

# Pelican Women's Championship

Friday, September 10, 2021  
Belleair, Florida, USA  
Pelican Golf Club



**Dan Doyle Jr.**  
**Brittany Lincicome**  
**Mollie Marcoux Samaan**  
**Gary Koch**

Press Conference

**Q. How do you feel about having Raymond James as one of your co sponsors?**

DAN DOYLE JR: I think it's excellent, yeah. I mean, they've been in the community forever. Yeah, I think it was great that they actually came forward and said we'd like to do this. I think they understand it. I think they might have realized, hey, we sponsor Raymond James field or stadium, and now let's make sure we cover a ladies' event, and I think they picked a -- I'm going to be selfish and say I think they picked the perfect event to sponsor. We love having them. They're a pillar in the community, and knowing -- I've known Tom James since I was a little kid, and he's always supported -- they support everything in the Bay Area.

To have them join us and partner with us is incredible.

**Q. Dan, I'd like to hear, you kind of touched on it a little bit, but tell us about the history of this golf course. You said you grew up playing on this golf course, right?**

DAN DOYLE JR: I did.

**Q. And how it came to be about you and your dad owning a golf club and then the formation of this championship.**

DAN DOYLE JR: So we bought this golf course in -- I'm going to say it was -- I think it was June of '17. The town had come to us looking for a donation on an infrastructure project, and as a joke kind of said, hey, looked at the balance sheet and said, you guys have this golf course, we'll buy the golf course, that covers your infrastructure

project, and we'd like to own the golf course.

Now, I've grown up in this town, roughly two square miles; is that right, Tom? Yeah, it's two square miles, so I've grown up in this town. I learned how to play golf at this club, and when I was a kid you'd pay \$120 and you could play unlimited golf in the summertime from 2:00 on. Again, I'm going to say I was a kid so not the brightest in the world so you'd get here at 1:30, get a hotdog, you'd wait, literally at 2:00 you'd tee off. Afternoon thundershower would come so you'd find the biggest tree to go hide under. Now I've got kids so now I realize how dumb that was.

But that's the way -- you'd stay out there and you'd play, and my mom would pick me up when it was pitch black. I did that for probably three or four summers in a row. So it was always kind of a -- literally it's almost in the center of the town.

Granted, we have a country club down the street that's got two golf courses, so when we bought it, we kind of -- it's one of those, it's like restoring a car. So we had some ideas, hey, we'll just clean up the golf course, and then it was, hey, let's knock the clubhouse down, we can build a little clubhouse. And then it was, well, if we're going to build this, let's build this. And if we're going to redo the golf course -- once we decided to do the irrigation system, which I didn't realize how expensive PVC pipe was but we learned, once we made that call, we kind of said, let's bring it back to its lustre.

Now, obviously Donald Ross designed this golf course and is long gone, but we've kind of kept some of the old-world style. You've played it this morning. Greens are big greens and things like that, but we moved the bunkers where they come into play today, not where they were.

So we kind of wanted to bring that old world lustre back to it, but we also wanted to make it fun to play and also to play in a relatively quick pace. That was goal number one. And then goal number two, I was given advice by a very good friend of mine that said, let's make it really family oriented, and we want to make it inclusive. It's easy to get the male golfers out here to play. We want women golfers out here to play, and we need the next generation of golfers out here to play.

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I think we've done a really good job at that. We've got a really -- it's fun, we've got a great ladies' golf group that play on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They play Saturday mornings. They actually get early morning tee times. It's not just reserved for men like some traditional clubs. We treat the -- they're just as equal as a guy, and they get it.

Then we have a group of younger ladies, younger girls, all in high school, about six of them, that play out here that are phenomenal. I love taking them out and playing with them because you'll get some cocky male guy who thinks he can outdrive them, and these girls clobber the ball. It's just fun to watch.

Last year we invited them all to play in the pro-am. They were all a little nervous about it, and whoever they got paired up with kind of rolled their eyes, going, oh, man, I'm playing with these girls, and all four girls just rifled them off the tee. And I remember the player just kind of had this little grin, and at the end I was talking to them and they had the best time. They absolutely fell in love with it.

And then when it came to hosting the tournament, our director of golf, Justin Sheehan, called me while we literally had a trailer parked on the side of the street, this was a dirt pile, these buildings didn't exist, and Justin called up and he said, hey, I've got this great idea, what if we have an LPGA event. I think he expected a debate which led to, okay, what do we have to do. He said, well, I'll set up a meeting.

I'll give the LPGA great credit because they came, we met in the trailer, and we're either really good salespeople or they just wanted to get out of here, but they agreed to it.

And then the pressure was on. Then we wanted to make it really nice. In a typical, as we say, "Doyle fashion," we kind of went around and we looked at some other LPGA events. We didn't go to the majors but we looked at some other LPGA events, and then we would quiz players all the time, what didn't you like about that event or how can we make it better.

We heard -- and it was funny because you hear things, it was, well, it would be nice if we had better food. They kind of stick us in a tent off to the side. So we shut our entire bistro down. We have a menu if they want to sit inside. I think we have a buffet if they want to be outside. But we try to treat them better than any other tournament out there, and that's what we strive for.

We took their -- I don't want to call it their complaint card, but their comment cards at the end of the tournament to heart, and what did they say, what did they like, what didn't

they like, okay, let's take the list of what they didn't like, let's start with the top three and let's work on that. Then this year we'll have a new top three and we'll work on that.

The idea is we want to turn this into an incredible event, and we're not there yet, but we will get there. But just when we get there, and if Brittany goes, hey, this was perfect event, I'm going to tell you we're going to take it to the next level.

**Q. Perfect event because she can sleep in her own bed.**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Yeah, that's helpful, and the food is great.

**Q. Brittany, how important as a Tampa Bay native and Tampa Bay resident, how important is it to have this tournament here in the Tampa Bay Area because there hadn't been an LPGA event since the '80s. How important is that for you as an LPGA player to have a hometown tournament here in Tampa?**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Yeah, it's fantastic. You think of golf and you -- it goes hand in hand, like wanting to have events in Florida, and there for a while I felt like we had zero, and now we have a few, which is awesome.

Like you said, just being down the road at a course that I also played when I was a junior, seeing the renovations and seeing how beautiful it is now, I thought it was nice back then, and now it's like a whole 'nother level.

But to have it just down the road from my house is pretty incredible, to be able to sleep in my own bed, that's very rare for any Tour player, and just to come to an event like this, like Mr. Doyle said, just the food and the way they take care of us and the locker room -- the locker room overlooks the golf course. It's like the most beautiful women's locker room I've been to in my life and I've been to a lot of courses.

Just how they're treating women in this community, it's a win-win, it's so great, and it's so great to be a part of it.

**Q. Kind of a similar question. Same type of question. How important is it from your perspective, being almost the de facto host for Valspar and being a host for Outback years ago and being a member here at Pelican Golf Club, how important is it to you that this tournament is here and kind of elevating women's golf here in the Tampa community?**

GARY KOCH: Well, I'll certainly echo what Brittany had to say. To think there hasn't been an LPGA event since here



the '80s is mindboggling to me. It was successful back then. It's amazing how we have gone that long without having one.

My hats off to the Doyles, obviously, for stepping up, and I'll give Justin a little credit for coming up with the idea. I hate doing that, but...

You know, Tampa Bay is a golf community. It really is. The number of people that play the game, both men and women, is staggering. I think we've seen a rejuvenation of the game here, unfortunately because of COVID, but it's certainly -- every golf course that I know in this area has had record number of rounds and play, and a lot of that play has been women. It's great to see the Doyles step up, make that a critical factor and help promote the women in the game because it's strong. It's very strong.

I had a great time sitting at home watching the Solheim Cup last week. It was phenomenal stuff. Are we going to have that kind of atmosphere here?

DAN DOYLE JR: I would love that. I think Justin has got a plan to have some of that on a few of the holes.

GARY KOCH: Well, to showcase how well these women play the game of golf is really great. Obviously having been in the Tampa Bay Area since 1968 when I moved here, to see an event of this magnitude come to my hometown, it's very impressive.

**Q. Molly, just to follow up on that, as the new LPGA commissioner, to hear that, as Dan said, when we were inside that last year kind of was a dress rehearsal, that this year will be with fans and spectators, be the full -- you also earlier this week announced a new LPGA event in Cincinnati. How important is it for you to have these new events on the LPGA calendar as the new LPGA commissioner and helping to elevate the women's game?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: No, it's incredible, and it's not just a great golf town but a great sports town. There are a lot of championships here, a lot of winning teams, and being a part of that for us is phenomenal, sort of associating yourself with winners in every way.

But what I've found just in my first four or five weeks on the job is I have two main impressions, and sort of sitting here, one, the quality of the athlete, it's truly incredible, and if people see how good our athletes are, they're hooked from minute one. And the other are the partners that we have. I would say just from my first conversation with Dan and seeing how much passion he has for the growth of the game and for the growth of giving women an equal

opportunity and to showcase their talents and sort of elevate women's sports, I was blown away by our first conversation, and then being here today, I was like, this is the coolest place. I couldn't believe the villas when I walked in.

Sort of this idea that we're trying to get better every day and trying to build on the success that's already been here, that's kind of what we're trying to do at the LPGA, too, is sort of say, we've been in a good spot for 71 years, but we're ready to take it to the next level, and the only way we do that is with partners. There's no way we can do it without people that have that same -- and also the creative ideas; like last night I had so much fun hearing all the new ideas for this tournament and for the LPGA more broadly.

I think it's going to be amazing here and really I've had the time of my life in the last 24, 36 hours I've been here, so I think it's a perfect spot for us to be playing.

**Q. Dan, what's the excitement going into this year? You said last year was a dress rehearsal and obviously a lot of the members got to see what an LPGA tournament looked like here and then players obviously had families and guests here, but knowing you're going to have fans here, knowing you're going to be able to share this experience with them for the first time for real?**

DAN DOYLE JR: We're excited to show it off. It's a labor of love to build this place, so we're excited to show it off in one way. In another way we're really nervous. We don't like stubbing our toe, so we keep going through our -- where are our points of failure, and try to come up with a solution before it even happens.

To your point, I think we've got hole 12 set up as kind of a rowdy par-3 as you know. Last year I think somebody got a hole-in-one on it and won a car, but we've got it set up where it's going to be a little more rowdy atmosphere.

**Q. Like 16 in Phoenix?**

DAN DOYLE JR.: On a smaller scale, much smaller. But honestly that was Justin's kind of idea, that's how he pitched it, let's make it exciting and fun. I'm not sure if the golfers really love that, but it looks cool on TV. Watching the Solheim Cup when they're cheering, when you guys get announced, it's awesome.

**Q. Are you going to have a dance group on the first tee?**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: I feel like a lot of golf fans think of golf as being like stuffy and quiet. You see it on TV, and



you get your drunk ones every now and again, but it's just so much fun. We love cheering and we love having the fans come out, and Solheim, obviously face paint and glitter and all that stuff, but even regular events. Just come out, have a good -- we want you to have a good time.

DAN DOYLE JR: So we did have the pro-am last year, so a lot of my friends participated, and they've played in pro-ams from all over and it was amazing to get the letters from them saying that was the -- I've played in PGA pro-ams and they're nice and they're fun, everybody had an absolute blast because you as a player and your friends, open arms, you were welcoming, you were carrying on conversations. If you wanted to get razzed you'd razz us --

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That's how it should be.

**Q. If you wanted to get razzed, a player would razz you a little bit. If you asked for spot advice they'd kind of give it to you. But they made it really -- it was a personal experience but a lot of fun.**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: If you leave it short or top it I might make fun of you.

DAN DOYLE JR: To hear our director of golf got out-driven --

BRITTANY LINCICOME: It happens.

GARY KOCH: The other thing, too, from a broadcast standpoint, there's nothing better than what you're talking about. The energy that the crowd creates comes through the broadcast. There's no doubt.

I know as an announcer, the hardest thing for us when there were no fans was for us to be excited. You you play off the reaction of the crowd with the good shots or a great putt being made or a poor shot being hit. As we're watching it, we're fans, as well. So not having the noise there, the energy there made it very difficult. I think what you're talking about doing, especially at the 12th hole, just going to make the broadcast that much better.

**Q. I did want to ask Brittany, being on so many Solheim Cups, just thoughts from watching last week?**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Yeah, I think even -- obviously I wanted to win, but just how close it was. I think it's great for fans. I think everyone got to watch golf all the way down to the last couple matches almost going to 18 every time. It was super close. Everyone played great. It was just the excitement and -- everyone -- obviously some of our players didn't have their A games, but overall, it's golf,

it is what it is. I thought it was great how close it was because obviously it kept everyone entertained and you had to watch all the way to the 18th hole. A lot of matches went to 18. So I thought it was awesome and very exciting, and watching everyone dancing and having a good time, I wished I was there. I was bummed to miss it. Hopefully will be on the next one.

DAN DOYLE JR: By the way, hole 12, it will be rowdy, and a hole-in-one gets you a Lamborghini.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That's on record.

**Q. No, it's done. It's done. You might want to go out there and take some practice.**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That's very cool.

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: The Solheim is such a great example of the crowd, the energies we talked about, but the volume of people -- I was there all week, and the fairways were lined, there was young people, old people, people from all different backgrounds just kind of cheering on the athletes and getting some great golf. I had a commissioner's club on the 18th, and it was amazing because almost all the matches went to 18, so that was the place to be as we were winding down. Some pretty amazing shots at the last moment, so again, displaying their athleticism.

The other thing I love that you said is these women are athletes, and they need a performance environment, and that's what you're doing really uniquely here, which is amazing. Thinking through what they need to reach their peak performance, and it matters, and so I know they'll be really grateful for that every step of the way.

**Q. Brittany, we talked about fans and the rowdiness and how fans are going to be here. With this being your hometown event, last year you couldn't really have your family, friends and everybody here to cheer you on, and there is a good Tampa contingent, so both the Korda sisters are committed here, Lydia Ko lives right down the road, Brittany Altomare lives here, and they're all committed to this tournament. Tell me about what it's going to be like to have the local family and friends support, not only for you but also for Jessica and Nelly being from Bradenton and Brittany also being from here.**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Yeah, I should probably put my request in now for extra tickets, because like you said, it's rare. Like my brothers don't ever get to watch me play, so to be so close to home and now being able to have fans again, a lot of friends and family are going to come out, like



my parents' friends will want to come out I'm sure. It will be cool to have them come out and get to see what I do. Like I said, my brothers, I've been playing 17 years and I think they've been to one golf tournament ever. It'll be cool to have them come out and get to see what I do and help support me.

Obviously just seeing them in the crowd if I have a bad hole or a bad shot, it will be cool to look over at them and be like, okay, let's try to get this back and try to play well for them. To have a couple of us being local really means a lot, and just having, like you said, friends and family coming out and watching and supporting us, we'll want to do good for them for sure.

**Q. Gary, the golf course, as a member here, and you've played this over the years, so tell me from your perspective as a member of Pelican Golf Club, just tell me about the golf course and just the championship conditions, and you're also very familiar with the history of the golf course and just how the Donald Ross legacy has continued here at this place.**

GARY KOCH: Well, I think Dan said it very well. The goals were it sounded like to create a course that's fun to play, which it certainly is. I think the greatest challenge is the greens. A lot of the greens have some contour and movement to them.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Elephants.

GARY KOCH: Yeah, I'm a member, I can't say that or I might not be a member anymore.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: They're good elephants, but they're elephants.

GARY KOCH: Contours. Elevation changes and contours. Beau Welling, the architect who led the renovation, restoration, whatever you want to call it, really took to heart some of the design of the old masters, so there's the Biarritz green, there's the Thumbprint green. Really to me the greens are the character of the golf course.

For the ladies, and again, I've been fortunate to do Women's Open telecasts, the KPMG LPGA Championship telecast. The ladies hit the ball so straight that they're not going to miss many fairways here. I've got friends who play here that aren't very straight, and they don't miss many fairways. So the fairways are generous. The challenge becomes when you play your approach shots into the greens.

I don't know if Dan has mentioned this to everybody or not, but the new superintendent here, Terry Kennelly, has been

on the job right around four months. I've seen a big change in the conditioning of the golf course in just that period of time.

I think by mid-November when the tournament rolls around, the course should be absolutely perfect. It's a great time of year for Bermudagrass to be able to get the greens as firm and fast as you possibly want them. Hopefully they're not too fast because if they are, they'll be a real challenge.

But you know, look at last year; what was it, 14-under was the winning score, and I think a couple ladies shot 64s if I'm not mistaken. There were a couple 64s shot. So 6-under par, and this is a par-70, which is a little bit unusual, so only two par-5s.

The key to playing the golf course well in my mind is good approach shots into the greens and good putting, and that's going to pretty much separate who's going to do well and who's not.

**Q. Dan, speaking of Terry, so Terry came from Concession. Tell me about Terry and his great work here, because --**

DAN DOYLE JR.: I mean, he's been great. I mean, he joins my father and I for breakfast probably twice a week. I mean, it's a light atmosphere here, so it's joking around, but it's really funny, you ask him a question about the golf course, and he'll either give you a quick answer that's got a lot of confidence behind it, or he's going to say, you know what, I don't know, or I'm working on it and I'm trying to figure it out. He doesn't try to tiptoe around it or guesswork.

So it was funny, when we brought him in, we announced he was here. Three weeks later members were going, holy smokes, we're seeing the improvements. He was relatively new, so it wasn't like it was a terrible golf course. Over the summer something was wrong with him because he beat the golf course up beyond norm, but his vision was there, and we're now seeing it -- as the grass starts growing back, we're seeing his vision come to life, and it's incredible. I mean, he's done a -- my dad is right here.

DAN DOYLE: It still has the scars. We had plastic surgery done on the course. It still has a few scars, but by the time the tournament is here it'll be --

DAN DOYLE JR.: She's going to be beautiful. His brother is the super up at Baltimore Country Club. It's in his blood, and he loves it. His goal is to make it absolutely perfect not only just for the members but make it perfect when it's on display for the ladies. That's the goal.

**Q. Where do you see this tournament going from here?**

DAN DOYLE JR.: We see it growing. What we'd love to turn this into is a tournament for the ladies that they come to every year, and it's a -- the only way I could equate it would be you've got the Masters and they play it at Augusta every year. We want this to be the women's version of the Masters. That would be, hey, we accomplished what we wanted.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: You're off to a hell of a start.

DAN DOYLE JR.: Thank you.

**Q. Brittany, how does the course challenge?**

BRITTANY LINCICOME: Yeah, Gary said it perfectly, actually. You can see a couple holes from tee to green, it doesn't seem that -- although last year it was really windy, so a couple spots that I didn't think were in play when I played practice rounds came into play when the tournament day came around, which was interesting.

Yeah, tee to green not a lot there. A few fairway bunkers you've got to work your way through, but by far the greens are the hardest part. You'll see a few of them today. Yeah, a couple -- was No. 2 the one with the false front green?

DAN DOYLE JR.: Well, everything is false.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That's true. It's stuff like that that you've got to really kind of pay attention to or you're going to end up in a spot where, oh, my gosh, I didn't practice this, how do I hit this kind of a situation.

Yeah, it's incredible. The greens are awesome, and like Gary said, you're going to have to be very accurate with your irons coming into the green or you're going to end up on the wrong side of one of the elephants, as I referred to them, and you'll have to putt over them, and you could have a lot of three-putts during the week. Definitely have to be accurate with the irons and good with the putter that week, making the five-footers to save par.

DAN DOYLE JR.: If you go back in history on old world golf courses, too, the first hole was always designed to be a warmup hole, so it was supposed to be somewhat easy, which this one is, and the second hole was supposed to say, welcome to golf. That's why the second hole is the way it is.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That hole was into the wind last

year, too, and I hit like a 9-wood in there, which is like my 4-iron basically. It's a great hole. It's beautiful.

**Q. Is the routing similar or was that completely changed?**

DAN DOYLE JR.: No, the routing -- we changed one hole on each side, so we changed 8 and 9, and then it was a dogleg and it used to go over the houses. And then we changed 13 and 14. It was 11, 12, 13.

**Q. It was built in 1926?**

DAN DOYLE JR.: 1927.

**Q. What were some of the things that you all took last year and were like, okay, we see some room for improvement in this area or this area, whether that be things that the players wrote on comments cards or just things that you noticed?**

DAN DOYLE JR.: One thing, the greens were inconsistent from the front to the back, so when we brought Terry on, we gave him that task. We said, they're going to be perfect. That was probably the number one that stuck out in my head. We got a couple comments on food on things they wished we had, so we made sure that we had those on the menu, as well.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: It's hard with COVID, too.

DAN DOYLE JR.: It was an odd deal.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: It's hard to get it right.

DAN DOYLE JR.: Some of them asked -- we've got a big fitness facility here, and they wanted access to that. We kind of had it open last year; I just don't think we -- we didn't voice it well enough.

So we've actually shut the fitness center down during the tournament so if the ladies want to use it before or after the event, and then we'll have masseuses and things ready for them.

GARY KOCH: I'd endeavor to say it's one of the finest fitness facilities I've ever been fortunate to use, and I'm sure somebody would be welcome to take you up there and show you around because it is impressive.

DAN DOYLE JR.: But it's just little things. You'd read through the comments, and certain things would stick, and you'd go, huh, and then we'd go out and try to figure it out. My dad can tell you, at the end of the tournament we watched all the NBC footage and we looked and at the end

of hole 2, you have our maintenance buildings and then you have the town's sanitation departments in the far distance, and you could see them, and you really could see them on television. You don't notice it until you play it, kind of get distracted.

So we decided -- hey, do we paint the buildings green and does that hide them, and we kind of came up with this idea to put bamboo. And again, I'm going to say, in Doyle fashion, we bought 40-foot bamboo and we lined it all the way back there, and you can't see -- you can't see -- the people that are playing, when you get down to the end of 2, you're going to realize there's still a few little gaps, and the bamboo was just planted in July, beginning of July, so it's just starting to open, but by November that'll be a wall.

BRITTANY LINCICOME: That's so funny.

DAN DOYLE JR.: So we did things like that. It's always -- hey, my dad --

DAN DOYLE: There were things on the menu they're going to eat in the bistro.

DAN DOYLE JR.: My dad is tough, in a great way, because once I tell him, hey, we're perfect, he's going to go, no, we're not, we've got to figure out how to get to here, and that's how I was raised, and that's what we're going to continue to do with this tournament. Even when Brittany tells me it is perfect, we're going to say, yeah, but what would you think if we did this, and she would go, oh, then it would be perfect. So that's what we're going to do.

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