

AIG Women's Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

Brooke Henderson



MIKE WOODCOCK: We'll make a start. I'm very pleased to welcome the world No. 5, Canada's Brooke Henderson to the interview room.

Brooke, can I start off by asking you how much momentum you're bringing into this week after your excellent victory in the Evian Championship.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, thanks, it was super exciting to get my second major championship victory just a couple weeks ago now, and I feel like the last two months or so, my game has been definitely trending in the right direction. Two wins, some good top finishes, and in majors.

It's been fun to be near the top of the leaderboard in contention and hopefully just kind of keep the momentum going.

MIKE WOODCOCK: What are your thoughts this week of what you've seen of Muirfield so far in practise?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love it here at Muirfield. I think it's maybe my favourite links that I've ever played. It's definitely going to be a great test, very challenging especially if it's as windy as it is right now. I think it's beautiful views walking around, and it's a beautiful golf course, so I'm really excited to tee it up on Thursday.

Q. You were due to play the Scottish and you didn't. Can you explain that decision, and what you did do instead? Did you play in links courses?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I was planning on playing but Monday of the Scottish week, I was still very tired from the week before and just decided for me if I just took a couple days off. Kind of got recharged and came into this week ready to go.

So we were able to play a little bit of links golf up at Carnoustie, and we toured two castles. Kind of did some tourist things. It was a nice week to be able to celebrate the win and kind of get recharged.

Q. You played a few links courses over the time, and

you said this one is your favourite; why, and what makes this one stand out to you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's early in the week but when I first played, I played nine holes on Sunday night and then 18 holes yesterday, and I just love the way it feels and the way it looks. I mentioned some of the spectacular views of the water, which is really cool. You can see it from a lot of different holes, actually, which is pretty neat.

And it's a very challenging golf course. But there's a lot of different options off tees and it's just a great feel here. So I look forward to playing four days of competition.

Q. There is a crazy discussion about how much pro golfers are playing for in terms of money these days. It's dominating headlines. Curious if at any point in a given tournament, money is on top of your mind, it could be the first tee shot, the final putt, a week later. When do you think about money?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I wouldn't say think about it at all really, maybe leading into the event, especially when purse sizes jump or something.

On the women's tour, whenever we see those purse increases, we are always very excited, just to close the pay gap between the men, and also just to see the sport get bigger and to be acknowledged a little bit I think is really cool.

But in the tournament, I don't think I'm thinking about it. I'm just thinking about my next shot and what the cut line is and what I need to do today and tomorrow. And especially on the weekend when I'm trying to climb the leaderboard, it's really just to be the best that I can and move up as many spots, and the trophy at the end.

But money doesn't really come into it while you're playing. I think it's more before and after that you kind of celebrate.

Q. How important is winning the second major? The first one is always good, but some people get stuck on the first one. How important is getting that ticked off?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It is super exciting. It did take six years, but it was definitely worth the wait. To win my



first major championship, it really changed my life, just the attention that I received from the media and from fans and everything.

But then to get the second one, yeah, it's a box that you can check off, and it just makes you feel a little bit more confident about where your game is and that you can compete on the biggest stages.

Q. What would it mean to challenge and potentially win this event as well?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, it's super exciting to come into this week with as much momentum as I have and have my game in such a good place the last couple months. Links golf is very different, and definitely a big challenge for me coming from courses that were nothing like this growing up.

So it is a big change. But every year, I feel like I get a little bit more comfortable with the different shots and the different style of play that you need to use. It's a great time to be a part of women's golf and to be here, major championship on this incredible golf course that we've never been able to play before; only the men. That really means a lot, and I'm just excited for the opportunity.

Q. When Muirfield adds female members, when the R&A brings Muirfield a Women's Open, a lot of people in my shoes can talk about the message that's being sent. But I'm curious, in your shoes, what's the mentally that's being received?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, to be playing better golf courses and golf courses with this historical meaning as Muirfield. It's hosted so many men's championships, but the first women's. To be playing this year, it really means a lot to all of us.

It's just proof that the women's game is continuing to grow; the purse sizes are increasing, and we're on network TV more and we're playing these better venues.

Like I said, it's just a really fun time to be a part of women's golf because it is growing so much and we feel like we're making a difference for future generations.

Q. Have you talked to any of the members about this course, and have they given you any tips, or not

BROOKE HENDERSON: I haven't talked to any members, but that's a good idea. Maybe I'll have to go find some.

Q. You weren't at the party last night then?

BROOKE HENDERSON: (Shaking head no.)

Q. No? Okay. Well, it wouldn't have been very good if you hadn't talked when you got there. Makes sense. Have you talked to any of the caddies who are local here, or none of them?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I haven't yet, no. I'm playing the Pro-Am tomorrow, though, so I'm sure there will be some caddies out tomorrow.

I'm just excited to tour the course again, 18 holes tomorrow. Every day has been a little bit different, so it will be fun just to see it again.

Q. How long does it take you to show up at a course you've never been to before and feel like you've learned it and that you know this golf course?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think that's where my sister, my caddie, really comes into play. She's really analytical and takes a lot of notes and spends a lot of time studying the book and also just taking in the whole golf course. I always really value her opinion and kind of what she sees and feels.

I'm very much just a feel player, so coming in, I like to see the golf course and kind of feel my way around. I feel like we make a really good team that way. The two methods kind of fit really well together.

It is tough when you only have three days to learn a golf course, especially a challenging golf course like this one. But we just try to do our best, prepare, and then when it comes time to tee it up on Thursday, we are just trying to hit good shots and try to make the best decisions that we can.

Q. This is a huge step for the women's game. Do you think the women's game will get the chance to take another huge step by being at Augusta professionally one day?

BROOKE HENDERSON: That would be very cool. I feel like right now we are just trending in the right direction and we are getting to play amazing venues like this one, super exciting and hopefully just continues to grow and we can continue to compete on the same courses as the men.

Q. With another major win under your belt, what's your next big goal, and do you have a focus on maybe getting to world No. 1?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I'd definitely love to win another major championship, maybe end of this week.



But I think, you know, I'm just trying to get better all the time. It's so fun to be able to compete against the best in the world and be in contention in those final groups on the weekend, I love that. Seeing your name at the top of the leaderboard, and just when the pressure is on, being able to hit golf shots and being able to climb the leaderboard, that makes me really excited.

Hopefully Thursday, Friday, I can put myself in good positions and then kind of make that charge come the weekend this week.

But long term, of course I would love to continue to get my World Ranking in a better spot. I guess I got as high as No. 2 this 2016. So it would be nice to get a little closer to the top. I'm just excited to compete for championships, a major and just regular tour events.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Brooke, best of luck and thanks for joining us. Good luck this week.

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