

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

Wednesday, June 5, 2024
Galloway, New Jersey, USA
Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Brooke Henderson Gianna Clemente

Press Conference



just getting out there and playing more golf is really valuable.

Q. Brooke, you won here, like you said, in 2022. What do you remember most about that win and the emotions?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I was having a little bit of a rough stretch in 2022 leading into that event, so to come out here and to play really three solid rounds of golf and put myself contention on the last day and really make a huge climb on the Sunday, lots of birdies and an eagle on the playoff hole, obviously so much fun.

Made a huge impact on my career and gave me a lot of confidence for the rest of that season, which included winning a major a few weeks later. So it was a really big turning point in my season in 2022, and just having so much history here myself with the sponsors' invite in 2015, just being able to play here since then, it was a very special victory.

Q. When you sit next to an athlete like Gianna, who's in that sponsors' invite position, what kind of advice would you give to her about this event and having this as the beginning of your career?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. It's super exciting to her to be able to get the sponsors' invite this week. She's an amazing player and I know she's going to play great the next three days.

It's just a great opportunity to learn as much as you can. This event has been here forever, so hopefully it'll be here forever in the future too, so you'll be able to learn the course and take good notes.

When you come back later in your career, you'll have things figured out a little bit more, which is really cool. Yeah, just really enjoy the opportunity. I mean, I've always been very grateful for the opportunity this event gave me.

Q. Gianna, sponsor invite this year. Talk about how you've prepped -- this isn't your first LPGA tournament

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center. Joined by Brooke Henderson and Gianna Clemente.

Just getting you both in here just to talk a little bit about the ShopRite LPGA Classic. It's a legendary event, long history, amazing with charitable giving as well. They have a history as well of giving opportunities to players at the beginning of their career.

Brooke, I believe it was 2015 you played here for the first time, and Gianna, you're a sponsor invite this year. Talk about from each of your perspectives what that means to you to play in this event.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, this event has been so meaningful and very special in my career. Receiving the sponsor invite in 2015 was critical to my year that year and getting into as many LPGA events as I could. I was able to make the cut and make some money, which was great.

I've been able to come here every year since, which is awesome. In 2022 was able to win and add my name to a long list of incredible athletes and women who have won this event before. That was very special.

And this year I'm just excited to be back and have the opportunity, because as you mentioned, there are so many great things about this event, like you mentioned, the charitable aspect and giving back to the community.

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, this is my fifth LPGA event, so obviously any sponsor exemption and opportunity that I can be given, I'll take it.

All the LPGA experience that I've got in the past, was able to Monday qualify three times in a row and that experience I'll definitely never forget it.

Yeah, any experience I can get playing with the pros and



... when all is said, we're done.®

-- but talk about how you prepped for this one specifically.

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I try to take equal preparation with every single event. With summer season coming up there has been a lot of preparation in a lot of different ways.

Yeah, just getting to know the course as much as possible. I was lucky enough to play in the Monday qualifier last year so I already have a little bit of experience with this course.

But, yeah, just soaking it all in and making sure that I feel as prepared as possible.

Q. I saw you recently at the Mizuho Americas Open when you won the AJGA portion. How are you going to carry that confidence into this week?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, it was a huge confidence boost. It's been a while since I won. I've had a lot of really good finishes, but it feels really good to finally have a win again.

Yeah, I played some really good golf. Obviously some tough conditions, really tough course, but, yeah, that was a really fun week and a huge confidence boost for sure.

Q. Brooke, I know tough week last week at Lancaster. Coming back to a place you won before, had so many positive experiences, how fired up are you to wipe the slate clean and drive forward?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. Last week was definitely not what I wanted or expected. I feel like when you have those -- when you don't go in and do exactly what you want, you do learn a lot.

The last few days I've been really trying to take the things that I needed to perform better at and try to practice those and get a little bit better physically and mentally.

Yeah, last week was a tough week. This week, just so many great memories here. I love this event and coming back. I love that it's three days. It makes it really fun and you know you have to go out and make birdies and climb the leaderboard as much as you can really quickly.

So a lot of good things moving forward, and I'm really excited for this week.

Q. Don't want to take away too much from this week, but got an event in a couple weeks that you are a past champion at that venue. How much are you looking forward to playing at Sahalee again? What, if

anything, do you remember from that victory in 2016?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Again, extremely special to win my first major at 18, beat Lydia Ko, who is a great friend now, at the time world No. 1 in a playoff to get the first victory. It was really exciting.

Honestly, back eight years ago in 2016 it was a dream week. Everything just went perfectly. Hole-in-one on Thursday and trophy on Sunday.

So it's a lot to live up to this year, but looking forward to the opportunity of going back there and seeing if I can put four solid rounds of golf together and see if I can put myself in contention.

Q. I know 18 year old Brooke would be really impressed with what you've done in the last however many years. Would you have expected all of this success after that win in 2016? Obviously coming out made a big impact really quickly. But to look back and be the winningest Canadian golfer of all-time, do you think she would've expected that and can you speak to that?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, sometimes I still have to pinch myself that I get to live this dream out here on tour. Growing up as a little girl I just wanted to get my LPGA Tour card and compete against the best in the world every single week?

To have the ability to do that, and then in addition to that, win two majors, go to the Olympics, and win 13 times, it's really been a dream career so far.

But I'm also very excited for what the future holds and continuing to try to improve and push myself to be a little bit better.

Q. Gianna, you're sitting next to obviously a really, really solid player in Brooke. You've have played with some really solid players in recent weeks. How much are you aspiring to make an impact like players like Brooke, Nelly, Lydia have done? How much are you aspiring to do something like that?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, so much. I remember going out with my dad to our local like Ohio LPGA events, and I would watch Brooke the entire 18 holes and we would stay out there all day and come all four days. That was like one of the highlights of my year.

Yeah, to be able to play alongside them after watching them from behind the ropes is really special. Definitely very inspirational.

Q. Gianna, a lot of players have come to this tournament, Brooke was one of them, as teens, some younger than you. Sometimes all those players went on to great careers. Michelle Wie, Lexi Thompson. But sometimes the expectations put on them when they were your age were practically impossible to live up to basically. How do you deal with those expectations and play for yourself and not play for the outside voices of people telling you what you need to do to be successful?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, it's really tough. That's a great question. Not something I'm asked very often. There is definitely a lot of expectation and a lot of pressure put on me. I would say it's more by myself and not by other people. I think I'm definitely the hardest on myself. I don't think anybody could be any harder.

But, yeah, it's just really important to stay in the moment, which is not an easy task. But it's just really important to take it week by week and try to enjoy what we're doing. I mean, playing in LPGA events like this, this is something I dreamed of a couple years ago. Just to get the opportunity is amazing.

Yeah, really important to stay in the moment.

Q. Brooke, how do you sort of deal with those expectations? You kind of faced the same thing. Sometimes I feel people putting those expectations on these teen players don't really understand how hard it is to actually win on the LPGA Tour.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. It's extremely tough to win on tour. Nelly has made it look really easy this year, but I think I she's an exception to the rule.

It's really tough. There is so much talent. The pressure and expectations can get to you. It can be really tough.

I mean, you had a great point: Nobody is harder on the athlete than they are on themselves. I think you just really have to kind of plan out, pick your goals, strategies on how to achieve them, and really stick to the process, stick to the moment, enjoy the moment, and just try to be the best you can in everything that you do.

Some weeks it's going to go really well and other weeks it's going to be really tough. The tough weeks, you got to try to learn from them and move on.

Q. Gianna, what do you do to sort of relax or maybe get away from the game a little bit, or are you all golf all the time? Do you have any other hobbies? What

do you do to unwind?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, it's no secret. Golf is definitely the center of my life. I wouldn't want it any other way. I think sometimes when say that people have a negative reaction, but I would not want to be living any other way.

Yeah, there is not a lot of time away from the course. I don't think I'll ever be the type of person to take weeks off. I think I find a lot of peace in just practicing when there no tournaments, even in the off-season. As I said before, there will never be a time where I'll voluntarily take weeks off.

Just going out there and practicing by myself and putting some music on and just hitting balls is very relaxing to me. I know that's not everybody's thing. Yeah, just kind of what I do. Obviously if I want time away from the course I can take it. That's very rare for me for sure.

Q. Who do you listen to when you're listening to music?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I'll listen to anything. I'm kind of on a country kick right now. Yeah, I'll listen to anything. Just put music on and relax.

Q. What would make a successful weekend for you? You know, on Sunday, what would make you walk away from the course feeling good?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I don't think I've set a specific -- like I don't want to say goal, but I don't think I've set a specific expectation on myself. It's more about enjoying the week and gaining experience.

Obviously making the cut I would say is a good base goal.

But just to play the best golf I can. Obviously not every week is going to go like that, but, yeah, just to go out there and hopefully play some good golf.

Q. Brooke, how important is it for young players like Gianna to sort of handle the expectations and the outside noise and not let that get to them? Make it more about them, their own goals, their own development, and not try to play to please other people basically?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. You can't please everybody all the time, so like I kind of said earlier, you just have to make plans, goals for yourself and then just kind of stick to that process.

I think that's also where it becomes really important to have a solid team around you. I've been really fortunate with my dad, coach, sister, caddie, my mom, my management team.

So it's just important to have a lot of great people surrounding you to kind of block a lot of the noise. I think that's really key. Just kind of building that group and people that you can count on.

But, yeah, just trying to enjoy everything you can, and I feel like Gianna has had an amazing attitude just listening to her talk the last few minutes. She really has things under control.

So just keep doing that and see how far it takes you.

Q. How would you describe the fans, volunteers here at ShopRite? I think the fans kind of adopt the champions, make them like they're the home team. How do they interact with you? Are they loud? Quiet? Do they come up to you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure, the fans have always been amazing here. Especially for me, I've always really felt their love and support, especially after winning in 2022.

I feel like that support and love has only grown, which is really cool. But it's a really fun atmosphere. A lot of holes are pretty close together so the crowds, galleries, they really grow and it's easy to move from one hole to the nother to catch a lot of good golf.

The people that come here really seem to enjoy it. Volunteers are always very kind and nice here as well. You know, this is a special event that I always look forward to coming back to because of that kind of energy and great support from the people that put this event on.

Q. Just wondered, Gianna, you said great things on media day about playing in an LPGA event. What kind of preparations do you make not only with your practice, but mental preparation as well?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, I think mental preparation is really important. Like I talked about before, I'm not setting like a specific expectation on myself. I think obviously, like I said, making the cut would be great. I think just mentally knowing that we're here for experience and it's not like ride or die yet.

I think that's really important. Obviously I've been working very hard. Had a good week to the Mizuho Americans Open couple weeks ago, so that was a great confidence boost.

I feel really good overall so, yeah, see where it takes me this week.

Q. Brooke, I know it was a really rough weekend for a lot of people last week at Lancaster. What did you take away from that and how do you regroup after that weekend?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it was extremely tough golf course, and I played it back in 2015 and did not find it as hard as I did this year. The conditions were just a little bit different.

So it was tough playing Thursday afternoon in the wind with the tough golf course. Unfortunately Thursday kind of got away from from me. Fought back pretty hard on Friday. 2-over, but on that golf course it felt pretty great.

I feel like that was a good start in rebuilding and getting ready for this week to fight back on Friday. And then I've had quite a few days off, so just been trying to put in some work, get some good practice in the last couple days, try it make small improvements in some areas I felt I could have been better last week, both physically and mentally.

It makes it nice to come into a course where you have had success before. Can kind of help build the confidence this week.

Q. Gianna, you talked about on your success at Mizuho couple weeks ago up in Northern New Jersey. Now we are in Southern Jersey. How much you are channelling being back in Jersey and that experience a couple weeks ago for ShopRite this week?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, it was an amazing week. It was definitely a long week, but to be able to come out on top was really special. Liberty National is a super special place to me with my coach there. I just had an amazing team around me that week.

Yeah, definitely really, really special, so to come back -- and obviously it hasn't been that long. I still feel like I kind of have a little bit of the confidence from it.

Yeah, definitely channelling that this week and hopefully playing some good golf.

Q. Brooke, following up on Lancaster, beat up a lot of people last week. Coming into this week, you're coming into this week as a past champion, three consecutive weeks on courses that you're really, really familiar with. Touched on this a little bit, but touch on that, on being a past champion at three consecutive

**courses and how that can help you almost level set
and reset going into the summer?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. It's a great feeling to know that you've had success at the next upcoming three events. It's really cool, and you know the courses pretty well. It makes the practice round days a little bit less stressful because you know the course and strategies for the different conditions that seem to work all right, and so then that way you can just really focus on the things in your game you need to focus on.

But, yeah, this week very special winning in 2022; Meijer, won twice there before, 2017 and 2019; then of course KPMG Women's PGA, winning my first major back in 2016. All the wins are in the past so hopefully I can get one here soon and add to that list.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports