

# U.S. Women's Open

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA

Lancaster Country Club

## Brooke Henderson

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning and welcome to the 2024 U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally. Joined here by Brooke Henderson.

Brooke, you were here in 2015, nine years ago already. What are some of your memories from that week? You finished top five.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that was an incredible week for me to finish top five. I was just trying to get my Tour card at that point, so any time I was able to play on such a big stage and especially an important event such as this. I played really well on the weekend, climbed up a bunch of spots, and to get that T-5 was really special.

I've been trying to think over the holes the last few months, and it's such a beautiful golf course, and it's in perfect condition. So I'm just really excited to be back here and to feel the atmosphere of a major championship.

THE MODERATOR: We hear the players give overwhelming praise about this golf course. What is it that kind of makes it a true U.S. Open test?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It is a challenge, for sure. It tests everything, and that's exactly what you want at a U.S. Women's Open? It can be scary coming into this week for sure because it is such a tough golf course, but I think just looking forward to the challenge.

This course, it demands not only strategy but also execution. You have to hit really good shots. I think it's a great balance between the two. You can't just bomb it around. You've really got to think your way around.

I think it will be a lot of fun, and I'm really looking forward to teeing it up Thursday.

**Q. Brooke, you're used to big crowds in Canada, but what do you remember about the atmosphere in Lancaster in 2015?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, these were some of the



biggest crowds that I ever played in front of. I just remember there being so much energy and so many people. It was so much fun to play in front of.

So when I knew we were coming back to this golf course, I was really excited for the atmosphere, the energy, and to get to play in front of huge crowds.

**Q. You've had several third place finishes this season. How would you sum up the year so far?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's been a really good year. To get those top finishes, a lot of top tens, a couple top threes, which is really exciting. I feel like my game is trending in the right direction.

I had a little bit of a setback a couple weeks ago at the New Jersey events, but the game is right there. I just need a couple of things to turn it over. But I'm really excited about how this year has gone so far, and I'm really looking forward to the rest of summer because I feel like I'm right there.

**Q. Brooke, obviously you've been here before. Does the golf course feel any different with some of the changes? Then second question is what's the most interesting hole out here and why?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Well, 18 is very interesting because it's very long and it's a finishing hole. So it makes it really fun. You can see the big grandstands when you tee off. You know it's going to be filled with people at the end of the week.

I feel like that hole is maybe just of the most interesting because it's the 72nd hole, it's the 18th hole, it's where you've got to finish strong, and it's a tough hole.

I think every hole out here, they're all a little different from each other. Their style of how you have to play them is slightly different. I think that's really cool about this place is you've got to know where the slopes are. You've got to be able to hit all kinds of different shots.

I think just coming out here yesterday and then again



today, just trying to relearn the golf course and know where I have to be.

**Q. The first question, does the golf course feel any different with some of the changes they made a couple years ago?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I'm just trying to think of some of those changes right now. That's kind of like where the relearning comes in trying to figure it out. I think -- I just remember it being so grand and beautiful and a challenge. That's exactly what it is right now.

**Q. We hear that this is a fader's golf course, and you're a fader, right? Driver anyway. Most of your colleagues are not faders. And you played so well nine years ago. Putting all this together, do you feel like you're particularly well suited to this place?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Well, I'll take that as a compliment, thank you. I hope so. I hope it pans out.

I think, yeah, maybe the fade does give a bit of an advantage on a few holes, which is nice, but you're going to have to hit a lot of different shots. Especially if you get into trouble, the rough's very thick, getting thicker. There's certain places where you can and can't miss, and if you're in those places, you're going to have to hit really great recovery shots.

I think you're going to need every shot in the bag, and the most important one, like any U.S. Women's Open, is the mental side of things. You're going to have to stand strong and be tough and be gritty.

**Q. You mentioned nine years ago you were just trying to get your Tour card and getting out here. A lot of things have changed since then, the course being one of them a little bit. The purse, \$12 million, the game itself. There's not a lot of returning players in this field compared to nine years ago. Where do you feel the game has gone in nine years as the women's professional game, and to play for \$12 million this week has got to be exciting.**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, very exciting. The game is just continuing to grow, and it's a really fun time to be a part of the Tour because you've seen so much growth. Over those past nine years, I've seen so many things increase in purses, better venues, more coverage, more media, more fans, which is really exciting.

I think the players are getting better and stronger as well. So for me it's just been really fun, and I hope it continues to grow and just continues to get better.

**Q. Do you see areas it hasn't grown?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think we can always do better, but I think we've made big gains in all areas. But I think we can always do better.

**Q. I was going to ask you about Nelly and the run she's on, but I think what I really want to ask is do you think players ever get tired of talking about Nelly or Annika or Tiger and Scottie golf? Does it wear on you to be asked about one player all the time, or do you see that as maybe beneficial to helping the overall picture?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I think at certain times throughout careers, certain players really take off and they get on a run. Like Lydia was on a huge run for a long time. Jin Young a couple years ago was winning a lot. May won three in a row a few years back.

So there's different times throughout a career when players kind of get on a run and they're talked about a lot. There's a lot of attention, and they're doing a lot of good for the game.

I don't think we get tired of it. We're just trying to grow the game and get better ourselves and use every day as a stepping stone to make the Tour better, make yourself better, and just grow the game.

**Q. What other player in your career have you been asked about the most?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Probably Lydia just because we're the same age. She was ahead of me, but we kind of grew up at the same time and have been out here for a long time. She's had a phenomenal career and very close to the Hall of Fame.

So it's very exciting for her. I really look up to her, so it's easy to talk about her.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

BROOKE HENDERSON: No, I don't think so.

**Q. Brooke, every one of your victories have been double digit under par. In Gee won here at 8. Do you feel better suited at a golf course that is more difficult where an 8-under is a fantastic score, or would you rather play one that's 21-under?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I like when it's tough. I feel like I've always played generally well at major championships

because it is really tough and you have to be able to grind it out. Realize that pars are good, pars are your friends. When you get birdies, you can better capitalize. And just trying to make the most out of each day.

Sahalee was the only one, KPMG, Women's PGA, where I was minus 6 for that victory. That course played extremely tough, as this one will. So hopefully I can lean on a little bit of that knowledge and play well and be gritty.

**Q. Looking at what Nelly was done this season, is it more inspiration or frustration for you? Do you feel at times you're just playing for second, or what's the mindset?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I don't think so. I feel like I've been very close all year, and she's been able to turn it over on all these weeks. She hasn't necessarily been out front at the start of the week on all those victories. She just kind of found a way to get it done, which is really very impressive.

I think for me personally I've been right there. I've been trending in the right direction for a while now, which is really exciting for me.

I think every week I'm just trying to be my best and try to make small improvements for me. If I can be near the top of the leaderboard come this weekend, I'll be very excited about that, but just trying to make small progress.

I think for Nelly it's been an amazing run and definitely inspiring and definitely something to look up to and try to learn from as well.

**Q. Given what happened last week on the PGA TOUR with Grayson Murray, I'm curious what you do to take care of your own mental health or how much of a priority that is for you week to week?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I didn't know Grayson, but it's very sad. I'm sorry to his family and to his close friends. It's a very difficult time.

For me, I try to keep a good balance between golf and just regular life. I mean, life can be very hard. Golf can be very hard. So just trying to be grateful for all the opportunities that I've been given and just trying to get a little bit better every day and try to tell the people around me that I'm grateful for all they've done and I love them.

I think just trying to be a little bit better. Like I said, life is hard. Golf is hard. You've just got to keep moving forward.

**Q. Just a question about the setup. What about a U.S.**

**Open setup is different from every other week that you play?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, everything is just a little bit harder, I would say. The course is a little bit longer. The rough is a little bit longer. Greens are quicker, more slope. Just everything about it, you've really got to pay attention and have a strategy. But then when that strategy doesn't work, then to be gritty and kind of grind it out.

It's just a lot of fun. It's a great challenge. I think, if you go into the week knowing it's going to be tough, you kind of look forward to those moments when things aren't going well. You kind of try to rise to the challenge. Just the atmosphere when you walk into a major championship or the U.S. Women's Open, it's different than every other week. It's a little bit more exciting, a little bit more adrenaline, and it's just really fun.

**Q. Can you think of a time at a U.S. Open where you had a certain strategy and you had to pivot?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure, pretty much every one (laughter). Yeah, it happens all the time.

**Q. I mentioned it just nine years and not a lot of players have returned in the field. For a golfer, I'm sure you've played so many other tournaments, you've got to jog your memory about the course. For the people here and the organizers, it feels like you just left, right? So when you think about your experiences away from the golf course, what are the first things that come to mind from the last time being here, and what are some of the things that you share with your friends or maybe other people on Tour that have asked you about it because they haven't been here before?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Just first of all, how beautiful it is here, how hilly it is. It's a tough walk, and just the beauty of it. It's a cool surrounding area as well, sort of laid back. I really like that.

Just being able to think back about the memories from nine years ago has been really fun, how I played the course and how I'd like to play it a little better this time around.

Any time you can gain from past experiences, I think that's really important moving forward. I was really proud of my T-5 finish, but that was also nine years ago. I start fresh here on Thursday, so hopefully I'll get off to a fast start.

**Q. You mentioned New Jersey wasn't quite up to the standard that you wanted. Which part of your game was a little off?**



BROOKE HENDERSON: Just sort of everything was like slightly off. But I feel like those are the weeks where you really learn the most and you can really benefit the most because, once I have an off week, then I can work on a few things and come back.

Not every week's going to be perfect, and I think that's really important to remember. So weeks like New Jersey kind of put that in perspective, and hopefully I can just continue to grow and be a little bit more positive.

**Q. There isn't a player in the field over the age of 40. You obviously started out very young here. Do you have in your mind a timeline of how long you think you might be out here? Does 40 seem like it's possible for you?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: 40 seems like a really long way away (laughter). Yeah, that seems like too far. I feel like you never know for sure. I'm just grateful to have the opportunity to play out here against the best in the world and to be able to do it -- I guess this is my tenth season technically. It's been a while.

This is my 12th U.S. Women's Open, so it's pretty cool. I just try to enjoy every opportunity I've been given, and we'll see how far the game takes me.

**Q. Have you over the course of your career given any thought to the kind of place that makes for a successful venue from a fan support angle? I ask that because Lancaster, from everything I've heard, was amazing. It's not the biggest town. It just seems like kind of in the middle of nowhere if you're not from here. Have you thought about that? Why is a place like Lancaster so good? Have you put together any thesis over your time out here?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Talking to a couple of other players and stuff, I think when a community can really wrap around the event, that's when we get the biggest crowds and the more support.

For example, here in Lancaster, it's a little more laid back generally, and when a big event like this comes into town, a lot of people can gravitate to it. For me, it's kind of close to the Canadian border too, so a lot of Canadian fans come down, which is cool for me.

I think maybe just when the community can really be involved, I feel like that's when we see the biggest support.

**Q. For those from Lancaster, that was Shane Ryan. I have his number if you need it.**

(Laughter).

Two quick things, Brooke. When did you go to glasses? Is there a story behind why?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I went to glasses last August. So I've always had trouble with my eyesight. I've never really been able to see the ball land or certain things since the start of my career, but I was a feel player, so I just really leaned into that feel, and then I would just ask my sister, like is that on the green, or is it in the apron, or where is it? So I was really dependent on her for a while.

Then I decided I wanted to be able to see where the ball was going and I wanted to maybe have a little bit better feel around the greens, which I think the glasses really help because I can see it a little clearer.

**Q. Did you have contacts before?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: No, I didn't. Hopefully contacts in the next year or two. For now, just glasses.

**Q. The other thing is -- and I don't have your record in front of me, but even if you haven't won in a certain amount of time, you've always been there for most of your career, and yet there's a number of players that seem like they've just disappeared, whether it was injury, whether it was -- SH Park comes to mind, Maria right now, Yani. How do you avoid that? How do you keep a level of decent consistency to keep going?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Well, thank you. I'm proud of the consistency I've shown over the last 10 years. So I take that as a big compliment, so thank you.

I feel like trying not to have too many highs or too many lows, keep it pretty steady, stay positive. You never really know what's going to happen in life or in golf. Just try to make the most of every situation that you have.

For me, just trying to keep it even keel as best I can, not get too high and not too low.

**Q. Mechanics or between the ears?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Between the ears, yeah. Mechanic, I've always been pretty simple, feel player. My coach, my dad, my sister, my caddie, they always work on simple things, never gets too technical or too complicated.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports