

# USGA Media Conference

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USA

**Mike Whan**

**Mike Davis**

**Stu Francis**

**Craig Annis**

**Beth Major**

Press Conference



MIKE WHAN: Thanks, Stu. And thanks, everybody else, for joining in. It's an exciting day for a kid who was a caddie for about half a summer. Hated it. And the grounds crew asked me if I wanted to work on the grounds crew as a bumper boy. So, I edged bunkers and raked them for a summer. And then after surviving that gauntlet he allowed me to start riding mowers and taught me how to change cups.

And, so, like most grounds-crew kids I've sat as the sun goes down, putting, saying this is for the U.S. Open. Coming full circle is pretty exciting. Golf has been a part of my whole life. I love this game; I love this country; and I love the process of getting better. And I feel like with this job I'll get a chance to do all three.

I do know -- as you do you, anybody who's watching this knows me, you're probably going, I don't know what expertise Mike Whan brings to the USGA. And you're right -- feel free to make that your headline. But the reality was that was exactly the same headline I walked into the LPGA in late 2009.

I knew I was never going to be the content expert in any meeting for quite a while -- probably still not at the LPGA. But that makes you a better person and a better leader. Forces me to listen, which doesn't come natural. And so I love putting myself in the situations where I've got to be the person to listen and learn way before we lead.

I'm excited about the team that's at the USGA. I'm excited about the upside potential. As I've said to many people, I've got my seven or eight things I really think it's going to be about. But if I learned anything at the LPGA, I had my seven or eight things when I walked in and probably three weeks later I realized five of them are wrong. I just didn't know which five before I walked in.

This is a unique opportunity for a kid who loves the game. For me to be able to work most of my life in this game, from Wilson Sporting Goods to TaylorMade, adidas, to the LPGA to here, really the only time -- I've said this to Mike Davis before -- the only time I think I'm really going to be comfortable in this job is when it's going to be working with the other stakeholders in the game -- David Abeles at TaylorMade, Chip Brewer, John Solheim. Those are my friends.

BETH MAJOR: Good morning. I'm Beth Major, head of communications at the USGA. On behalf of our entire team thank you for joining us on this incredibly exciting morning at the association.

I'm very pleased to introduce USGA President Stu Francis, USGA CEO Mike Davis and Mike Whan, who earlier today was announced as the next CEO of the USGA. I'd like to turn it over to our guests for introductory comments. Stu?

STU FRANCIS: Thank you, Beth, and thank you for joining us today. This is an important day for the USGA, and it's an exciting day for the USGA. As you all know Mike Davis announced in September of last year that he intended to transition out of the USGA in 2021.

We put together a search committee. We took a lot of input. We had much in-bound interest as well as internal interest. And we did a very thorough search and analysis of who we felt was best positioned to lead the USGA subsequent to Mike Davis' departure. As you know, we announced earlier this morning that Mike Whan will be the next CEO of the USGA.

We were looking for somebody who, frankly, is a very unique individual -- strong golf acumen, strong golf experience from a leadership standpoint, great business experience from a strategy standpoint, understands the equipment manufacturers well -- and that's a spec that's pretty difficult to find in one person combined with a high level of energy and just a person that is incredibly fun to work with.

And we did find our person. Mike Whan, we're delighted you're joining the USGA as CEO. And we're incredibly excited. And I'll turn it over to you.



When we're talking about Jay Monahan and Martin Slumbers and Keith Pelley -- and these are the people I would talk to anyway and do a lot, actually pick their brains about how to work together.

We've all done major business entities together. Almost everything that's been successful in my 11 years at the LPGA came at the hands of another major stakeholder who joined me to make it a reality.

LPGA\*USGA Girls Golf because Mike and the crew got involved at the USGA. The Women's PGA because Pete and Seth got involved and brought that over the line. It's AIG getting together with the R&A to create the Women's British at a whole new level. Keith joining me on the LET board to really take off with women's European tour golf. Everybody in this group has been part of kind of helping me build success.

One thing I'm pretty comfortable with is building strategic alliances where we share goals but have to work together to get there. And I know if the USGA is going to be successful in the next 10 or 15 years, it's going to be because we created these powerful alliances with the groups that matter and the ones that are going to want golf to be great for the next 50, hundred years, just like the last 50 to 100.

I'm excited about that. I know I have a lot to learn, admitted that I have a lot to learn. But I think I'll be surrounded by people who can teach me. And I'll bring in strategic partners to make sure we get there.

So long transition. I'm still going to finish up at the LPGA, help us find the next commissioner and that transition. It probably won't be until summer that I sit in that office and not in this one. And long transitions won't be easy for a guy with no patience. But it's the right thing to do for both organizations. And I'm proud that both the LPGA gave me an opportunity to pursue this, and Stu and Mike created an opportunity that would wait for me to get there this summer.

MIKE DAVIS: Let me start out by saying thank you for joining us. And in terms of today, I can't be more excited for my friend Mike Whan. I suppose I'm equally if not more excited for the USGA.

I've known Mike for well over a decade. I know him professionally and, again, in that capacity because we sit on a handful of boards together. We've dealt with a handful of governance issues together. We've worked on women's and girls' golf initiatives together. And certainly Mike's been a big part of our USGA Women's Open and our Women's Seniors U.S. Open as well. And I know him

in a personal capacity as well.

He's a friend. He's a person of high integrity. He's just fun to be around. He's a great family man. As you've heard, Mike is really steeped in golf and has a genuine passion for the game.

So I think from a golf industry perspective, he's got tremendous respect. And I know in talking not just before this opportunity came about but before, Mike's got a tremendous amount of respect for the USGA and what we do.

And I think he understands that we're about promoting the game, protecting the game, regulating the game and ultimately growing the game.

I think in Mike we've got a wonderful leader. We've got a big-idea person. It's somebody that's not afraid to think outside of the box. As all of you know, he's inspirational. And as I've said, certainly the board when we were going through this process, Mike's enthusiasm is downright contagious.

And I think you all know this, but it is worth noting again, if you look back at the last 11 years at the LPGA, folks, he's completely transformed that organization into one of the most respected organizations in all of sport. They've had historic growth in terms of the number of events. Their purse is going up a remarkable amount -- broadcast hours.

And it's not talked about as much, but just a meaningful growth with LPGA teaching professionals, that division. And ultimately near and dear to our heart is really what we've done with the LPGA and the girls golf program which really has shown great results.

So, you know, listen, Mike's going to bring skill sets to the USGA that I don't possess. And I've thought about this and I've talked to Stu about it, I think it's going to be great for the USGA and great for the game. Mike and I over the course of the last several weeks have talked about this opportunity. No one knows everything. I certainly don't to this day know everything about the USGA.

And I think that we just got done with a staff town hall before this. And what I conveyed to the group is Mike is so enthusiastic about this opportunity. He's going to dig into things like how we conduct our championship, rules of golf, the global system on handicapping and course rating. Obviously distance insights is a critical initiative for our game.

But beyond that -- Mike talked about it -- it's our alliance with Allied Golf Associations both here in the United

States, like state and regional golf associations, but it's also global partners that we've got.

It's looking at things like our green section which is over 100 years old, which I could make a strong argument is the most important thing that the USGA has done for the game, the whole of the game, with everything we do.

Mike will dig into the new GHIN technology platform that touches millions of people. And obviously we do a big part of preserving and celebrating the game's rich history.

Something else that's somewhat new, I know Mike is excited about and will engage with, we have a foundation. As I've said to our internal team, I don't think there's any greater opportunity for us to do more than we're doing for the game than to raise philanthropic monies to put directly into the game of golf.

In terms of next steps, when Mike starts, the formal date really will be at a time, once the LPGA gets a successor in place in terms of the commissioner, but that doesn't mean that Mike won't be engaging with the USGA. I think as his time allows he and I will certainly be working together, talking about strategic plans, annual goals, our organizational structure and understanding of our budget, our finances, our assets, and just kind of a deep dive into what we do.

So I think that I can tell you that our senior team here is very excited about this announcement. And I guess in closing I would just say, you know, today is really about Mike Whan; it's about the future of the USGA.

I'm very excited about that future. I can tell you that the USGA is in great hands. And a tip of the hat to Stu and the search committee for his and their good work. And I know the last ten months, for me, I know is going to be a very smooth transition. And I look forward, even when I'm gone, to looking, watching from afar the USGA thrive in a mission to really better the game.

So, Beth, I'll throw it back to you.

BETH MAJOR: Mike, thanks so much. Stu, thank you and Mike. Thank you for joining us today. We are, as Mike said quite correctly, incredibly excited to have you joining us at the USGA in the coming months. Having the pleasure to work with you on the Women's Open and LPGA\*USGA Girls Golf for the past decade plus, we're incredibly excited to have you join us. So welcome.

Questions?

**Q. Before this opportunity came up, how often had**

**you considered life after the LPGA?**

MIKE WHAN: I'll be honest, I've known for maybe two years that it was time for me to figure out what was next. I don't mean it in a bad way. The learning curve wasn't steep. My wife finds it really strange that I admit this out loud, but when I feel like I have it sort of figured out, I start thinking about what's next, because I like the first-tee jitters. I like the anxiety of realizing that you're never going to be the smartest guy in the room and certainly going to get that at the USGA.

So I'm going to have to learn a lot. So I had told my board chair probably back in October that I had grinded over this for a while. I was thinking about it in 2019 but then pandemic hit. You're in a year and you put your head down and you wake up and it's Christmas 2020.

So I had had a conversation with Stu and one chat with the selection committee kind of when I went public with my plan to leave. But by no means did I have a job at the USGA or any other job for that matter. That's the part that my wife finds strange; you go and say I'm going to go find something else, but I don't know what something else is yet.

I certainly knew the USGA had a myriad of candidates and they were looking at people from all over, our industry and all over. I never thought of myself as a candidate but kind of sensed that announcement in late January and early February. Things sped up quickly and we were able to get to a solution about a week ago.

**Q. Golf had a big year in 2020, a true bright spot during a truly difficult year. What are you excited about as we look forward as a game? And where do you see how the USGA can play a role?**

MIKE WHAN: Listen. I've been doing this for 11 years. If anybody would have told me in any one of those 11 years during essentially an offseason that next year we'll have literally hundreds of thousands of people revisit this game again from virtually all different aspects -- youth and women and people of all different backgrounds and ages, that's what we had in 2020. We had kind of a rebirth of the game.

If you don't know that then you weren't playing yourself because almost any course you went to, it looked different. It felt different. It was exciting.

And in the middle of a time when people really needed to both get outside and to just be able to kind of socialize in a safe way, golf came shining through.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

For me, personally, I've thanked many times Jay Monahan for leading us back into May. I waited a month and let Jay go first. Like any good leader, I let him go out on the stage first, figured out what would be good, and then we launched a month later. And I think together with Keith and many others, including the USGA, Augusta National and the rest, we felt it was important to bring the game back publicly so it could be played back.

I think a combination of golf courses and golfers have learned kind of a different appreciation for the game and the people that play it. I hope as an industry we've respected that.

I haven't talked to a manufacturer who has as much inventory as they thought they'd have. So sales have been good for them. So I think this is exactly what golf needed.

We talked a lot at golf about this huge sort of latent demand, this big chunk of people that wished they could play golf but just weren't playing much. They didn't either have the time or the place. And that latent demand came rushing back to the game in 2020.

I think it's our responsibility to not only respect that but embrace that long term, because it shows that there's plenty of people who want to play more golf and just didn't until 2020. And I think as long as we continue to do a good job of embracing their return, golf's in a better place, because we've got the huge trial numbers that we all tried to figure out for so many years all happened in one year. That's pretty exciting for the game.

**Q. It certainly is. Two-part question, what is the biggest challenge for the USGA and how has your experience as LPGA commissioner prepared you for finding solutions to problems?**

MIKE WHAN: I think I'll take those in reverse order. I think the reality of it is the things that I have in common between walking in as the LPGA commissioner and walking in as the USGA CEO is in both cases I didn't get to walk in and be brilliant at anything. Nobody at the USGA is going to say, as soon as we talked to Mike then we'll figure out blank, blank and blank. I don't bring that perspective or that expertise and I know that.

And I didn't at the LPGA either. But what I feel pretty confident about is when we have a challenge, and usually any challenge at the USGA, just like any challenge at the LPGA, almost always requires more than you to solve it. You work with other industry partners.

I'm very comfortable -- as my father used to say you lead very well in the huddle. Not always actually when the play

is called, because I'm not always the ball carrier, but I'm really comfortable pulling the huddle together of the right people and making sure we hear all the different voices and the right plays.

I'm excited by working with David Abeles and Chip Brewer and John Solheim, really excited about working with Jay Monahan and Keith Pelley and Martin Slumbers. The people that we'll pull together for the game, golf course associations and superintendents, that's kind of my bread and butter. I hate to say it, but I'm really not that good about many things. But I'm pretty comfortable in the area of pulling together strategic alliances and making sure that together we can get farther and faster than any of us could have got on our own, making sure that we all find out what is the common shared objective and let's focus on those first and the other pieces later.

So that's very much in common with the LPGA. Like I said in the beginning, none of the accomplishments in my 11 years that people have written about came because Mike Whan was a genius. That's -- any player or staff member can support that, because I've never been the smartest person in the room. But I have been able to get other people from other organizations to embrace what's important for the women's game and make it and lift it faster and farther.

In terms of what's most important, I think it will be difficult for me to say that's more than, that's less than five or six things, but I'll learn in my first 100 days how to prioritize those five or six things, but I really believe championships and making sure that the stages we create for amateurs, juniors, professionals, have to be at the best they can be and reinvesting in a significant way in those championships will be high on my list.

I believe that making sure that we as a governance body are working both with and for our partners. I sent a note to Chip Brewer this morning that said, I look forward to working for you. I really believe we'll work for the manufacturers and with the manufacturers. I believe we'll do the same with the golf course owners and the tours.

I have a little note on my note pad that says, respect history, dot, dot, dot, but don't be afraid to make it. I believe that I'm going to learn a lot about the history of the game at the USGA. I'll revere it, like I did the history of the LPGA, but I'm not going to be afraid to make a little history, too. And if you're trying to make a little history, you're going to fail a few times; you're going to swing and miss. But I won't be afraid to swing.

My father used to say, it's okay to have the mistakes just don't have the same mistakes next year. So, we're going





to make some mistakes.

I won't have a problem promoting the game every minute of every day because I love this game. I love this sport. And promoting it just rolls off my tongue because I believe in it. I believe in the life lessons it's taught me. It's been an important part of my life and my family's life.

I want more people to feel in their life what golf has brought me in mine. So reaching out to others is I don't do that because it's on some org chart or because it's on some incentive plan. I left the corporate world to work in the golf business because I believe that golf is more than a game and it can really be an important part of your life. And since 1991 or so that's what I've been doing. I won't stop that now. I just have a bigger stage to achieve that.

**Q. One of the key topics you will inherit is the distance debate. And curious for your thoughts in terms of where you stand on that current topic.**

MIKE WHAN: It's funny, I didn't realize how people had an interest in my thoughts on the distance debate until the last 24 hours. I'll be honest with you, Beth and Phil, I have a lot to learn there. It's funny, I remember when I walked into the LPGA, I was at my press conference at Madison Square Garden, and they started hammering me with questions about the LPGA. And I remember thinking, the media knows more about these questions on the LPGA than I do.

I've watched LPGA and I've been involved. And I've certainly had my share of conversations with Mike and Stu about distance, but I've always sort of felt that through the LPGA -- and I hadn't really engaged in a more significant way. So I really have to spend time to get in and understand this. And I'll take the time to understand it from numerous different perspectives -- tour players, from manufacturers' perspective and golf course owners, from other stakeholders -- because I think I have this unique opportunity to really not have a set-in-stone philosophy walking in.

I believe one of the things that makes golf great, and quite frankly makes it greater than most other sports, is this hundred-plus million dollars of R&D that gets spent in our game all the time.

I hate to say it but I'm not sure anybody who is a bowler woke up on Christmas Day and said this is the year because of the new ball and new shoes, this is the year I really take it to the next level. Or darts or some other sports that have been around a long time. Golf, despite its long history, has always had this excitement factor and innovation factor and a chance to get to believe that your

14 handicap can be 12 this year and finding the right mix to do that.

I'm certainly not going to be the USGA CEO who throws a blanket over R&D and puts these handcuffs on innovation and says manufacturing ends today. The one thing I know from spending a lot of time in the manufacturing world is as soon as we establish new standards, whatever those standards are, a thousand engineers will wake up the next morning and start figuring out how to push the envelope within those standards. And I'm counting on it. I'm counting on it for the game, counting on it for the manufacturing business, counting on it for the excitement it brings to viewership and young fans.

We'll have to figure out how those standards can live with the game for the next 100 years, but it's one of the things that separates us. It's one of the things announce a new U.S. Open Championship, that 30 percent of the advertising gets bought ahead of time by the people in this business, like the TaylorMades and Pings and the Acushnets.

So, we have to find the right balance and they have to find it with us, because all of us have something to win to make sure this game is as strong in 100 years as it is now in the middle of the great expansion in the pandemic.

So, finding that mix, I admit won't be easy. But I'm definitely going to come in with it with a mindset of innovation and excitement has to be part of our future. And at the same time we've got to protect the game long term. And I realize those can be divergent points of view, but having been a commissioner for 11 years, divergent points of view are essentially involved in virtually every topic you deal with. I won't say I'm comfortable there, but I'm used to living in that space.

**Q. Mike, you've made a few references to having a lot to learn over the next few months. And one of the folks who has checked in is curious; what have you learned already about the USGA that you might not have known through the selection process and the interview process?**

MIKE WHAN: That's a longer list and probably a list that Stu would prefer I don't share on a recorded -- but I would say really in the last few years for me I've had a lot of, what I'd call USGA stereotype-breaking moments. I don't mean that in a bad way. Just as a guy who grew up in the game and has worked around the game, I thought of the USGA as a certain way.

I'll never forget the Rules Modernization Project that -- Mike and Stu will remember the year, 2016 or 2017 -- but I came

to Mike as a pretty vocal customer. I really believed that we needed some rules changes, we needed them on tour. And we were on tour 34 weeks a year.

And some of the rules that I knew they were already looking at and they were talking about implementing in two years, I just said, Mike, as one of your customers, please go faster. And let me help you in going faster.

And Mike gave us, as both the tours and some of the other -- a seat at the table. They did go faster, which honestly when I asked for it I didn't actually think he'd do it. And they gave us a chance to actually go live with them, make changes. They listened to our tour players and our rules officials and our staff.

And I really, I said to Mike after it was over, I really felt like a partner. I felt like you were in the game with us. You weren't watching the game and viewing it as an umpire from the outside. You were in the competition with us.

And it felt good. And Mike kind of looked at me like we've always been like that. But I didn't live it. And living through that really made me see the partnership opportunity. I mean, I thought -- I remember thinking watching on TV, we were complaining about dropping a ball from a knee. I called Mike and I said, if we're complaining about a ball drop from the knee, the rest of this thing has been pretty good, because if that's what we're talking about -- and in two weeks we're all going to realize dropping from a knee is pretty simple.

Because there was a lot of change in there, a lot of important change for at least us at the time at both the amateur and the tour level. And it felt like we did it as an industry even though I know they had, between the USGA and the R&A, had to take a leadership role in it, but they let us ride with them. And I think it was a good moment for me.

I would be honest with you, when I walked into the selection meeting, the selection group meeting of the LPGA executive committee, the executive committee looked different, acted different and pushed me and allowed me to push them.

And, again, not my stereotype of the USGA executive committee. Not their fault. Just different than my stereotype. And I remember walking out of that enthused, that, A, they let me be me -- which I'm highly caffeinated; there's no way around that -- and we really got into some meaty topics in the very beginning.

And I realized there was a group that was really comfortable with change. They were going to put

out-of-bounds stakes up, and I was going to push those out-of-bounds stakes. But that's no different than the LPGA. If we had done everything at the LPGA that Mike Whan wanted to do, I'm not really sure it would have been a successful decade. I had real quality people around me helping me from walking off a cliff all by myself.

And I said to the selection committee and to the board, I need you and I promise I'll make you uncomfortable as long as you promise to let me make you uncomfortable so we can both find ways to push the envelope. Yeah, I found those were great moments for me and it got me more excited about the job.

The last one was when I got the offer from Stu, I asked Stu for a couple days to think about it. I'm not sure how Stu felt about the couple days, but I made phone calls to people that I knew I'd work with -- Jay Monahan, Keith Pelley, David Abeles, Martin Slumbers, Mike Davis -- and their reaction to knowing me and knowing the job made me comfortable in taking the job, because I knew that I wasn't culturally exactly what they had.

Mike Davis and I will be friends the rest of our lives, but no one will confuse the two of us as the same guy. I thought to myself, am I really the right fit and the right guy?"

But Mike's reaction and Jay's reaction, others, who said, Mike, do this; we're with you. And this would be good for us and good for the game, made me excited about taking it. It was the kind of the final push that I needed to make sure it was the right step for both me and the game because I wouldn't want to do anything that wasn't in the best direction for the game.

**Q. Stu, what did you and the executive committee learn the most throughout the search process?**

STU FRANCIS: I'd say two things: One, the level of interest in the role or a role in helping to lead the USGA is something that people find quite appealing. I mean the USGA, we're a \$225 million nonprofit. We invest every dollar that we bring in into the game once we bring it in.

And I think the footprint of the USGA and how important golf is to people's lives really came through in the level of people who are interested in this role, the passion that they brought to the discussions we had with them about the role.

So I think we learned that even though golf is a sport and a game and recreation, it's a meaningful piece of many people's lives. And I think the pandemic year was kind of a unique year to be able to out searching and deciding who the next CEO of the USGA would be.

The other point I would make is I do think the pandemic year has enabled all of golf to work more closely together as a sport. And I think golf did a superb job of recognizing the pandemic, waiting until the right time existed to return to regular activities. And golfers do follow the rules. The rules were set up as to how to deal with a pandemic, and golf did a better job than any other sport in maintaining those rules.

So I think my respect and our selection committee's respect for the game and what it means to each person was already high, but it went up even higher after this process was completed.

And to finish, I think the other nice thing that we feel good about here is this transition we think will be seamless. I think Mike and Mike together -- knowing each other, working together -- that doesn't always happen in a smooth manner. And we couldn't be more delighted that there's a partnership and a team approach to moving this forward.

And I guess that's the last thing we learned is be careful what you wish for, you might get it. And I'd wish for a great transition, a great new leader. Have a ton of respect for Mike Davis, and I think we got all those. So we're very pleased.

BETH MAJOR: Terrific, Stu. I couldn't agree more.

**Q. Mike, on a topic that's near and dear to our hearts, can you give an assessment regarding the success of the LPGA\*USGA Girls Golf program and the partnership between the two organizations to bring that program to more and more girls? But within that also, given the experience and your perspective related to women's golf, what can or needs to be done in your new role to continue to see and expand that growth among juniors and women in the game?**

MIKE WHAN: Well, that was almost like, whoever asked that, that was a softball of softballs because nothing gets me more excited than what we've done for girls golf.

I've said this many times, I've said this to Stu and the executive committee when I wasn't a candidate for this job, and said, I don't think the USGA takes enough credit for what they've done for women's golf.

I take credit for it virtually every time I'm on a camera because I'm so proud of it. I always say there's a lot of charities that will throw a lot of numbers at you -- how many people they've got involved. But very few of them will take them right down to the bottom line which means actually playing the game or getting involved.

So, to me, regardless of how you feel about USGA girls golf, and I think you know, Beth, how I feel about it, the bottom line is 15 years ago the future of this game -- I always found it funny when somebody asked me about the future of golf because I say, whether you like it or not the future of golf is playing the game. It's junior golfers. You want to know what the future of golf looks like, just go look.

You can talk about 50 years from now, but 20 years from now the future of golf is playing golf. And if you go back 15 years, the future of the game looked exactly like adult golf. It was 85 percent men, 15 percent women. It was two-thirds white males as an overall organization. That was junior golf.

So, when somebody says to me, Mike, how do you feel about the future of the game, I'd have to grit my teeth and go, I think the future of the game will look very much like the current state of the game.

If you just jump forward to today, where 38 percent of junior golfers are women, I can promise you Mike Whan didn't believe we'd get there in 11 years. I certainly wouldn't have thrown that number on the table.

The fact is you could see those kind of stats in every country around the world. I'm talking about the U.S. I don't can if you talk about Thailand or Taiwan or Japan or wherever. You're going to see this incredible growth of women's golf. And, so, as I always say to my golfing male buddies, if you don't like women playing golf get over it because we're coming and we're coming in big numbers.

Because the reality of it is the future of the game is super female. It's also two-thirds not white male. And so the game's going to look different in the next 15 or 20 years, regardless of how you feel about it because we've already started the pipeline with junior golf.

And, listen, there are a lot of people that should and can take credit for that. I wish the USGA would take more credit for it because they've been our partners in getting there. But one of the big reasons there's so many girls playing the game because we've gone from introducing 5,000 girls to 93,000 girls to girls golf and an all-girls golfing environment where you're not playing with a bunch of boys next to you.

And you know, Beth, you could go to a girls golf clinic and we may not hit a golf ball for an hour. If we want to talk about phone covers we'll talk about phone covers. We're just trying to make the golf course a fun, accepting and relaxing place so girls want to come back the next time, which young boys probably don't grasp because they



probably feel pretty comfortable the first time they walk there. But young girls don't always, including adult women's sometimes.

So creating that environment of all girls, where it's not competitive in the beginning -- if it gets competitive later, great -- it's just fun. It's just a place to get together, has really been a game-changer. And to watch other countries pick up versions of that program, it warms my heart.

I've said this to my team at the LPGA many times, 30 years from now no one is going to look back at the last 10 years of the LPGA and go, man, they really raised purses or look at the TV coverage. Those are things you talk about today because they're real report cards of progress; I get it.

But what they're going to say 30 years from now is how did this game get so female. And if they really look they'll look back at a time when we made a huge, concerted effort -- not just us, not just USGA -- Augusta National, PGA of America, PGA TOUR all got serious about women's golf at the youth level, whether funding programs like ours or doing some of their own.

One of our biggest growths in girls golf was doing it at First Tee sites. We stopped worrying about whose program it was, and we focused on the objective. And it's really been a home run.

We've got a long way to go to bring more diversity to the game, but we needed to start by bringing the other half of gender to the sport and we're well down the path there. And I'm super proud of that.

You could say anything you want about my tenure at the LPGA and all of the mistakes we made because, goodness knows, we made a few -- I probably made more than a few -- but that one mattered, it's lasting. And our founders at the LPGA would be most proud of that one -- not purses and TV. They'd be proud that we left the game better for the women playing today. Their daughters will have a better sport to play in than they did. And that's all the founders are trying to achieve. Sorry, you got me riled. Could have killed an hour on that.

BETH MAJOR: Absolutely love it. You know the passion I have for the program, and certainly look forward to finding more ways for us to make it better and talk about it more.

So to me there's nothing better than meeting a girl and doing crafts, but 20 minutes later she's outdriving me on the driving range. So look forward to more and more of that in the years to come.

With that, we're going to close our press conference. Mike,

Mike and Stu, thank you for joining us today.

Should any of you have questions that you didn't get to pose this morning, please send them to my attention and we will follow up with you. Thank you.

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