

Pelican Women's Championship

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Sierra Brooks

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Happy Tuesday everyone. Welcome to the virtual media center and the Pelican Women's Championship presented by DEX Imaging & Konica Minolta in Belleair, Florida.

Without further ado, I'm joined by University of Florida alumni and sponsor exemption, Sierra Brooks.

Thank you for joining us, Sierra.

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah, thanks for having me.

THE MODERATOR: Earlier this month you wrapped up your rookie season on the Symetra Tour with a third place finish in the Tour Championship, part of back to back Top 10s, and your first campaign on the road to the LPGA.

What's the greatest lesson that you can take away from the Symetra Tour?

SIERRA BROOKS: Man, it's been an exciting season considering everything. Having an opportunity to be able to compete and playing as a rookie, it's what I wanted to do since I was a young girl, so just out there there are lots of learning lessons. Every event I'm learning something new and just trying to really get comfortable out there.

That's been the main key for me. Whether it's picking the brains of other girls who I'm playing with or just trying to figure out the schedule of the week, with having a caddie to having my dad on the bag to just myself, there has been a lot of good learning experiences.

THE MODERATOR: And you're not a stranger to the LPGA tour, though. You competed in the 2016 U.S. Women's Open and (indiscernible), 2019 U.S. Women's Open, and then made your first cut on the LPGA at the Marathon LPGA Classic in August. What are your expectations this week?

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah, I mean, I feel like my game is in



a really good spot. I like the way I've been trending with the last few events I've had. I know I can compete out here and my game stacks up, so...

Obviously there is a lot that I can't control, but I can put my best foot forward and play my game. To contend here at the end of the week is -- that's my goal, just to get myself in position to contend and keep running.

THE MODERATOR: Keep chugging right along where you left off at Symetra Tour. Throughout this year you have written a kind of quarterly player diary for Golf Week. I read in one of them that you were pretty shy as a kid, but you remembered going to the LPGA Gin Open event at Reunion around the age of eight, and you wanted an autograph from Natalie Gulbis but were too nervous to ask.

You're competing in the same tournament with Natalie on the LPGA Tour this week. If you could go back and tell your eight year old self about this moment, what would you say?

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah, I mean, it's funny. I actually gotten a couple girls this week saying, Hey, Natalie, how is it going, and calling me over saying Natalie. I'm saying, It's not Natalie. No, going back to that, it's just cool to be able to compete with girls that I have been inspired by since I was a young girl.

Just something I would say to her is just like they were eight years old at one time too. There is nothing to be nervous or scared about.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Last November you turned pro. Looking back with what you now know and experienced this year, how ready were you for the transition?

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah, I mean, I definitely -- I was ready. I've always tried to get my game to a point where I felt ready for the highest days of golf, so it is crazy that the season -- everything that's happened. It's felt like a movie.

Just to have salvage the season and get to compete has been a blessing, but I definitely say before and now, like I felt ready.



THE MODERATOR: Well, the first-ever LPGA tournament was the Tampa Open in January 1950. The last time the tour played in the Tampa Bay area was 1989 at the St. Petersburg Women's Open. You were born and raised in central Florida. How good is it to see the LPGA back in part of the state, especially in the 70th anniversary season?

SIERRA BROOKS: Oh, yeah, I love it, getting to compete. It feels like it's kind of in my backyard. Yeah, any chance I can to be in Florida, it's just great. I feel like I am at home here and I know these types of courses. And just so you know, also to be able to have some of my family and friends out supporting and kind of have that home field support is special.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Last one I have before we open up for questions, you're big into fitness, healthy eating, finding a competitive edge, so much so you bought a pair of Felix Gray blue light glasses this year. I know dad had a couple funny things to say about that in one of the player diaries. How do you balance diet, and do the glasses actually work?

SIERRA BROOKS: The glasses work, for one. My group has told me so with just the data. Figuring out your recovery with and without glasses has been interesting.

Yeah, I mean, I think at this level everyone competing is at a high level, and so you're just trying to do anything you can to get an edge.

But nonetheless, just to feel good about yourself and feel like you're at the right place to perform your best. So it's definitely been a learning process with health and fitness and nutrition just on the road, but I definitely feel like I've balanced it out well. I've been finding ways to get it in when I can, but the main focus is on being ready for the tournament days.

THE MODERATOR: For sure. Open up for questions now. Bob asks for our LPGA junior league girls, what has been the three most important keys of success in golf in reaching your goal of playing on the LPGA Tour?

SIERRA BROOKS: That's a great question. I mean, I definitely would say that one, finding a way to have fun when you're at a young age. It's tough. I remember days where I was six to ten years old and I was always by myself or out with the men's group trying to play. Finding other juniors that are your age that you can get better with is important.

And making it fun anyway you can, because it is just a

game at the end of the day, and it's something you got to remind yourself of. Also, make goals and stay with those goals and dream really big.

The sky is the limit and there is so much that you can achieve, and golf takes you to some of the greatest places you could ever think of. Just to have those goals at the end of the day that you're trying to get to and working hard, it just takes a lot of hard work and there is a lot of highs and lows with the game.

You just got to stick through it and know that at the end of the day you're doing what you can do get there. Just stick with your process. Just sticking with your process.

The last one is to make process a goal as well. Like with little drills and just what you can do on a daily basis to achieve your goals was a big thing for me that I learned later on with my dad, was just that having a structured practice made me feel like I was getting closer to where I needed to be at the end of the day.

Q. What do you do to keep it fun and interesting in light of all the time and hard work that goes into developing your game?

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah, playing a lot and playing a lot with your friends and competing while you're playing, playing for lunch or an ice cream at the end of the round, you know, couple of dollars, whatever it is, just finding a way to compete while you're on the course, and you can do that with drills as well.

THE MODERATOR: Couple questions and we will let you out of here. If anybody has any other questions for Sierra. We'll shift over to a couple holiday questions. Thanksgiving is next week. Can you recall any fun family traditions from your childhood or even more recent memories that you have instilled?

SIERRA BROOKS: I mean, we're very -- we've just been simple with our Thanksgiving holiday traditions. Just getting the family together and celebrating and visiting all our family and family members. I just think the togetherness of it and just getting to be with the family is what it's all about, and I'm looking forward to getting to do that coming up.

THE MODERATOR: Eating a lot of food is a common theme for Thanksgiving and the holiday season in general. Any specific meals or unique family recipes that stand out that you particularly enjoyed over the years?

SIERRA BROOKS: Well, I like every part of it, to be honest, just the whole Thanksgiving feast is good. But I'm



big into the stuffing and sweet potato casserole. I don't know who makes it, but whoever does is doing a good job because I'm diving into it every year.

But, yeah, no, like I said before, just that and getting to share that with the family is awesome.

THE MODERATOR: So no particular family member has ever introduced you to something specific or...

SIERRA BROOKS: Not -- I mean, it's always kind of my family members will bring different meals over, but my grandma always makes an unbelievable sweet potato casserole. It's not part of the meal. It's more like dessert.

But, yeah, I definitely try to -- I have tried to put my own spin on it last year. We will see if you can do that again this year.

THE MODERATOR: So you picked up some kitchen utensils and tried to...

SIERRA BROOKS: Yeah. No, I love to cook. Any time you're in the kitchen I enjoy it. Yeah, I try to get in there and especially help them out now that I'm old enough to and feel like did my part on Thanksgiving.

THE MODERATOR: Does it turn out as good as grandma's?

SIERRA BROOKS: You know, yeah, I guess we need them to really be the judge of that. But I think so. (Laughter.) I would like to think so.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you everyone for joining today. We got one more.

Q. Is the heart and soul of your game old school or new school? Old school being feel, timing, or new school, tech and numbers, or do you feel you have a balance?

SIERRA BROOKS: It's easy to want to sway towards new school with the way that the game is going, and it's just getting longer and everyone is finding ways to gain that distance, and with the power of the media you see it. Go on YouTube and there are 500 videos of golf swing stuff on there that I'm hesitant to want to click on.

But I try to just stay balanced and stick with old school just knowing what -- being like creative. Like I say all the time, golf is an art and I'm an artist, to be honest. For me, I feel like my best game comes out when I'm playing in this way.

It is easy to get into the mechanics and the little things, but

just to stay as free as possible out there is really how you can be an athlete and perform in the way that you know you can.

So I am old school. I like to like find ways to get better and maybe that does dive into the newer stuff, but I just try to stick with what works for me.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. The best players are old school.

SIERRA BROOKS: That's right.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you everyone for joining.

SIERRA BROOKS: Thank you.

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