

# AIG Women's British Open

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

South Ayrshire, Scotland, United Kingdom

Royal Troon

## Georgia Hall

## Brooke Henderson

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to the AIG Women's Open call, and first thing to note for Brooke and Georgia, especially, and all the journalists is that the tournament has been rebranded and has dropped the word "British." So it's the AIG Women's Open.

First of all, Brooke and Georgia, thanks for joining, both major champions and looking ahead to the first major of the year. How has lockdown been for both of you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, so I started in Florida and came back to Canada in March and spent two months pretty much just self-isolating at home the whole time reading a lot of books, which was kind of nice for a change I guess. Once things started to open up a little bit, visited my cottage. The golf course opened pretty close to June, and it's been really nice to get back again and start practicing and preparing for AIG Women's Open.

THE MODERATOR: And Georgia, what about yourself?

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I was in Australia when we heard, and I came back to England, and you know, it was pretty bad lockdown for quite a while. Six or seven weeks, couldn't leave apart from an hour of fitness a day.

So yeah, I had a long time off actually. Hit some golf balls, and then when the golf course started opening again, it was great. I could go and practise and spend most of my days just kind of playing golf, really.

I think it has gone pretty fast. It's been a way nice to slow down and be at home a little bit, but I can't wait to kind of step back out there and compete.

THE MODERATOR: And have either of you learnt any new skills in lockdown that all this time at home has given you an opportunity to do something different?

BROOKE HENDERSON: No. 1 thing that jumps out would be I'm a way better cook now, which is a good thing. So



that's definitely been exciting, learning some new recipes and just kind of hanging out in the kitchen. That's probably the No. 1 thing.

THE MODERATOR: And what's been your specialty?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I don't know, I feel like I go to tuna casserole a lot. I like that one.

THE MODERATOR: How about you, Georgia?

GEORGIA HALL: I don't think painting's a skill but I'm definitely an expert at that. Done about six, seven rooms. And just a bit more kind of on fitness probably, because we can only do an hour running, fitness a day, so I run, and I'm a bit better than when I started.

THE MODERATOR: So does that mean you're going to play awfully fast when you get to the AIG Women's Open.

GEORGIA HALL: I've gone around in 2 1/2 hours.

THE MODERATOR: Neither of you are playing in the States at the moment. What made you choose that decision?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I'm just kind of trying to take it week-by-week and make the best decision possible and I felt like the AIG Women's Open has a great plan in place, and I feel -- I'm very excited and looking forward to competing there, and I'm really appreciative of everyone that's worked so hard to get it running and getting all of the plans and protocols in place. I feel like it will be hopefully a very safe place to go, so definitely looking forward to that one.

Just felt like I wasn't ready to go to the States and compete in the first few events.

GEORGIA HALL: Well, it's only two weeks before The Scottish Open, so I kind of -- I didn't want to go all the way there and have to quarantine for two weeks beforehand, which would have made a month for me over there and then come straight back and play a Scottish and the AIG Women's Open straightaway.

I was quite happy here. The weather is pretty good in England. It's our summer. I really wanted to make my



proper return back via the Scottish.

THE MODERATOR: Have you played any competitive golf yourself, or has it been just mainly working hard and practicing?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, my last competitive event was in January, so it's been a very long break for me. I was thinking a few weeks ago and I think it's the longest break since I was in elementary school. It's been long. The rest has been nice. Just trying to practise and work hard. You know, when you're not competing, it's hard to kind of judge where your game is at but hopefully I'll be ready to compete when I get back at it here in a couple weeks.

THE MODERATOR: And how do you get your game ready without having had any -- not playing any warm up tournaments for AIG? How do you try to get yourself mentally in that match-fit place?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Mentally I think will probably be the biggest challenge. Physically I feel like I'm hitting it well, and playing under par which is always great. Mentally just kind of getting back into the swing of things, working with my coach, my dad and also my sister, who is also my caddie. I'm just trying to get the right mind-set and hopefully over the next few weeks can get it in the right spot, and when I tee it up on Thursday, I'll be ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously you've had some great success in the Rose Ladies Series. How has that been for you?

GEORGIA HALL: It's been great. It's very different only being a one-day event. You kind of have to get off to a quick start. It's great. It gives me something to play in and be competitive and it gives me something to practise for every week, so it's really good just to be in that mind-set heading into the Scottish.

THE MODERATOR: What do you both know about Troon? Brooke I'm going to ask you first because I know Georgia has played it but may have forgotten.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Actually in a Pro-Am in 2015, I played with two members at Royal Troon, so that was really fun for me and just learning how beautiful and tough a golf course it was. The last little bit, I've been trying to learn about the course, study it a little bit, and I've really enjoyed going over some of the holes and hearing some of the past stories.

I think one of the really cool things is a few years ago, I played a replica course where The Postage Stamp was

one of those holes, so I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to going over and playing the real Postage Stamp.

THE MODERATOR: Did you watch the Mickelson and Stenson dual?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I haven't but that's coming up next.

THE MODERATOR: I asked Vicky if you had played a practise round, and said it was a while ago but you can't really remember.

GEORGIA HALL: I played a casual round there about eight years ago, I'd say, so I can't actually remember any of it. It's kind of like playing it from new, but I've never been there. I'm actually very excited to get back to a links course this year.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously in 2018, you obviously had a great finish, Georgia, and Brooke, you finished 11th I think at Royal Lytham and that was your best finish to date. Did you find you were picking up really cracking the British links course, or how did you improve so much on that in 2018.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, for sure, I feel like every year I go over and play links courses. I learn a little bit more and feel a little bit more experienced, and just more comfortable I think is the key thing.

So that's exciting, to get that finish there, because before that I was really struggling every year just to make the cut really. But that T-11 gave me a lot of confidence going moved.

So I'm looking forward to it this year. I think another thing, too, is in New Zealand a couple years ago, I was able to win that tournament on a links course, and so since then, I feel a lot more comfortable and I think I understand how to play the game a little more over there on links courses.

THE MODERATOR: What specifically did you change or adapt to to make that better?

BROOKE HENDERSON: One thing is conditions. You know, just always be prepared, being patient, and realising that you're not always going to be on the right side of the draw and bad things are going to happen most likely out there during the four days and just kind of dealing with it.

Also different types of shots that I didn't grow up playing on here in Canada. The last few years have developed a little bit lower of a wind shot and just knowing targets, I think off

the tee. It's a lot different than over here where it's tree-lined. I think those are kind of the main things.

THE MODERATOR: And Georgia, what do you love so much about playing links golf?

GEORGIA HALL: I love that it's the most natural form of golf course. You have humps and bumps everywhere. You can have more than one shot; you can have five different shots to play, chip-and-runs. You really have to take in consideration the wind is, and then you can adapt your swing to that, hitting lots lower. It's just really creative and I really enjoy it, and every day is not the same. Every day is different. I play up there with the home crowd, and I'm at home.

THE MODERATOR: How do you feel about playing with no crowd, since both of you obviously haven't played a pro tournament since COVID. How do you feel about playing with no fans out there.

BROOKE HENDERSON: It will definitely be a very different experience. Under the circumstances, I definitely think it's the right decision, and I'm really happy about that. But from a golf standpoint, I know it will be different. You won't have that boost or cheer when you make birdie, and you won't feel maybe as bad when you make bogey and disappoint some people.

I think you can kind of look at it both ways.

GEORGIA HALL: I think these two events coming up will affect me -- will be very different for me because I'm used to having the most fans watching me in these two events.

So I think it will be strange. It will be strange not to have my family there or friends that I know of, but when we get back to America, yeah, it's going to be different. But we'll just have to kind of get used to it pretty quickly because I think it will be like that for a while.

**Q. How important has the Rose Series been and where your game is at?**

GEORGIA HALL: Like I said before, I think it's great to be competitive every week leading up to these two big events. My golf, it's very consistent, and even my scoring. The last two -- making it a third this week would be great. I'm very happy with where my game is. All of the players have had a lot of time to prepare, and like Brooke said, I think mentally, it will just be a little bit harder than actually kind of going out there and competing.

But yeah, I just can't wait, and I'm very -- I'm confident in myself, but I'm excited to see everyone, as well, and just

play competitively.

**Q. What is your comfort level traveling overseas at this juncture in time?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, so definitely travel can be stressful at the best of times, and you know, with everything going on, just have to do the best that we can and do all the precautions that we can.

You know what, maybe not ideal in a world pandemic, but at the same time, I feel like everybody is taking it very seriously and have a lot of great protocols in place. I'm looking forward to getting back out there and having an opportunity to compete and coming with that means that I have to travel.

**Q. Georgia, can I sort of ask you the same question a little differently. With all the uncertainty, there's always the chance that you'll go to America and then get stuck there if Britain locks down or something goes sideways with the virus in America. How much does that weigh on you or how much have you thought with that?**

GEORGIA HALL: Obviously I take the decisions I make very seriously. I haven't played in events for five months, so I really would love to go back out there and compete in America. Planning to play in Arkansas, will be my first event. I think we'll just have to see how it goes. Fingers crossed, things get much better in America as we go along. But yeah, if it comes to the case that I can't come back and I'm stuck out there for a bit, then that's kind of what I have to do, stay out there and try and make the most out of a bad situation if that does happen.

But like Brooke said, just want to go out and play golf and doing everything we can -- staying away from everyone.

**Q. As was mentioned at the start of the call, what does it mean to you that AIG has extended its title sponsorship to 2025?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I think it's awesome they came on as title sponsor last year, and I think at times of uncertainty and lots of things happening in the world, it's great that we can actually get something positive from this, and to have another two-year exemption, it's great for women's golf and especially great for the AIG Women's Open.

Obviously as players, we appreciate AIG so much and hopefully it will be successful.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I agree with Georgia 100 per cent. I think that was a great answer. We just really

appreciate the support of all women's golf, and especially the AIG Women's Open, and I think it's always a great event going over and I look forward to it every year.

**Q. Golf is one of the first women's sports back in a big way. Do you think this is a special moment for women's golf with all the terrible things going on; do you think this is a special moment for women's golf to shine and step into the spotlight so to speak?**

GEORGIA HALL: Definitely, I think so. As you say, not much women's sport is going on at the moment, so it would be great for us to make more headlines and for people to see us around the world more and the U.K.

Obviously as players, we're going to do the best we can to showcase the best golf to the public around the world. So I think it's a great opportunity.

**Q. What's the situation in Canada? Is there other women's sports back or is golf kind of the first?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I would say golf is one of the first for women's sports for sure. Overall the situation in Canada is doing really well in terms of COVID-19, which is great. But yeah, like Georgia said, it's a great way for women's sports and women's golf to make some headlines and kind of pave the way a little bit.

**Q. What would you like people who mightn't traditionally watch women's golf, what would you like them to get out of watching the AIG Women's Open? What would you like people to see from this?**

GEORGIA HALL: Mostly what hard-working great players we are, and for people to see that it's interesting watching women's golf all the time, not just men's. I think it's great if they do take that from it, as No. 1.

I think maybe more people can relate to women's golf a little bit more because we don't hit it 350 yards. We are kind of more about hitting a lot of fairways and hitting greens and putting well. Yeah, I think if they can take that from it, it would be a positive.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, only thing I would add to is to see what a great game golf is, and that you can play it -- you know, I started playing the game when I was three years old and my great grandmother played up until she was in her 90s. It's just a great game that you can play your whole life and so many great values that you can learn along the way and a great social game, as well.

I'm looking forward to competing and looking forward to seeing everyone again. Seeing everyone here is really

nice because I haven't seen you all in so long. Seeing friendly faces; it's kind of the social aspect, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Which golfers have you stayed in touch with, your close friends on Tour?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I would say mainly Alena Sharp. She's one of my best friends and she's also on the player board. I've been trying to get some good info and kind of listen to some of her wisdom. She's played on Tour for a long time, so for this entire -- well, the last few months, trying to see what her experience is and what kind of wisdom that she can give me along the way.

THE MODERATOR: Have you spoken to anyone about how the first week's been in Ohio or to find out what their experiences were like, for either of you? Have you heard from the girls how it is in Ohio playing behind closed doors?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I just touched base with Alena quickly and everything went well, which is a positive sign, which I think makes us all feel comfortable moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Georgia, I guess you've seen everyone at the Rose Series. Have you talked to anyone who has played out in America?

GEORGIA HALL: I spoke to Bronte. She obviously said traveling over there from the U.K., the airports are very, very quiet. No one was there. It was a bit strange. Apart from that, I think everything's going well as it can do over there.

Yeah, one week down is good that nothing's kind of happened.

**Q. Where was it that you played on the replica Postage Stamp?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Golden Ocala in Ocala, Florida?

**Q. Just a complete, exact replica of the Troon one?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, that course I think has nine of its holes or replica of famous courses from around the world. They have Amen Corner. I remember that one and the Postage Stamp

THE MODERATOR: And Georgia has no memory from The Postage Stamp from when she played obviously.

GEORGIA HALL: Not really.

**Q. Georgia, you've been part of a winning Solheim**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**Cup team on Scottish soil very recently. How special would it be to have an individual win in Scotland on your C.V.?**

GEORGIA HALL: Scotland is my favourite place in the world. I absolutely love it. I would love to live there, as well. I love holidays there, everything.

To win there would be awesome for sure. On a links golf course would be great. That is definitely -- every time I come to these events, a win is definitely kind of -- at the start of the year.

THE MODERATOR: What is it about Scotland that you like? Is it the people? The food?

GEORGIA HALL: Well, everything, really. I love how pretty it is, so much countryside, and I think the best golf courses in the world are in Scotland. Everybody loves golf over there. The people, the best fans come from Scotland, if they come to watch the British Open.

Yeah, most of all, just the countryside and you just get such amazing views.

**Q. And how about yourself? What do you remember about your last visit to Scotland?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Well, actually a lot of my abscess tors came over to Canada from Scotland. So I feel like I have a special tie there, too, which is pretty cool.

But yeah, like Georgia said, the countryside is amazing. The views are great. People, the fans, always very respectful and very kind. I feel like there's lots to look forward to, and also the great golf courses. I'm really looking forward to playing Royal Troon and yeah, just a great experience overall.

**Q. Question for Georgia, if I may. When you won this tournament, it was obviously, and rightly, loads of attention and a great story and loads of focus on you. Do you feel in the time since it's been put on that that has had the positive impact you would have hoped in a broader sense for female golf in Britain? I know it's not your responsibility, but do you feel it had an impact, not enough or more than you expected? How would you judge that?**

GEORGIA HALL: I think it had much bigger impact than I thought. Even six months later I had messages from girls on social media saying that "I've taken up the sport because I've watched you play and compete in the last nine holes at Lytham and you made me find of fall in love with the game."

That's a great feeling that I got to have a lot more youngsters into golf, and if I can continue that, that would be great' if a British person can win the AIG Women's Open, because it just touches everyone all across the country.

**Q. Unfortunately a few of the Korean players, doesn't look like they are going to come and play. What does that mean for the tournament? Does it diminish it in any way?**

GEORGIA HALL: Obviously it's a shame they are not coming over, but it's a strange year and I completely understand if some of the Asian players don't feel comfortable with coming over. I don't think it dents the tournament at all. We've got some amazing players still coming, loads of amazing players from America and other parts of the world.

So I think it will still be an amazing tournament.

**Q. Have any of your U.S. friends been in touch to ask you about Scotland or anything they need to know? What sort of tips have you had to give them?**

GEORGIA HALL: No, they haven't. So they must -- I suppose they might be comfortable with coming. Not yet, anyway. I might get some towards the end of this week I would imagine as they kind of start to travel over.

**Q. What have you done to prepare yourself for the protocols that you're going to have, the testing and the social distancings and the things that are going to be unusual that you haven't been accustomed to.**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, definitely traveling over there, or driving up there for me. I feel like I've had to answer about five e-mails a day, which is a little bit hard work but it's okay. You know, I've just had a test got sent today for me to do, return. Obviously when we arrive, I think we get tested, as well.

We have to book practise rounds online, which is very different. So I think you definitely have to prepare a lot more than you normally do. Normally you'd turn up and play. But obviously we're staying in -- all staying in the same hotel and you can't leave, so that part of it, I have to stay in in the evening, so that's fine.

Obviously a shame we can't go out, but I understand that to run this tournament, we do have to stay away from each other, and that's what I'm going to do. You know, when we finish a round, I'm just going to like air-high-five them. I'm not going to do any elbows or anything. I feel like I'm going

to be as safe as possible.

**Q. Would you actually prefer some poor weather at Troon, as it might make life more difficult for those who have less experience of links golf? It might favour the players who are more used to links.**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I think at Troon -- to have bad weather, as well, at least one day, I think it would make things a lot more interesting. It will make things a lot tougher for us players.

Obviously I don't wish too much bad weather, but especially in all wind every day, I think that will do enough harm to scores. They won't be as low. And it's a British Open, so I do expect a lot of players will be expecting bad weather at least for one day.

THE MODERATOR: Do you like it when it's bad weather? Do you feel like you have an advantage?

GEORGIA HALL: I feel I have an advantage when it's very windy. When it rains, that's a no for me. I don't enjoy that at all.

But if it windy, it can be windy as it likes. I quite enjoy playing in the wind, so yeah.

THE MODERATOR: How about you, Brooke? How do you feel playing in tough weather conditions?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I do believe that it is part of the British Open experience to have all those different weather conditions. It is really fun for a couple weeks a year to really experience all that.

I feel like over the last few years, I've been playing more and been able to compete stronger under those conditions. It's all just kind of the luck of the draw, and also, you need to get some great breaks here and there. But you know, hopefully be able to talk with Brit and make the best decisions possible under the conditions.

**Q. To both of you, do you practise in bad weather, expecting bad weather in sort of August in Scotland?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Actually, yeah, it was raining this morning when I was out playing. Normally I'd think, I'll stop and take a break. I was like, no, I'd better stay out here just in case and get prepared.

GEORGIA HALL: Mostly if it's windy, I think that's a great opportunity for me to get my 3-iron out and hit some punches into the wind. That, mostly. And also putting, especially where you start the ball because the wind can

push it, so I think that is quite important to practise in the wind.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports