

# Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio

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Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Boca Rio Golf Club

## Karrie Webb

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center at the 2022 Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio. We are joined by World Golf Hall of Famer Karrie Webb. Karrie, thanks for joining us you today.

KARRIE WEBB: Thanks for having me.

**Q. I read recently that this is going to be a sort of start to a return to the LPGA Tour; is that true?**

KARRIE WEBB: I don't know. I don't know where you might've read that. It's not necessarily a return, I don't think there is any full time or even a big chunk of part time golf in me.

But when you're away from it for a long time you do -- there is lot of things that you do miss about it. I think it was great, very convenient that I could stay at home this week and play in a tournament for the first time in a while, and, you know, not feel like the rigors of having to travel with luggage.

I'm just excited to be back out and see people I haven't seen for a while and to be around the atmosphere on the LPGA.

**Q. I would imagine the luggage is maybe one part of the game and the lifestyle that maybe you don't miss.**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think after 20-plus years of lugging your clubs and tour bag around and a heavy suitcase from shuttle busses to the car rental place to the hotel, it adds up over the years doing that all on your own.

Those aren't the highlights of playing on the LPGA, but they're all part and parcel of it. Those are definitely not the things that I miss. I miss seeing all the people and the banter on the range. You know, those are the things you think when you're in the heat of it that you're not going to miss, but you actually miss -- apart from the competition, you miss the most.

**Q. Obviously right outside where you live here in the**

**United States. How did you get ready for the Gainbridge at Boca Rio, your first event on the LPGA in two years?**

KARRIE WEBB: Well, I actually played Pelican in 2020, so it hasn't quite been two years, but it feels like it, especially getting back into full practice and stuff like that. That's another thing I don't really miss, is the grind of putting in the hours on the range and on the practice putting green, and I think that's why I don't really have the desire to play a lot.

I really don't have the desire to put the work in, and to even come close to competing out here you have to be able to put the work in to compete with these girls. The standard just gets better and better every year.

**Q. Recently, earlier this month, the inaugural Australian WPGA Championship was contested in your honor. What was it like? Take us through the process of how that event came to be and what was it like to have such a talented field?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, you know, it came together pretty late last year, but golf in Australia, I mean, not participation-wise, like golf has boomed in Australia just like it has around the world, but professional golf in Australia has really been hit hard by COVID.

The men's Australia PGA was being held but that was in doubt because they couldn't get international players in the field. There was an interest to include the women and to have a Women PGA Championship, which this year they played in the same field as the men.

But what was really promising for me is that there was interest to have a standalone event going forward, 2023. When I was asked to have the trophy named after me that was obviously a very great honor and not something you ever think is going to happen or something that is going to come about.

So that was fun, too. I got to design the trophy. I've held up a few trophies but never had a chance to design one that hopefully many women will hold up for years to come.



**Q. What was it like to see Su come out on top?**

KARRIE WEBB: It was really cool obviously with my scholarship series, a lot of great Australian female players have come through that and gone on to bigger and better things, and Su is one of those people.

To have one of my scholarship winners to win it the first time was really special. I played a practice round with her today, so good to catch up with her.

It was just unfortunate, really would've loved to have been in Australia, but it was so hard with scheduling and the quarantine and stuff going back to Australia that I had already planned to be back here.

I had set my sights on playing Gainbridge, so next year hopefully I'll be back there to present the trophy to next year's winner.

**Q. You seem comfortable now in where you are in your career and playing less. When you first started reducing your schedule, did you miss it more? Did you kind of have to wean yourself off golf, or did you right way say, Hey, this is good?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, well, 2018 and 2019 I played a part time schedule. I think I played eight or nine events both of those years.

And then 2020 I had planned to play similar amount, and I had started off in Australia and played the Vic Open and Australian Open and obviously COVID hit. I just didn't have the desire to go back out with the restrictions with the travel.

I think right at the beginning it was really hard for me. I think the hardest thing was just like, Well, what's my schedule now? I don't know what I'm going to do. But I really didn't -- I think because I had played part time I had learnt to spend bigger chunks of time away from the game.

The part time golf and then the wind down from that even was so that I could spend more time in Australia, which I didn't get to do in 2020, but I did last year in 2021. Got to spend six months of the year in Australia. That was really good. I enjoyed that.

And because of the restrictions in Australia where I was, we didn't have any COVID but you couldn't really travel anywhere. I got to spend time where I grew up and with my family, so it was really good to do that.

**Q. What will determine in your mind how many**

**tournaments you play moving forward?**

KARRIE WEBB: Well, my body for one. I've been dealing with a bit of a neck issue that even when I was playing part time I was still dealing with it. I feel like I'm a little bit more on top of it, but I haven't played under pressure since I feel like I've sorted it all out. So it'll just see how the wear and tear after whole tournament goes.

You know, just testing drivers down there and I was like, I can't hit too many more. It's going to tighten up my neck. So that's one thing. And the other thing is I chose golf over a life events for 25 years, and, you know, I want to put life events ahead of golf.

So I think that's where golf fits in as far as how much I'm going to play. This week is perfect. It's convenient that the tournament is here where I've lived for 23 years.

It's fitting in with my life. I'm not missing something that I -- I think when you're in the heat of golf you think you're missing out on stuff or at least I did towards the end of playing full time, and I just want to have a better balance I think.

**Q. Do you consider yourself now a true Floridian? You've been here 23 years. What do you do here? What are some favorite things to do living here?**

KARRIE WEBB: I've lived in the same house for 23 years, so, you know, I haven't lived in any other residence longer.

It's definitely as much home as it is when I go back home to Australia, and same sort of weather I grew up, so that wasn't a huge change.

But still play a little bit of golf socially. Love to go fishing and boating. You know, I don't know, I've got a little bit more time on my hands to figure out different stuff now, different hobbies.

**Q. One more. I know this has probably been asked a million times, why did you choose Palm Beach County?**

KARRIE WEBB: First couple years I was in Orlando and I moved there from Australia because there was a lot of Australian golfers in town that I knew, but our schedules were so different that I could be home for a week and no one would be there.

And then I also grew up in this the coast in Australia, so Orlando was too far inland, too far from the ocean for me. And I had come to Palm Beach County or Martin County so stay with Greg Norman as teenager so had been down

here before.

And I also had friends down here. Beth Daniel was living in Delray and still lives in Delray. Then I also through coming down to see her, I met actually people that lived here permanently, not professional athletes and had crazy schedules like I did, so I was able to come off tour and have friends that didn't play golf. I didn't have to talk about golf.

I could just have a social life that didn't revolve around what I shot last week.

**Q. Couple of things: The Chevron will be played in Palm Springs for the last time in a couple months. You won there twice, and apart from those wins, what are the memories you'll take away from your experiences there over the last 23 years, and what are your thoughts about the tournament moving on? Kind of the end of an era.**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, well, obviously my two wins there, two really great memories, especially 2006 when I holed a wedge on the last which ended up getting me into a playoff.

Those emotions I experienced over that shot, you know, I've never felt on any other golf shot I've ever hit in my life, so that's definitely something that is stamped in my memory.

But just Palm Springs is beautiful. It's a great time of the year to be out there. You know, Mission Mills is a great venue. You only have to look at the list of champions that it's brought the best out of the LPGA.

And for me, the tradition and the history of that event is something that, you know, I'm disappointed that we are moving away from there and that it couldn't have been worked out to stay, purely because we don't hold onto those things hard enough.

I think it's -- if there is casual fans of LPGA, that's one the events they know about. For me, I think it's going to be hard to recreate that anywhere else, but hopefully Chevron is able to do that.

**Q. Following up on that, you're as big about history and tradition as any player I've ever worked with. How important is it to hang onto those traditions, whether it's about the Chevron or any other LPGA event, just to make sure that history doesn't get lost and today's fans or players don't forget about it or don't know about it?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think it's really important. I think if I said the Masters is going to move to, you know, another golf course in South Carolina, still going to be at the same time of the year and still going to be called the Masters, people would just laugh and say that's not going to happen.

And as a kid, I know -- I have so many memories from watching that event and so many of the young girls, you walk down the tee line, they have memories of those events, too.

We need to continue to hold onto our traditions and our history and make them super important, as much as -- as important as obviously playing for more money and equality. Those things are super important, but if don't hold onto tradition and history, it's hard for there to be this massive fan base that keeps coming.

I think that's why those events, that's why the Masters is one the most-watched golf events every year, is because of the tradition, because of the history.

You know, we need to continue to hold onto those things and to have our players continue to hold onto those things, and then also have our fans know about those things. That's going to grow our fan base, which then will include playing for bigger purses and better venues and so on.

So I think that all of that can be done at once. Doesn't have to be, you know, bargained away.

**Q. Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. I had a question about your preparation. You said you returned to full practice for this event. How does that compare to what you normally are doing?**

KARRIE WEBB: Well, it's probably not even full practice compared to 15 years ago full practice, but I was -- I played quite a bit November and December and then got COVID over Christmas, so that sort of hampered practice a little bit for a couple weeks there. Didn't touch a club for a couple weeks.

But it's not Karrie Webb practice that I'm used to, but it's more than if I'm not preparing for a tournament. You know, the range sessions and the short game sessions and stuff like that, that's not a regular thing if I'm not preparing for a tournament.

If I'm going out to play a social round I'm warming up to go out and that's about it. I'm hitting balls 20, 30 minutes, not standing on the range for an hour.

THE MODERATOR: The next generation of Australian players, I think of Hannah Green, Su Oh to an extent,

although probably more of a veteran than a young pup out here. Those next generations of Australian players, how often do you communicate with them in their endeavors and travels over the years, and what kind of advice do you provide to those players?

KARRIE WEBB: I communicate with all the girls quite often actually, you know, especially when they're playing tournaments.

They're all on my favorites for live scoring, and I now understand what my parents have gone through all these years of watching live scoring, especially if the telecast isn't on or I'm not able to see the telecast. It's stressful watching live scoring when you care about the results that the girls have.

But, you know, it's exciting this year. I think we've got two Aussie rookies, Karis Davidson and Stef Kyriacou, both great players. Karis was one of my scholarship winners; Stef wasn't, but I followed Steph couple years in Europe and I knew her before she turned pro.

Both great players, and it's great that we've got such a big Aussie contingency over here at the moment.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Following in your footsteps.

KARRIE WEBB: Thank you.

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