel out here.

Like I said, it could be very -- it would be very easy to step away from the game right now and be content with my career, but I definitely want to do a lot more.

Q. Was there a moment after you gave birth where you thought, maybe I don't want to...

PAULA CREAMER: No, not really. I enjoyed when I was pregnant, just kind of being pregnant and playing golf and just -- it was different, and I think because of that, when I had her I realized, whoa, I'm not ready to even do this. I will say I had to kind of tighten up my practice. I couldn't go stand out there for seven hours anymore. I had to make it much more efficient.

I've always been very goal oriented. Everybody knows that, and now even more specifically. I will say there was one time where I looked at Shane and I was like, I got to figure this out. I'm either putting 100% of my eggs in a basket or I'm not. We had a great chat and here we are.



There is a lot with that that came behind closed doors. We've worked really hard the last several months, so I feel good about it.

Q. (No microphone.)

PAULA CREAMER: Not really. Not through all that. I actually talked a lot with Brittany Lincicome and just figuring out the travel situation and how they do it and why she did in certain ways, what tournaments. You know, Brittany has been great. She's been really resourceful with things.

A lot of it, like I said, comes from me. I know I don't want to just be a name walking down there. I want to be able to compete, and that was kind of at the end of the day how much work am I going to put into it. I've put in a lot, so that was part of my whole thinking.

Q. Certainly sounds like you're getting a lot of support by the other mothers on tour.

PAULA CREAMER: Uh-huh, there are. It's pretty remarkable. Aza, Gerina, Stacy, Brittany, the other Brittany, Brittany Langer. I'm missing a lot of the moms, too. Sarah Jane Smith.

You know, everybody is in the same boat. We're all trying to do the same thing of obviously being a great mom and raising a child, but then you come out here and this is our job as well.

Being able to balance that I know I'm going to be learning things the next several months. That's the other thing. This isn't just a one week out here for me. I'm going to play the rest of the year and play next year.

So I'm sure there will be some bumps in the road, but such is life.

Q. You mentioned a lot of good memories. Obviously winning.

PAULA CREAMER: Uh-huh.

Q. What are some of the other good memories you have of Highland Meadows?

PAULA CREAMER: The fans have always been great. Obviously Pink Panther, and Dana has been such a big supporter of women's golf as well.

You know, shooting 60, that was my career low round. That was here.

I feel like it's just very welcoming. All the volunteers I've known for so long. I've been out on tour for a long time and I've come here since '05, so a lot of memories among people, too.

THE MODERATOR: One more from me. Kind of off the golf course, but another athletic mom is retiring from the game, Serena Williams, at the U.S. Open. I mean, as someone just coming back from motherhood, everyone has followed her career.

PAULA CREAMER: Right.

THE MODERATOR: What do you think of that moment and what do you think it's like as spectator and viewing her in kind of her crowning glory?

PAULA CREAMER: I mean, watching her two nights ago and having Olympia up in the box and watching her taking pictures gives my goosebumps, because I would love that, for one day Hilton to be able to do that. And how cool, especially in that atmosphere, night matches and things like that. I'll definitely be watching.

She plays tonight too, I believe. So be on TV or sitting there watching her. It's neat to see the greatest of all-time doing it and having her daughter there. It's very inspiring.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you Paula, and best of luck this week.

PAULA CREAMER: Thank you.

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