

# ANA Inspiration

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club



## Brooke Henderson

### Press Conference

**THE MODERATOR:** You just finished your practice round here. Tell us what it's like here at the ANA Inspiration so far.

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** When you arrive here it's just a different atmosphere. It's just incredible. You obviously see Poppie's Pond and Dinah's statue, Wall of Champions. It's just an incredible feeling and the golf course is in amazing shape and I'm really excited, especially coming off a great finish, just like six months ago, this golf course, I really look forward to getting back out there and hopefully starting off where I left off.

**THE MODERATOR:** You're also coming off a T-10 performance at the Kia Classic. What was working so well with your game at the week leading up to this?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yeah, I was really happy to get a Top-10 finish. That course has never really been in a great to me so that was definitely a confidence builder to get Top-10 there. I feel like my game is in a really good spot right now which is really nice and I feel like Britt and I have been working hard on a few things and it's nice to see it paying off.

**THE MODERATOR:** What have you been focused on improving more heading into major championship season?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Always working on consistency and trying to get a little better every day, for me especially working on my short game has always been a big thing. I've been working with my putting and last week I had a few days or holes where I was putting really, really well which again is a big confidence booster. Hopefully keep it going.

**THE MODERATOR:** Are you working on more consistency with putting?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yeah, it's always been, not a letdown, but some weeks I don't play as well, it's definitely usually the cause. So I've just been working on a few things like ten feet and in just being a little bit more just trusting in myself and trusting our reads.

**THE MODERATOR:** You've had some spectacular finishes here. You finished T-2, disappointing with the playoff of course, but what did you learn about yourself; you are a Major Champion and you've been in contention at major championships before, but having such a great finish just six months ago, do you ever think back on how you can improve that this week.

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** It's just the best feeling to be in contention on a major championship on Sunday afternoon, you know, playing against the best in the world on great golf courses, and just to have that feeling of adrenaline and that rush of energy coming down the stretch is always great.

Hopefully I can start off Thursday with a great round and put myself in contention on the weekend. I definitely think having won a major championship, it makes the nerves a little bit better. But they are always to be there, and you just want the opportunity. That's all I'm hoping for.

**THE MODERATOR:** We have some differences this year, especially with it being the 50th anniversary, going back to the island green, were you able to play that in your practice round today and what were some of your thoughts there.

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yeah, it's cool, especially this is how it started out. To go back to that is pretty neat. Definitely makes the hole a little bit different. You can't necessarily just go for it as soon as you have 3-wood in your hand. You kind of have to think about it a little bit more, and it's definitely a little bit more risk and reward.

I'm excited and I think that if I can get hybrid in my hand or 7-wood, I'll definitely be going for it.

**THE MODERATOR:** A lot of people have said it's one of the best times they have ever seen this golf course; would you agree?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yes, it's in amazing condition. Greens are really nice. They are a little bit firm right now but maybe they will soften up a little bit. Overall it's really great. The course staff really deserve a round of applause.

**Q. You always play well on tough golf courses. What is it about playing tough, major championship courses**



## that appeals to your game?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Thank you. I think maybe just the challenge of it. I think sometimes maybe when the courses get shorter and easier I don't focus as much. Sometimes when the courses are tougher and tighter, I seem to narrow in the focus on my tee shot lines a little bit more, which I think is important.

I'm just really excited to be playing in major championships and having an opportunity to be in those final groups to possibly win is exciting and I'm just trying to make the most of it.

## **Q. You mentioned your putting. You putted really well over the weekend, particularly on some greens, poa annua is a little suspect, anyway and your speed looked really good. Is the confidence coming back? Where are you with that?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I'd definitely say it's coming back, which is great. Any time that I've won or finished near the top, my putting always really helps me out if I putt really well.

It's kind of those weeks where I'm struggling a little bit and things aren't going my way I kind of lose confidence and usually the first thing to go is putting. So just trying to work on that a little bit but I'm definitely coming off, like you said, last week I was putting a lot better which was nice. So hopefully keep going this week.

## **Q. Playoffs are always a crap-shoot but are you confident coming back in and do you feel that you have something to prove given what happened in September?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Definitely a little disappointed how I finished last year for sure, but Mirim played great and what's a great champion. Just wish I would have maybe performed a little bit better in that playoff but I played great on that Sunday afternoon. So I think for me, it just gives me maybe a little bit of inspiration and maybe a little bit of momentum coming into this week.

## **Q. How are you finding the 18th green going for it in yep?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's pretty firm so I think 3-wood is definitely out. If I can hit maybe a high 7-wood into the wind it will hold and a hybrid will hold for sure.

## **Q. What's the distance?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: 7-wood just over 200.

## **Q. And would you be opposed or want them to water them a little bit more?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think, well, the course is in great condition. I think generally the course is playing a little bit firm. All the greens are a little bit firm so hopefully they can soften them up a little bit.

## **Q. What's continued to motivate you?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Just always trying to get a little bit better. Really happy with where I'm at, and I feel like I've had a successful seven years on Tour, which is really exciting. I'm always trying to get a little better and trying to get more wins, trying to move my ranking up. I think a big thing, too, is I'm just trying to embrace it a little bit more, and enjoy it, this journey, this process. I think sometimes you can get too focused on the end result but just really trying to enjoy and improve and make small steps all the time.

## **Q. How would you describe your game this last year?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I feel like last year, I was just really grateful to be back at playing when I finally decided to rejoin the Tour in August. I only played ten events which really is not very many for me but I was able to get six Top-10 finishes and be in contention a few times, and this year, starting out, I guess I have two Top 10s. Not really been in too much of contention, yet, but I feel like my game is really close, and hopefully over the next few weeks I can put myself back in there.

## **Q. Obviously a major championship, obviously every event on the LPGA Tour schedule is important for different reasons but how do you get yourself into sort of the mental position that you need to be in knowing that this is a major; the golf course is going to be a little bit more difficult and a little bit more stuff happening during a major championship week. How do you get yourself into that position to know, hey, I've got to elevate myself because this is a major?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, there's definitely a lot more pressure on major championship weeks. If you know that the golf course is going to demand everything you have physically and mentally, I think just making sure you get the proper amount of practice and the proper amount of rest early on in the week is really key, especially this week, it's so hot out here. I think just making sure that you don't overdo it on these first few days.

But like I said, I'm just really excited to be here and have the opportunity to compete, and hopefully I can just get off



to a fast start on Thursday and things will go my way.

**Q. I'm jealous that it's warm there. But it's obviously pretty much golf season here, obviously so many Canadians and they are starting to pay more attention to playing golf but an event like this, for you to not have any fans, again in a major situation like this, has that been tough for you to play without those crowds?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. I really miss the crowds and the fans, especially here in the desert, there are always a lot of Canadians and the Brooke Brigade following. You definitely miss their energy and their general excitement out here.

But at the same time, when you tee it up on Thursday, you're just trying to be the best that you can. And maybe acting more excited when I make a birdie will help replace all the fans.

**Q. You mentioned coming back to ANA and maybe a little bit of feeling that there might have been unfinished business given how things unfolded last time. Do you carry that with you or just focus on what you need to do?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think it's really important to take away the positives from that week because I played really well and there's a lot of good things that happened. Unfortunately I didn't lift the trophy but I was tied for the lead when we finished 72 holes. So that's a lot of confidence and that's a great feeling.

This year, it is a different golf course. Last year, it played a lot differently than it does normally just because of the time of year that it was played. But I'm hoping to take some of the things I learned last year and all the things I learned since I started playing this event in 2014 as an amateur and hopefully I can use all that knowledge and just perform well.

**Q. There was no Australian segment this year, so how would you assess where you and your game are right now. I know you mentioned you're feeling pretty good about it, but is this where you wanted your game to be coming into the ANA?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think so. I played really well at Diamond Resorts early on and then there was a little bit of a break there before the two Florida events where I didn't really see the results that I felt like maybe I deserved. Still I made the cut and I was playing the weekend and making some things happen.

And last weekend, Carlsbad, California, I've never really

played well there. So to get the Top-10 there is definitely a boost and hopefully I can keep going.

**Q. You mentioned working on your putting. Who are you working with and what are some of the things you're specifically working on? Is it involving changes to your stroke? Pace? Grip? Anything like that?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, so my dad is my coach. He's back in Canada. Just virtually and he's working on the mental side of it which I think is probably the most important part, and then my sister, she caddies for me and also helps a lot with the coaching aspect, too, when she's out here with me. On putting we've been working together on different techniques and styles on how to read it and finding a balance for what works well for both of us and narrowing that in every week.

I've actually switched to left-hand-low from inside ten feet which I put into play last week and it seemed to work out really nicely. That was a big change for me. But I feel really comfortable with it and I think I'll keep it going.

**Q. You mentioned wanting to get off to a fast start on Thursday. What do you need to have happen to have that fast start?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Out here it's really important to hit fairways. I also think that if you can hit it long off the tee, you definitely have an advantage. But with how long the rough is, most importantly you have to hit fairways and then going into the greens with approach shots, you have to play smart. There's a lot of different slopes and there's definitely easier places to putt from for every pin location. So that's where Britt and my dad come in and we both try to plan it out and get a good strategy together, and hopefully once we get that strategy, then I can follow it.

**Q. You talked about trying to get your confidence back a little bit. Is there a specific event or moment that you think back to that you felt like you weren't really confident you're trying to get back to?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I feel like generally I'm a pretty confident player. I think maybe just the last few weeks, I've definitely lost a little bit but there's times I've felt really great and been playing well. And other times -- which is golf, right, it's so up-and-down, and especially mentally, it's so demanding. So just trying to believe in myself a little bit more, trust in the process of what we are doing and just trying to enjoy it.

**Q. Are there things your sister and dad have worked with you on that help when you're on the course?**



BROOKE HENDERSON: I think just trusting what we're doing. It's been successful for a really long time, and sometimes you see great results and sometimes not as good as you would like. But you're always just trying to improve every single day and trying to get a little bit better.

I think belief and trust is probably the two No. 1 things.

**Q. When the last time your dad was at a tournament with you?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: January 2020.

**Q. And how difficult has that been for you?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, he's always there, like virtually, always helping us out and sending us his notes that he has on every course and FaceTiming and everything. So it's been okay. Definitely miss having my mom and him out here, to show support and helping out on the course.

But Britt has really stepped up and she's been a huge support for me.

**Q. How are you finding life as a sister-in-law being now that Britt is married?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's really great. I love Zach and he's a great addition to the family. It's pretty cool because he works with the LPGA, so he's able to travel to quite a few events that we're at, too, which makes it really fun.

THE MODERATOR: This is the 50th anniversary. What does it mean to you to be a part of the 50th edition of this tournament and what memories do you think back of, either playing or watching?

BROOKE HENDERSON: This tournament is so special, and to think it's 50 years old is really neat. To be a part of it for the last few years is really cool to me. Growing up, this is the tournament as a little girl that you dream of playing in and watching and hopefully winning sometime. For the men, it's the green jacket. For us, it's to jump into Poppie's Pond. It's just great to be a part of and I just -- yeah, it's just special to be out here and hopefully one day I'll be able to make that jump.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Brooke, for joining us.

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