

# The Presidents Cup

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Royal Montreal Golf Club

## Mackenzie Hughes

### Press Conference



**Q. How does a practice round this week differ from a practice round at a regular tournament?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I think it's probably a bit more -- I guess you're viewing the practice round as a part of team building, as well. Whereas most weeks I'm playing with Corey and Taylor and Nick and those guys, we were all great friends to begin with, but I've played with some of my teammates this week, and a lot of it is learning the golf course but a lot of it is getting to know the guy next to you and having fun with him and the ability to build a friendship. I think that's kind of the biggest difference is that it's like -- you're kind of killing two birds with one stone. You're trying to learn the golf course and trying to get to know the guy next to you.

**Q. How many times would you estimate you've partnered with Corey on a Tuesday game?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Well, see, Corey and I have been on TOUR, him seven, me eight. 25-ish tournaments a year. We play basically every week together. I'm going to say well into the hundreds, 150, 175 times on Tuesday where we've played somebody in some fashion. Or I might play against him if it's just the two of us. But yeah, there's a high degree of familiarity there with his game and my game.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: It's amazing, it was one of the things I was very set on once I knew I was on the team and Corey and Taylor were going to be there, as well, I thought, he's going to be here, so he's got my coach this week and he's a part of the team, and he's loving it.

But those guys would agree that we owe a lot to him, so to have him here is really special.

**Q. How important is he in shaping you (indiscernible)?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, he honestly -- I've said this before, he was a bit of a father figure to me when I was at

Kent State, and I felt like he was someone I could really lean on and trust. We had some really tough heart to heart conversations when I was at school. I felt like he wasn't just concerned with me as a player but me as a person. I entered school as a 17 year old with no experience and deer in the headlights. I left, I felt like, as a man prepared to go take on life, and he was someone that helped me do that, and not just -- the golf is one thing, but I felt like he was there for anything you needed. He cared for you before you as a golfer.

**Q. What's the level of excitement right now?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: It's pretty high. Yeah, not only am I looking forward to this tournament for the last couple of years, but now that we've been here for the last few days, you kind of want to go. You just want -- the practice is all fun and it's been great and we've had some nice dinners, but you want to go out there and compete and get going and feel the juices.

It's been a long wait, but tomorrow it's here.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, Mike has been great. We've had some great conversations just -- he's basically let me know that whatever I need he's there for, and any questions I have. But when I was here two weeks ago for our team building, I sat next to him for two dinners actually. I just kind of -- one was set up that way and the other one I just tried to get next to him. Whenever I'm around him, I like to pick his brain, talk to him about golf. So we've had some great chats about what to expect and what I need to focus on this week. It's been great to just -- obviously he's always been great with good advice and someone obviously I have a lot of trust in when he speaks.

**Q. You are one of the very best (indiscernible) how do you manage that kind of responsibility knowing that this part of your game could be very crucial?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I know that the things I do week to week on the PGA TOUR, it's no different than what I have to do this week. So the processes that I go through



and the routine that I have, that's all I can rely on. As great a putter as I am, you go weeks where you make everything and you go weeks where you don't make as much. But over the course of a year, I've proven that I'm a very good putter.

I'm hoping this is one of these weeks where I make everything.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I definitely know it can be. That's something that Mike and I have talked about is it's going to be easy to want things more, to try harder. If you have a putt to win a match, you might want it more because you're not playing just for you, you're playing for your teammates and the wives and the coaches. All you can do is control what you can. That's one of the messages Mike and I have talked about is hey, you do you really well and that's why we have you here. Hopefully that works this week.

**Q. What are you the most looking forward to about this week, the crowd, watching your teammates playing?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Well, if I'm going real dream scenario, it's making a 25-foot breaking putt on 18 to win the Cup and then running over to my teammates and going nuts.

I think, yeah, if you have a putt to win a match where you can get the crowd going, yeah, that's kind of like the moment you envision and you dream of. Hopefully we'll have quite a few of those this week.

**Q. What are you expecting (indiscernible)?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I mean, I expect that on these grounds that we're the favorites. I think having me, Corey and Taylor is a nice bonus for Canadian fans. Yeah, I'm hoping it's very loud. If anything hopefully we're hostile towards the Americans. When we play on their soil, that's typically how it is for us, so that's how it should be here.

**Q. What was it like to go to Habs' practice with your teammates?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: You know, it kills me to say this, but it was pretty cool. Those are some good dudes, and it's a cool building. It's my first time in the building, so that was actually quite neat. Obviously a ton of history there. It's a franchise that dates back a long way and they've won a ton of Cups. You can see that kind of history throughout the building. They were super first class. We got to meet

the coach, Martin St. Louis, and it was a real fun experience. We were on the bench for warm-ups and some of the guys came up and told us they were rooting for us this week. It was a fun night.

A few of those pictures need to go away, but yeah, we had a good time.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I'm going to say that way for probably the rest of my life, but I have a little bit more of a soft spot for the Canadiens now.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I think definitely that's going to be -- I kind of imagine when I've had putts to win tournaments, that's how I'm going to be when I make the putt on the second green to win a hole. I just think that's kind of what comes out of you. I don't have any plans for what I'm going to do, but I know that the emotions are going to be high. There's going to be a ton of energy in the crowd. I just feel like that's what will come out.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, Mike has talked about it, and I just think that this is home soil for us. I know it's not home soil for everyone on our team, but international grounds, and yeah, you want to feel like you have the home court advantage. If it's worth half a point, a point, whatever it's worth, the louder they can be, the better, because if I make a putt that they or Scottie hears on the next hole or the hole prior, that boosts your teammates. You're going to know which cheers are for which teams out there, kind of like when you're playing with Tiger and I'm in the group, as well, you kind of know which putt Tiger made and which putt I made. I think it'll kind of be like that.

I expect it to be loud and boisterous out there.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Again, I don't think so. It's hard from my perspective because again, I would personally do it because I love these competitions. I love the game. So if you said, hey, you have to pay to play in this, I would love to pay to play in this. But there would be guys I'm sure on the other side that have won multiple majors and maybe feel like they deserve to be paid to be here. I never feel that way. I feel like it's an honor that doesn't need to come with any monetary value.

All my memories from this week are going to be the team



room, playing with my teammates, playing for Mike, and that was really why I wanted to be here was to play for Mike, to play in Canada, to have these memories. That's worth more to me than anything you could pay me.

**Q. (On telling his caddie he made the team.)**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, you probably wouldn't want me to tell you this, but when I told him the news, he was in tears. So I knew it meant a lot to him, but I didn't know it meant that much to him, which it was really cool. It was cool to be able to share that news with him and also to share this whole moment with him, someone I trust a lot on my bag. Yeah, he's been a nice weapon for our team, too. Just walking around the property, speaking some nice Francais, and yeah, again, more so than anything, just nice to have him here as a friend, someone I trust, but to do it here close to where you grew up, this is a very special week for him, as well.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I called him the next day, and when Mike told us a week prior, we were not supposed to tell many people. So I called him the next day and just asked him if he was available to come to Montreal in a few weeks, and at that point he was just -- he was a mess. But it was really cool. I know he's really fired up to be here.

**Q. Do you get the sense that all the guys on the International Team have extra motivation to win this week?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: You mean just me, Corey and Taylor, or all the guys?

I don't know if that would -- I don't know if they feel like they have more pressure to win because it's Mike in Canada. I think it's more so guys now just realizing, hey, the last Cup we won was '98. It's time to get it done, regardless of who was the captain. The fact that Mike is the captain here in Canada, you couldn't script it any better. It's a good one if we do win. But the guys are motivated regardless just because of where it's been the last number of years and how close we've been. But certainly I think for me personally, I definitely feel that. Because of Mike believing in me now, my job now is to go out there and help him win a Cup.

**Q. What did you do today in today's practice rounds?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Well, we didn't play in a 12-some today, so it was a little different. We were just playing in groups of four. We played a foursomes match from 10 to 13 within our group, and then we played just a little

four-ball from 1 to 3. We just wanted to see the first few holes on each side. Weather wasn't obviously great today. But just wanted to get a little feel for the course today and kind of mix up the formats a little bit, too.

Also with the forecast tomorrow, some of the guys wanted to go out there and sort of be in the rain gear and see. All the gear we're wearing this week is obviously new, so if you have a rain jacket or rain pants that don't quite feel right, today was the day to feel that and say, hey, I need a bigger jacket or I need something different.

It wasn't quite like yesterday, but every day we kind of played some matches and had some competition out there.

**Q. Any cash prizes today?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, no cash prizes, but every day we're having matches within our team, with our own cash, which probably hurts a little more. Yeah, Corey and I actually lost today to Hideki and Sungjae in a chip-off, so that actually hurt even more.

**Q. Back to Corey, what (indiscernible)?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Well, him and I are usually playing somewhere on the West Coast, but I'd say we win a lot. 80 percent.

**Q. Emotion-wise right now, are you kind of feeling like (indiscernible) that just needs to be released? Do you just want to get this thing rolling? How are you feeling?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I feel like I'm not, I guess, bursting at the seams where I have to get some energy out, but I think I might feel that way in the lead-up to my first match, if I'm on the range and I'm on the first tee. I'm going to want to just let it out in some capacity. I'm not sure how I will do that, if it's going to be fist pumps and screaming or what it's going to be. But I'm sure when I'm out there, it's going to be -- again, you have these massive highs and then you have to bring yourself back and then you get these massive highs. That's something I'm going to navigate as I go and I'll have to go on the fly with all that stuff.

I think I have a great idea of what I need to do when I'm out there. As far as the reactions and all that go, I don't know how that's going to go, but I'm sure it'll be probably silly at times.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, I don't think so. I think I told



people like I mentally prepare for something like this, but I don't think even in my mental imagery it's going to quite get to where it's going to be on the course.

But I also go back to the fact that I've played in tons of big scenarios. I've played in the last group of a major on Sunday. I've played with Tiger. I've handled all those scenarios in my opinion well. All the things you do in those scenarios are all the things I'm going to be doing tomorrow.

The only tough balance or the tricky part is there's probably going to be more outward emotion at an event like this, so it's like, how do you balance that with the ability to bring yourself back to calm yourself down and make a putt or hit a great drive on the next hole. That's the kind of stuff I'll be dealing with. But I think I've got a good plan for it.

**Q. You talked about the highs and then bringing yourself back. (Indiscernible) is that kind of what you're saying?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, and I think that -- I guess as far as the golf goes, I might get a scenario where I get to putt on the 17th hole. During alternate shot it means I tee off on 18. So I make a huge putt in our match, then two minutes later I go to the 18th tee and I have to get up for an important tee shot. So it's an incredible high but now it's work. You have these incredible moments, but then it's back to business and I need to get back in my routine. I think that's something that's different than tournament golf because you don't have those swings of emotion as much. If you watch the PGA TOUR week to week, you don't need guys running around the green on the second hole of the day or the third hole of the day. It's going to be different.

**Q. Mark Smith was a big part of bringing the Cup here. Is he your friend?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: He's my friend now. I didn't know him prior to this week or two weeks ago, but he's been a huge supporter of ours, and he's done a great job of just helping us build team chemistry and camaraderie. He's been nice to have around.

**Q. He's been around physically?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah.

**Q. In the locker room?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Not in the locker room, but been on the course with us walking around. I know Mike likes to have him around, and he's been great to be around.

**Q. Was he with you guys (indiscernible)?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, he was. Yeah.

**Q. (On his short game.)**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I think in 2020 during the COVID year, that was a summer where it felt like I just made an obscene amount of long putts. I have a compilation on my phone from this season of just long putts I made, and it's like a three-minute video of just long putts.

I don't know what it was about that summer, but I seem to have kind of had something that summer, and from that point on I've been a pretty consistent putter the last four years on TOUR, and my short game has kind of been steadily improving the last four or five years. Now I'm at a point where I feel like, yeah, I'm one of the best in the world in that regards, and it gives me a lot of confidence in a spot like this or any week on TOUR.

**Q. Is it an equipment change? Is it comfort level?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, honestly a lot of the stuff I do week to week and a lot of my practicing is very much the same. It just seems like -- I don't know if I had more confidence in 2020 when I started to make some putts, but I feel like the hole started to get bigger for me, but I haven't done a whole lot different to be honest. In a strange sense, I feel like I got to a different level, I kept working on the same things and it started to click for me. But what I've done week-to-week and day-to-day has been very much the same.

**Q. In a three-minute video how many putts would there be?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Probably 12 or 13 putts, but I'm talking, yeah, 40-, 50-, 60-foot putts. Yeah, I don't know. I seem to have a knack for making long putts. Hopefully I'll make a few of those this week.

**Q. Is there something that feels kind of satisfying from one of your last events of the season and being here at an event that doesn't have prize money?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I think so. I think if I look at why I wanted to be here, it was because I wanted to play for something other than myself and prize money and FedExCup points. You just do it because you want to win. There's no financial incentive to win this Cup for us. It's just we want to win. We want to have the satisfaction of beating those guys.

I never really had that experience on TOUR, so this is my first real taste of it where you can play super high level golf



against the best players in the world, and it's really just for pride. But I've also never been as motivated as I am this week. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

**Q. Did you play other sports growing up?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I did. I played pretty much everything at some point in my life. I probably played hockey the longest. Shocking, right? I played basketball, volleyball. You name it. I played curling, growing up in Canada. I enjoyed team sports. I liked having teammates.

But I think ultimately what drew me to golf was that I actually -- I like being alone, too. I like having my own time. I like having the responsibility on my own shoulders.

But yeah, it's cool to be back in a team environment this week where I've got 11 guys with the same goal, and we're all here to win that Cup.

**Q. I know it's all new to you this week, but is there anything that's pleasantly surprised you or have you experienced anything unexpected?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: You know, I just think that it's kind of funny, I knew as a player on a team, you received a lot of clothes and stuff like that. It's probably tenfold of what I thought was going to be coming our way. My hotel room is just overflowing with stuff. It's hard to find stuff. The first day I couldn't find my belt. I was beltless the first day. I got to the team bus, didn't have a belt. I'm like, I don't even know where it is; I couldn't find it. They're like, it's hanging on that one rack in the room under all the clothes, and I'm like, I didn't see it. Couldn't find it. That's been really cool.

More than anything, it's just cool, like, me mown toes that I'll remember for a long time. There's little personal items that I'll have and hold on to it for a long time, pass down to my kids and whatnot. I think that's kind of been one of the coolest things, and then we've been in some team rooms and some team meetings, and there's been a few really nice moments with the team where somebody gets up and says something nice. Even like Trevor Immelman was just talking about how last time it was hard to make the phone call to me to say no, you're not on the team, and just how amazing it was to have me on the team this time. Stuff like that where I'll remember those moments as much as anything else from this week. It's just a real thrill to be in the room with guys like Adam Scott and Jason Day and all those guys.

**Q. What's the presence of Adam like, given his experience?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: He's great. He's great to be

around. Yeah, he exudes calmness and experience just being around him. Yeah, you can tell he's kind of taken that role on pretty seriously. He also read some of his comments yesterday, he expects a lot of himself this week, and I think he's determined to lead the charge, if you will, take this thing and kind of flip the script.

Yeah, it's been really cool, obviously, to share a room with these guys, but yeah, Adam as a leader has been great.

**Q. On the Korn Ferry TOUR what was the favorite part of (indiscernible)?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I mean, I think just getting my card. Once you physically had a card that had your name on it that said PGA TOUR, then kind of the aftermath of just celebrating with those guys next to you and knowing that you've kind of shared that bond now, that this is your graduating class, if you will. I know those guys that I still think about like a Joel Dahmen who graduated in my class and think, that's really cool to know that we got on the TOUR at the same time and accomplished that kind of life-long goal together.

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