

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

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Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Karrie Webb

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the virtual media center here at ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer.

I am pleased to be joined by the 2013 champion, Karrie Webb. I want to get things started. Welcome back to Seaview, welcome back to the east coast. We were just talking about how you recently flew back from Australia.

What's it been like gearing up for an event that I'm sure holds a lot of fun memories for you?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it's really great to be back here at the Seaview resort. I do have great memories here. I just love this tournament. ShopRite has supported it for so long and it's sort of -- it's such a familiar place for a lot of us that have been out here for a long time.

So I have lots of family and friends that always come down for the weekend, so for me it's always been a really fun week. I'm just glad to be back to play it.

Q. What was it like going back to Australia for a few weeks and months?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it's been great. My goal now is to spend a little bit more time back there now that I'm not playing as much. It's been really good.

Australia has sort of moved on from the strict quarantine through COVID, so everything is mostly back to normal now. You can travel a lot more freely back there, which has been good.

Q. Stepping back to last week, I'm sure you were expecting this, but speaking of Australian golf in general, Minjee Lee winning last week's U.S. Women's Open at a place that is also special to you as well, at Pine Needles.

What was this past weekend like following that along and watching her success rise through that weekend?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think Minjee would've gone into the week as a favorite having won Founders Cup and being the great ball striker she is. It really is a ball-striker's golf course. It was just amazing to watch and very special for me to watch her walk down the last with such a big lead knowing she was going to win, because that's what I experienced 21 years ago.

So it was really special. I was really proud of her. I started my Sunday with a five-shot lead, but I started off quite shaky that day. Going into Sunday's round I just thought if Minjee could get off to a fairly steady start I think she'll be fine, and she birdied the first two holes and I was like, Oh, she's off the races now.

I knew she had it in her for the rest of the day.

Q. I think I saw her say that you had texted her saying, let's go Aussie.

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I didn't want to ruin her mojo. She played so well all week. I just wanted to say great playing. I didn't even want to say, keep it going. It was just like, great playing, love watching, all the best.

It was sort of very simple text just to let her know that I was following along.

Q. What does it say for just the growth of Australian golf in general as you've seen Minjee and Hannah and so many other young Australian golfers, even some that are here this week as well, as you what happened them prime into their success?

KARRIE WEBB: It's been great. A lot of them have been a part of my scholarship series back in Australia and come over here and they've gone to U.S. Opens. Minjee, the first U.S. Open she attended was at Sebonack when Inbee won.

The following year she was my scholarship winner again and actually qualified to play at Pinehurst.



Same with Greenie. Her first U.S. Open experience was coming over to stay with me at Lancaster Country Club in 2015. Those were the experiences that I wanted. I wanted the girls to aim to play in those events some day and aim to win them.

For Hannah and Minjee both to have gone on and win the events they attended it's really, really cool for me.

Q. Back to New Jersey this week, as you prepare for an event like this, I mean, the last competitive we start we saw you was in Gainbridge at Boca, and we know that was a very hometown feel for you. You made the cut. You were able to compete on the weekend. For you, what does a practice schedule look like as you gear up for LPGA competition now?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I mean, think I sort of get back into the rhythm of it when I know something is coming up. Obviously you're not competition sharp, so even if practice is going well or poorly, it really doesn't change I guess my expectations going in.

We'll just see what we get. You know, I think I realized with the work that has to go into it why I'm not playing as much. I think that's the toughest part, the behind the scenes stuff. If I could just show up on Thursday and tee it up without too much work I would probably still play.

There is just so much work to being at your very best and trying to compete with the best in the world. So it's just great to only out and still be able to do it a little bit and see some people, familiar faces that I don't get to see as often.

Q. Does the competitive person in you kind of have to go between the, oh, I know it's a little bit more work than it used to be when I was out here all the time, does it kind of still come through when you get back on the course do you think?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think so. I did put some time into it before I came out here. I played a little more golf in Australia than I have been. My niece is playing a bit more now so she had asked me to go out and play with her a little bit and help her out with her game. So that was really cool and a fun experience as well.

Yeah, just coming back out here, you know, I don't know what to expect as far as my game, but I think I've had so many special moments and magical moments in my career that I think you always feel like there is some left.

So I don't show up thinking or expecting to play poorly. I think I can play well and I think it would be lightning in a bottle if I won, but wouldn't put it past myself to put myself

there with a chance.

It's a lottery as to what could happen. I know that I've done many great things before and who knows.

Q. A lot of magical moments for you. (No microphone.)

KARRIE WEBB: I think so. And I've played it a lot. Even playing practice rounds. I played a practice round with two of the young Aussie rookies yesterday and it was super windy yesterday. You know, I just know how to play this course in the wind, so I hope it's windy for the three days that we play.

But I think the length that it is, it doesn't disadvantage me that the girls are now hitting it 30 past me because there are only a couple holes that will take effect. It is a course I think I can be competitive on.

Q. Just what were you doing back in Australia? What was a typical day like? You mentioned you played with your niece. How much did you get away from the game? Were you just living a retired life? What were you doing back there?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, just enjoying being home was the main thing. I actually had quite a few business -- like things that were scheduled over the last two years that weren't able to be done. I had a few of those commitments to travel to throughout Australia to do those as well.

And then, yeah, just a little bit of golf, a little bit of just enjoying being home. My football team, we have season tickets too so got to the first five home games. They're having a really good season this year, too, so that was exciting.

Yeah, just stuff. I don't know. I thought when my playing career wound down a little bit and I wasn't traveling as much that the year would slow down, but we're already in June, and to tell you what I did for two and a half months in Australia doesn't seem like much, but the time went really quickly.

Q. You've won an amazing \$22 million so far in 500 tournaments. That's about \$40,000 per --

KARRIE WEBB: Oh, that makes me tired, 500 tournaments.

Q. That's about \$40,000 per event. Most women out here don't have that kind of success; you would agree?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, yeah.

Q. It's a hard life out here for many of them.

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it is. It's not the glamor that shows up on TV. Even people that would've tuned in to watch Minjee win the record 1.8 million last week, it's not that easy.

I think it definitely I think could be a little bit more lonely out here for the young girls than it was when I first started. When I first started we weren't playing for enough money that we could have mom and dad and swing coach and our whole team travel with us.

We had to travel with other players and share rooms. You sort of traveled all together as a big unit, a big family. More friendships were made and it was less lonely when I came out on tour for sure.

I understand why some of the girls that can't -- they still don't have the opportunity to be able to afford to have their team travel with them. It's hard then to go out to dinner with someone who has dinner companions built in because they have their team with them.

I can see why in many respects you hear about girls being homesick or lonely out on the road. It's just those things you have to navigate as well as learning how to play professional golf and make a living from it.

Q. To that point, I believe the next stop back in the day was the Corning Classic, and it was a regular thing for women to get into the same car and make at that trip up there, right?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, and I think our schedule used to be better like that. The West Coast Swing would be Tucson, Phoenix, the Dinah Shore at the time, and then to LA; all those were drivable.

And then we would be Atlanta, Nashville. You sort of -- you didn't have to fly as much. Yeah, you did. You carpooled and caravanned to the next events.

You know, it's harder to do that now because it's sort of crisscrossing all over the country.

Q. And can you tell me one thing that you learned through the COVID experience?

KARRIE WEBB: I guess that I'm okay staying at home. (Laughter.) The first probably six weeks of COVID at the start of 2020 there I had just gotten back from Australia when the world shut down. You know, everything that I

had scheduled -- I was going to play a little bit that year. I had some commitments, speaking commitments and stuff like that and sort my whole year had been scheduled, and that all got canceled overnight.

For the first six weeks I was like, we have to go somewhere, we have to go on a trip. And then now, like even packing to come up here I'm like, oh, I like sleeping in my own bed.

Yeah, I think I learnt that home is great and I really enjoyed those two years of not being super busy.

Q. I was watching you yesterday on the putting green and you were giving I guess putting instructions to a younger player. I don't know who the player was.

KARRIE WEBB: Stephanie Kyriacou, rookie from Australia.

Q. Okay. Do younger players come to you frequently for advice, not only about playing and technique, but on life and the LPGA Tour?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think all the young Aussie girls know that I'm not someone that pushes myself on them. I had plenty of unwarranted advice over my career where people would just offer me their opinions and I wasn't asking for any help.

So I don't go up and say, I think this is what you should do, but I think all the Aussie girls especially know that I'm there if they need. And then there has been a few other players from other countries that have reached out, and I'm more than happy to help.

I've been so lucky to play this game at such a high level, and I just -- I want to see anyone, any of the girls that play reach their full potential, whatever that might be. If I could be a small part in that, that gives me a lot of joy.

THE MODERATOR: I think I'll wrap it up here with something that we talked a little bit about. We released Meaghan Francella's DriveOn story today of what it took to walk away from the game, to becoming an LPGA professional, to now competing in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship again. I know you were able to watch her video that was released. Very touching, very moving. Just as a friend, seeing her story be told on this kind of stage, what does that mean to you?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it's really special. Meaghan has been a good mate of mine. I've sort of seen her whole progression from when she was a LPGA rookie to where she is now.

You know, I joked with her the other day, the only employment opportunity in golf that she hasn't got on her resume is greens superintendant. She's hit every other golf employment, even being an administrator working for the LPGA. Like she's got it all on her resume.

So Meaghan loves the game of golf, and where she is right now, back to teaching, you know -- besides playing; I think she would give anything to still probably be out here playing full time. But she really found her niche as a teacher. I been to both of the facilities she has been teaching at the last two years and everyone loves her. Can't say enough great things about her.

I'm just really proud of her that she's found her spot now and that she is getting back into playing a little bit. I'm excited for her to play this week and then in KPMG in a couple weeks.

THE MODERATOR: We like to say she is one of a local favorite here because of her close-knit ties to Philadelphia and such. I know you recently were celebrating birthdays together. When you talk about coming back to Galloway, New Jersey and this spot in particular, like you said earlier, seeing friends that you haven't seen in a little bit, how much more special does that make a week like this?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it makes it very special. Obviously like I said, I'm seeing friends and family from outside of the tour here this week, too.

But I think when you're caught up in full time playing and you've been out here for a long time, there is a lot of other noise and rubbish that goes on, as any little small town. Stuff like our little LPGA community. That stuff clouds what really is great out here sometimes.

I think when you step away from it and you come back you -- I miss things I didn't think I would miss, and I think that's just the wear and tear of what I was doing, trying to play at my best and asking the most of myself every week and all that other noise.

I think when you come back just occasionally, you, one, realize how great it was that I got to do this for as long as I did as well as did it, but also the people you met along the way.

THE MODERATOR: Amazing. Thank you so much for coming in and best of luck this week.

KARRIE WEBB: Thank you.

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