

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 19, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Brooke M. Henderson

Quick Quotes

Q. Brooke, take us through your round today. Obviously first round back in the season. How excited are you to be at the top?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, I'm really excited to be playing here this week. I always love this event. Playing with the celebrities is so much fun and the atmosphere is just always amazing with the fans, too.

I always look forward to the event, and to be here is just awesome. I went through a lot of changes in the off-season, but all the clubs worked really well today, which is great, and shoot 5-under to start the season off feels really good.

Q. Obviously new TaylorMade ambassador, both you and Nelly at the top of the leaderboard. What was working well for you? Any differences you felt with the new clubs?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, I've been really excited to join Team TaylorMade along with Nelly. I think that's really cool for both of us. The clubs are awesome, and I feel like I was able to make a bunch of putts today, which is a really great feeling. A couple to save par and some for birdie, and it really kept my round going.

Q. How much confidence does it give you for the whole season? I know this is round 1, but coming out with such a great round?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, it does feel really good, and to get off to a hot start, that's always a great feeling. Hopefully I can continue it the next three days, a lot of momentum, and lots of birdies. You really need to go low here if the conditions are going to stay as nice as they are.

Q. Last year in pretty bad conditions you play well here again. What is it about this place that brings that out in you?



BROOKE M. HENDERSON: I love it here at Lake Nona. The course is always in perfect condition. It's a great place. Like I said, the atmosphere here with the fans and the celebrities, it's just a lot of fun.

Today was a good day. Hopefully just continue it the next three days, and like I said, just make a bunch of birdies and see what happens.

Q. When you test new clubs and put them in play, there's a difference when you put it into competition for the first time. Did you feel comfortable with them immediately or were you still out there trying to feel them out?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, like you said, you can practice as much as you want, but competition is always different in all aspects, whether it's club or just mentally. It's a big change once you get to the competition.

I felt really confident with everything today, which is great, and playing with John and Josh, I've played with both of them before, so it was a lot of fun. We knew each other. Off the start I felt like we were feeding off each other, lots of good shots and good holes, and it made it a little bit easier, that transition into competition play.

Q. Can you talk us through the birdie at 18, and what might have been some other highlight birdies?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, so I was 3-under through 9, which felt good. Kind of gave the confidence a little bit of a boost. Unfortunately I bogeyed 17, so I was really trying to make birdie on 18 to try to get it back. Happy to make the birdie there, and just hopefully go out tomorrow and make some more.

Q. What did you hit in at 18?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Pitching wedge.

Q. To how close?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: It was just maybe around 15 feet.

Q. At 17 did you just miss the green?



BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, short, and made bogey.

Q. Did testing for new stuff keep you maybe playing and swinging more than you might have in time off?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: It was kind of a strange off-season for me because right after CME I had to take a lot of time off to heal my back, so it was really weird not practicing for a while.

Then even after resting for two weeks after that, I still couldn't swing full. I was just chipping and putting. It was a really strange off-season in that way. It was just like slow progress, being patient and then building up to where now I can take full swings and things.

It was a big off-season in terms of lots of things happening, but right now it looks like everything paid off well, and hopefully just keep it going.

Q. Did you feel you could swing pretty freely with the longer stuff today?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, no, my back feels in good shape right now and just continue what I'm doing off the course, and hopefully we'll just continue to heal, and it won't be an issue anymore.

Q. How is that impacting your start-to-your-day routine or the end-of-your-day routine? What you do you do to warm up your back or cool it down?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yeah, I feel like I'm getting older so I really have to do a lot more stretching and just mental prep a lot more than I had to when I was younger, and especially with the back the last few months. It does add a little bit into what I do after golf and before golf, but fortunately it's healing and it's going the right direction, so hopefully it won't be like that forever.

Q. Do you feel like you were able to swing 100 percent at everything today?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Yes, yeah, and that's been an amazing feeling after not being able to for so long. It felt like so long. It's great to be aggressive and to be able to go after shots again.

Q. When was the last time you feel like you were able to do that?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: October maybe? Yeah, when I played in Pelican. I was swinging full but obviously in a lot

of pain, and then I had to withdraw. I feel like October was probably the last time I felt decent.

Q. What would you give your pain level today overall?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: Today it was good, yeah, nothing, not even thinking about it. I just make sure that I do the right things tonight and tomorrow and hopefully the same moving forward.

Q. Was there one shot today that you were standing over saying, I have to go at this full and maybe you just kind of needed to convince yourself a little bit more to actually pull that off?

BROOKE M. HENDERSON: You know, it's good. Like this year I'm back to swinging how I want to swing my driver and I'm aggressive on every swing. I kind of have a good feel for things now. I'm not scared of hurting it right now, knock on wood, so hopefully that just continues.