

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

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Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Brooke Henderson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, here inside the media center with Brooke Henderson. I know a lot of people want to ask about your excitement. Welcome back to the defending champion. What's it like to be back at this tournament?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love this event. It's so fun and unique to be able to play with the celebrities. I look forward to it every year. To come back this year and be defending champion it's definitely different and a cool feel. I'm excited to tee it up on Thursday.

Q. We had Mardy in here earlier. He held you in high regard. What was it like winning this event in particular and kicking off your season last year like that?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, I had a lot of fun playing with Mardy. I was able to play with him one round last year as well and ended up being the champion. Pretty cool to hold a trophy with Mardy Fish.

So it's just a really unique and exciting week, and I just talked to him already just a few minutes ago. He's obviously an amazing tennis player and also an incredible golfer.

So just to see how talented all these celebrities are in what they do and come out on the golf course and hit good shots, it's really cool for us.

Q. You've obviously played in this tournament a number of times. Have there been any celebrities that made you feel starstruck when you were paired with them?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, absolutely. Almost every year I get at least a couple people that I'm pretty nervous on the first tee. But a few years ago I played with Vince Carter and I said to myself, if I can play in front of Vince Carter, I can play in front of anybody.



So after that it's been a little bit easier. There is just so many amazing people. They're all so talented at what they do. To come out here and play a round of golf with them is just a lot of fun.

And learning from them, they ask us questions as well, so I feel like it's just a really great week and I think the fans really enjoy coming out to a golf tournament but also seeing these other pros in a different element.

Q. You've been on tour for a while. Always I imagine have an approach to the season opener. Is it any different for a celebrity tournament, and what's the approach coming back as defending champion?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, this is a great way to start out the year. It's an amazing atmosphere. It's really fun. There are concerts three nights the week, big parties. It's just a little bit more chill and great vibes and great way to kind of start out the year.

There is only I think 43 LPGA Tour players this year, so it's a smaller field. If you can get off to a fast start you can get a high finish.

Q. With this course we know Lake Nona is a difficult course. With the weather, raining a couple minutes ago, how difficult are the elements in this course?

BROOKE HENDERSON: This is a very challenging golf course. It's a lot fun to play, especially if you're hitting it well it can be a lot fun. You really have to know where you're going and have a strategy going in.

But with the weather the way it looks the rest of the week with pretty cold temperatures and windy and possible rain as well, it's going to take a lot of skill to navigate. Need some good bounces. Going to have to be tough because it's not going to be easy.

Q. Can you talk about the goals you set for yourself on the upcoming LPGA Tour?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, winning this event last year was a huge boost to my confidence. I've always wanted to win at this event, so that was really big.

Then the rest of the year I maybe didn't play quite as well



as I would've liked, so coming into 2024 I'm excited to get it started again. Hopefully lower my scoring average a little bit, which will hopefully put me in contention more times throughout the year on the weekend.

That's all you really want, is an opportunity to win or an opportunity to be great.

Q. Brooke, you're often one of our positive players out here. After a year where you won out here really quick, didn't meet your standards, but pretty solid season overall, how do you reset coming into this week and this season?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it was a super fun way to end the year with CME, which is always a great event. To play Grant Thornton and to have Corey Connors as my partner, really gave it a run on Sunday in the final round and finished second. It was kind of a great way to start the off-season.

You know, it was pretty short off-season so didn't really do as much as I would normally. It is nice to rest a little bit, prepare, and practice for this year.

Like I said, I'm just really pumped up to be back here at Hilton Grand Vacations and to be playing with the celebrities and playing an amazing golf course like Lake Nona.

Q. I know it's a really short off-season, but what were you fine tuning mentally and physically as you looked ahead to '24?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I put in some new irons late last fall, so I really love them a lot, so just continuing to work, being a little bit more consistent with the iron play. But they've made a big difference in my game. I also changed my fairway woods and driver as well. And putter.

So it's been a really big change the last two months. All very positive and I feel like they're really going to enhance my game. Hopefully I can start off putting them to good use this week and throughout the rest of the season.

Q. What mentally goes into having a fresh bag now, brand new bag? Having to switch everything out, what goes into that mentally?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, the stuff they came out with is just so good it was really easy, quick change. I love being a part of team TaylorMade. It's been a great change for me. Being alongside other amazing athletes has been pretty cool.

I feel like my game is in a pretty good spot right now, new equipment and new season, so there is a lot of positives. Hopefully we'll see some positive change when I tee it up on Thursday.

Q. I guess I have a couple questions for you. My first question is: You spoke towards the end of last season about how you won this tournament last year and then you didn't win again. How did it set the tone over the course of the year that you started with a win? How do you go from a win and keep up that high level of play?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I feel like with golf, it's a roller coaster. Lots of highs and lots of lows. You just have to continue to ride it out and be patient.

Starting out with a win here last year definitely huge high. Then I did have some lows throughout the year. But I feel like near the end of the season I was starting to climb my way back up. Second place finish at Grant Thornton was really fun, playing with the PGA TOUR guys.

I just started to see a lot of positives near the end of the season. Just tried to continue that on through the off-season, and I'm excited to be playing here this week, playing next week as well. Couple weeks off and go to Asia, which I always really look forward to playing those events over there as well.

Q. You mentioned to me before and alluded to it, that whole bunch of new clubs. I know you're particularly excited about your driver. What is it about that that you like?

BROOKE HENDERSON: So I did a shoot with TaylorMade in November I guess. I hadn't hit the driver and I had to use it that day for some photos. I used it on the range and I was like, wow, I love this, so it went immediately into my bag.

It's been such a great change and gained a little bit of distance and feel like I'm hitting it a lot straighter which gives me a lot of confidence moving forward.

Q. As a bad golfer like me, what immediately appeals about a driver like that? Sounds like it had an instant impact for you.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. Consistency, forgiveness. I think it's better than the previous stuff I was using. I feel very confident with it, as I mentioned. Hitting it a little bit further. Distance has always been very important to me. I'm pretty short, so it's nice to maximize all I can do.

So if a club gives me a couple more yards, I'm definitely going to take it, especially since I had to go down to 46 inches two years ago from the 48" legal limit. Any time I can try to gain a couple yards back, I'm all for that.

Q. Quick question about sort of the schedule and 2024 as a whole. Obviously the Olympics are on the schedule this year. Majors of course. CP Women's Open as well. When you look at the schedule, you've won so many times on the LPGA Tour. When you think time for the majors, Olympics, and you got to get up for the big events, how do you compartmentalize the week in and week out effort on the LPGA Tour versus getting up for the big events?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's a very busy schedule this year which is really exciting. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to play in so many different events and some different events like the Olympics. Only comes every four years. It's a great opportunity to go and represent your country.

So, yeah, there is a lot of exciting events. The British Open, AIG at St Andrews, which is a dream come true to go play at the home of golf. The women's KPMG, Women's PGA, going back to Sahalee where I won in 2016.

So a lot of weeks where I feel like I'm excited for. It is going to take a little bit of planing and scheduling to make sure that I can try my best efforts to be peaking for some of the top events in the middle of the summer.

I think I'm just really excited for the opportunity to be playing week in and week out against the best in the world. Our purses continue to go up. We're playing great golf courses. It's just a lot of fun to be out here.

Q. I know it's only January, but fast forwarding to December, that will be the tenth anniversary of you turning professional. Do you ever allow yourself away from kind of the week in and week out grind the LPGA Tour to maybe realize and kind of zoom out on that and think about the people you inspired or accomplishments that you have had over the last ten years?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I think perspective is a great thing, and being able to step back every once in a while, and, you know, just be grateful for how far my team and I, we've come. Then also to get back into the moment and see what we can do in the future.

But it's pretty cool. I guess technically my tenth season on tour, so gone by really, really fast. I hope that I have

inspired and motivated the younger generation to pick up the game of golf off just chase and pursue whatever is in their hearts and whatever they dream to go after.

So it's been a lot of fun for me and hopefully the best is yet to come.

Q. Two quick ones. One, what.

S going on with the thumb-wrist thing you got going there?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, so I've had a bothersome some thumb for a long time now, since 2017 off and on. Last year I guess in the middle of the summer it started to bug me a little bit more, so I've been taping it, not consistently, but every so often, trying to strengthen and help it out so that it won't be as bothersome. As.

Of right now the tape does a good job. Hopefully won't be as painful in the future.

Q. You taped that big Christmas commercial for TaylorMade. Assuming that's the thing you did in November. I know sometimes they finagle a few things. Were all the golfers in one place at the same time? Did you spend any time with Tiger if he was there?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, we were all there together, which was really cool. I sat beside Tiger at the breakfast and that was pretty cool for me. Yeah, to be in the company of all those talented players, it really means a lot to me. I feel like I was very inspired and motivated to be in their company.

Q. Was that the first time you spent some time with Tiger?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Actually last year I met him for the first time at the TaylorMade shoot so it's been a couple times now.

Q. Is there a technical medical diagnosis for what is going on with your thumb, and how does one do rehab for a thumb injury to make it stronger?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I've just been seeing the LPGA physios. They've been doing a really great job. I don't really know the technical stuff, but they're just trying to do different things to loosen it up and make sure there is not too much stress.

Obviously being a golfer there is a lot of repetitive motions, so over the off-season I went a few weeks where I wasn't practicing as much and my thumb was great.

No, as the season has gotten closer and I've been practicing more it started to come back a little bit. Hopefully won't last forever, but I think while I'm playing I'll probably have to deal with it at least a little bit?

Q. Any particular parts of game where you feel it more than others?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Definitely the long game, so like full swings you feel it more.

Q. This is a really short off-season coming off the Grant Thornton Invitational. You talked about coming into year ten. What's it like to have such a short off-season and roll into the next year?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it has been really short. I'm just hoping I can keep the momentum I had near the end of the season and bring it right into 2024. That's kind of the goal. It's been fun. Actually in September last year took five weeks away from competitive golf, September and October, so that was a little bit more of my off-season.

This time I didn't view it -- just viewed it as a few weeks off and a shorter off-season, so worked out all right.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us, Brooke.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Thank you.

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