

# KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Tuesday, June 20, 2023  
Springfield, New Jersey, USA  
Baltusrol Golf Club



## John Lindert , PGA Paul Knopp Kerry Haigh Mollie Marcoux Samaan

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. I'm the LPGA's Megan McGuire, and I'd like to thank everyone for being here at the 2023 KPMG Women's PGA Championship.

It's going to be a great time here at Baltusrol Golf Club where the players will be playing the recently restored Lower Course, and before teeing off Thursday morning, we are happy to hear from the following PGA of America President, John Lindert, KPMG U.S. chair and chief executive officer Paul Knopp, LPGA commissioner Mollie Marcoux Samaan, and PGA chief championships officer Kerry Haigh.

John, what are your thoughts on the PGA of America returning to Baltusrol for the KPMG Women's PGA Championship?

JOHN LINDERT: Well, first and foremost, it's great being back here in New Jersey. We were here in 2005 and 2016 for the PGA Championship. I didn't have the pleasure of playing the Lower Course before the renovation. Got to play the course this morning. It's a fabulous layout. It's going to be a tremendous venue.

This is our ninth year with wonderful partners, KPMG and the LPGA. We're really looking forward to a fantastic tournament and a fantastic week. We've got some great venues lined up in the future. 2024 we're at Sahalee and 2025 we're at PGA Frisco.

This is going to be a tremendous week.

THE MODERATOR: Can you tell us more about the live broadcast for this year's championship?

JOHN LINDERT: Yeah, our partner NBC and Golf Channel and Peacock has increased the coverage to 26 hours this week, which is fabulous. They're going to cover our Corebridge Financial Team of Eight, and I think we started a tradition with our Corebridge Financial team.

At the PGA one of our Corebridge Financial members had a hole-in-one. At the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship one of Corebridge Financial team members had a hole-in-one.

So we're going to continue that tradition this week and have a hole-in-one with one of our Corebridge Financial team members.

They're great at what they do. They instruct the game, they coach the game, and they can play the game.

THE MODERATOR: Allow me to introduce the U.S. chair and chief executive officer for KPMG Paul Knopp. Paul KPMG has been a catalyst for change in the women's golf space and beyond. Why is this championship so important to KPMG as a whole?

PAUL KNOPP: You know, it really starts with our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's a long-term commitment. As we think about wanting to impact society, not just KPMG, we thought about putting together something that would really be different on multiple dimensions.

You think about the different dimensions of this event, it starts with the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. But we wanted to elevate women both on the course as well as off the course, so we couple with that the KPMG Women's Leadership Summit which is our way of trying to help more women get elevated to the C-suite.

We look at the impact we had as a catalyst for change in the sport over the last nine years, we've seen other major



organization like Chevron and AIG and Amundi start to be sponsoring major women's championships, too, on the LPGA Tour, which is amazing, and it's great to be supported by them.

Then you think about the KPMG women's leadership Summit and the fact that we were the pioneer for that in 2015, and now there's 20 other LPGA events with affiliated women's leadership conferences. So we really feel great about the impact we've had there.

Then you move to the third dimension of it, which is the net proceeds of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship and the KPMG Women's Leadership Summit go to fund scholarships, and over the last nine years, 166 scholarships totaling \$5.3 million to young people, 70 percent are women of color, and these women have gone on to law school, they've gone on to medical school, clinical researchers.

It's just amazing to think about those three dimensions and the impact that we're having and the change that's really brought about by her participation in this event.

THE MODERATOR: You talked about the Summit and what it means to this championship. Can we get a little preview of what we'll see tomorrow?

PAUL KNOPP: Yes, absolutely. We host the KPMG Women's Leadership Summit in conjunction with the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. We're really excited. This is our ninth year to do that.

Now, what we have is business leaders, political leaders, sports and media leaders come together with women that are nominated by the CEOs of 140 leading companies, and these women are right on the cusp of being in the C-suite, and they learn, they develop, they share experiences, and it's just an amazing event for these women.

We think about the impact we have, we're going to have Allyson Felix and our closing keynote speaker. She's in the U.S. the most decorated track and field athlete in Olympic history.

And we're also going to be Dr. Condoleezza Rice back with us again this year.

If I think about the impact the Summit has had, we play only a small part in the development of these women, but there have been 2,500 women over the course of the nine years go through this Summit. 50 percent have been promoted, and 37 percent to the C-suite. Then last year alone, 4.5 million viewers participated through streaming in the event.

We really feel great about the women's leadership Summit.

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to now introduce the LPGA commissioner, Mollie Marcoux Samaan. Mollie, can you tell us the history of this championship and what it means to the women's game to have partners like PGA of America and also KPMG?

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, I mean, this is an amazing championship. This is the second oldest major that we have on the LPGA. 1955 I think was the first time we played.

If you look at the past champions who have won this event, it's the who's who of the LPGA. This has been a critical part of the Tour.

But I think in really studying the history and looking at this event, in 2015 when we partnered with KPMG and the PGA of America sort of everything changed around this championship and I think it became, like Paul said, he kind of described it perfectly, a catalyst for change on the LPGA.

If you look at all the things that they do to elevate this tournament, it's what we're trying to do. The investment that they make in the women golfers, in the LPGA, has really taken the LPGA to new heights that we never really imagined, and I always say, golf is an individual sport, but this tournament and the way the LPGA works is really a team sport.

So doing it together with these amazing partners has allowed us -- if you think about, these guys all talked about it, the television coverage this week, the elevated purse from last year, which was amazing, the Summit that we do and the way that we talk about using our platform to elevate and inspire women, that's exactly what KPMG tries to do.

I think the golf courses that we play in the markets that we play are really phenomenal. I had a chance to play Baltusrol a couple weeks ago and I've played once before, and it's incredible. To have our women being able to play on this level golf course in front of in this New York market in front of the world, and to see -- to be able to play on the golf courses that the best men have played on, that's really important to us, and I think we're going to have a great fan base.

I think this championship for us has elevated us.

The thing I love is whenever we work with KPMG, they say, how do we solve a problem, what kind of problem does the

LPGA have, we're about solving problems for our clients, and that's what we've done.

You can see it at every level of the game and how it's really pushed us forward in so many other areas.

So this was the first tournament that I attended as the commissioner. I hadn't really started yet. Went down to Atlanta and I just was blown away the first time I saw it, and then last year at Congressional was amazing, and then driving in here today and seeing what they've done, it's going to be an amazing week.

THE MODERATOR: Now is there's something new that we've recently announced. It's not new for our players, the KPMG Performance Insights Program. Now we have something that's accessible to fans and media alike.

Can you dive in a little bit what does access to this kind of data now mean for the average golf fan?

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAN: We always talk about the need for more investment in the women's, and I think, again, KPMG stepped up and said, how can we help you, what do you need, and I think one of the areas that our women were significantly behind was the data that they had to drive performance.

These are the best women in the world, and they need all the tools that they can possibly get to be able to drive their own performance.

So the KPMG Performance Insights allows that. They allow to use data and analytics to improve the players' games. It's really made a difference. Laura just did an amazing job on Golf Channel talking about the specific things that our athletes have learned through the KPMG Performance Insights Program, and it's real. It is really driving their performance and solving a problem that we had.

I think the other really exciting thing, the media has had that data, but now we just launched a new website where the fans can engage with that data, and that just allows us to tell our story.

We have the most amazing golfers in the world, the most amazing golfers, not just male or female, and I think the data is showing that. Minjee Lee's statistics last year, we would never have known that her proximity to the hole was better than any golfer that's playing, and from various distances.

And so that insight for us to be able to tell our story and to get closer to equity and to tell people how great our

athletes are really matters. We couldn't be more grateful for the partnership.

Again, KPMG stepped up to help solve our problems, and we're just going to build on it as we go.

THE MODERATOR: Last but not least, Kerry, you are back here at Baltusrol for the first time since 2016. How does the course look in your eyes and what makes it such an elite host for golf?

KERRY HAIGH: Well, thank you. It is great to be back at Baltusrol. As you said, I was here in the previous two PGA Championships, and the club just bleeds major championship golf.

It's almost in their DNA, and to be a member here, you almost want to host major championships, and so excited that the KPMG Women's PGA Championship is here, and the commitment from the club. They're closing both golf courses for 10 days in the middle of summer, and the conditioning, Greg Boring and his team, director of grounds, have done an incredible job.

The putting greens, the playing surfaces are second to none, and the restoration that the club took with Gil Hanse, the sympathetic restoration I believe they call it, did an incredible job. So adding more hole locations, widening some fairways, adding more bunkers, a little deeper bunkers, but overall removing some trees.

But the look, the feel of Baltusrol is even better than it was in '05 and '16.

Previously hosted two Women's Opens. Great champions there. This week we have 98 of the top 100 players from the current Money List playing. Greatest field in women's golf, the greatest athletes on a great venue, and can't wait to start on Thursday.

THE MODERATOR: You talked a little bit about the course changes that have been going on with that renovation, the restoration from Gil Hanse.

As you were preparing for this championship, how did you take into effect those course changes, and were there any differences in the way that you prepared 2016 to now with the women?

KERRY HAIGH: Yeah, I think, as I said, Gil had done an incredible job, along with the club. It takes two partners to make the changes and spend the money that the club have done, brought in modern technology. They can pump air into the greens, they can suck air out of the greens. Based on the weather forecast, who knows, we may need to use

some of that technology. Who knows. It is 50 percent of sunshine is what we hear. That's what we're looking forward to.

Gil and the club, Greg, they worked together beautifully. The visual, the esthetics out there, you can see so much more, so many holes, so many different aspects of the golf course that you could never see before, and that adds to the -- it's a historic landmark here at Baltusrol.

What they do, what they continue to do, is make the club better, make the golf course better. They're going to restore the upper golf course this coming year or next year.

As I said, the club is just unbelievable, their commitment to major championship golf, and I would like to thank the volunteers here, Mary Lou Carter is the general chair, and she and all of the volunteers are pulling together to make this what we hope will be our best KPMG Women's PGA Championship we've ever played.

**Q. Paul, when you started this event or when this event was begun in 2015, what were the expectations for the KPMG brand, and how has that evolved over the last eight years?**

PAUL KNOPP: We certainly have a huge investment in the women's game of golf, and so it has exceeded our expectations. You think about the fact that today LPGA majors have an average purse that's double what it was in 2015. The total purses on the LPGA Tour are almost double what they were in 2015.

I talked earlier about the women's leadership Summit and the various dimensions of this event, but what's been amazing is this collaboration between the LPGA Tour and the PGA of America and how it's endured and how we sustain it and partner together make it better every year.

So I would just say it really has exceeded our expectations in terms of what they thought about. It was hard to imagine how incredible it's become.

We definitely want to see the women play on the courses that the men get to play on. We want them to have the same kind of opportunity when it comes to the data that they use, so we're really trying to drive more equity when it comes to the game over the long-term for the women.

**Q. If you said KPMG to the general public now, they may not even know you're an accounting firm, but if they are a golfer they know you run this event.**

PAUL KNOPP: That is very true.

**Q. Was that part of the expectation?**

PAUL KNOPP: Oh, sure. From a brand perspective, there's no doubt that the branding around the course, the recognition, the incredible partnership with NBC and The Golf Channel and Peacock provides us great exposure.

But at the end of the day, we want that exposure to translate into our commitment to diversity and more equity with women in sports. That's the way we think about it.

**Q. Kerry, based on John's wishes, how will you make more hole-in-ones possible this week?**

KERRY HAIGH: The more the merrier.

**Q. What would you expect to see here this week compared to 2016, and after what you know about the women's game, what will be the surprises or the things that people won't expect?**

KERRY HAIGH: Well, as I said earlier, the top women golfers in the world are incredible athletes. It's unbelievable how good they are. The golf course here is a great golf course, but it will test the best players in the world, just as it did in 2005 and 2016.

But other than the tees that we're playing from, it's 6600 yards plus, it's plenty of golf course. The rough is three inches, but it's thick and it's consistent.

We will probably top the rough on Wednesday as we did on Sunday.

But it's a great test. That's what we want. It's not what we do, it's what the best players in the world do on a great venue. Our job is to just present it for them, to showcase their skills, and hopefully we'll have a playoff on Sunday evening and the greatest players in the world, or one of them, will hopefully win.

**Q. For Paul and Mollie, after all the insights and your experience now, what do you think women in business can learn from these top golf players in the world? And the other way around, what can the top golfers in the world learn from women in business?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAN: I mean, I think golf is a really hard game, and you need all the tools and you need all the coaching and you need a whole support system around you. That's the same thing in business and the same thing in life.

So I think golf is a perfect metaphor for life. You fail a lot in golf and you have to have resilience and grit and get back



up.

I think we can show a lot. I also think we can show how talented women are at something really, really hard, and sometimes in business there's the glass ceiling, sometimes it's hard for women to dig in and say I'm going to do something really hard that I can fail a lot at, and in golf these women have to really be able to be gritty and dig in.

I think there's a lot of parallels between golf and business, and so what these guys are doing, combining the two, is really, really important.

I think we're trying to inspire women to say, you can do hard things in really difficult situations, and you can be under pressure and you can do it really well. Again, I think the data insights are showing you've got to use all the tools in your tool chest to do that, so I think that's what this championship is really doing.

PAUL KNOPP: The only thing I would add to that great answer is that the dimensions of the women's Summit that we hold and the future leaders program, there's a dimension that is related to giving both of those groups of individuals more exposure to golf.

They're inspired by the amazing golfers that play in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, and I think to ensure that women have more access to the game of golf, equity, opportunity, the same way that -- if you look at the history of the game, more men have played over history than women, and we're trying to ensure that we give women more exposure to the game so that more women play golf and more women use that as another avenue to hopefully make business connections.

**Q. Kerry, you want to have great drama at the end of a great championship. How can back-to-back par-5s play into that?**

KERRY HAIGH: Yeah, it's certainly unique. Baltusrol is pretty much a very long, challenging 17th hole with is a Sahara waste great hazard there sort of challenging you on the second shot, and then likely or hopefully a reachable par-5, 18.

So much history has come down on those two holes. As I said, you've got to wait a long time before you get to the two par-5s. There is one on the front nine which is certainly reachable and gettable. But 16 is a tough par-3 for sure.

But I think the back-to-back par-5s certainly calls for a lot of potential movement coming down on Sunday of the final. Two birdies, birdie and eagle, or you get a little off kilter

and a bogey, and who knows. That's the fun, and that's the excitement coming down the stretch.

**Q. For John, as you look at the Corebridge team that's here, why is that important to have your representative teaching pros and instructors out here side by side with the best in the world, and how much of a push did the PGA get out of Michael Block and Oak Hill?**

JOHN LINDERT: Well, I'll answer the second part first. Probably unbelievable push for Michael Block. Obviously now a media sensation. He's on every YouTube or whatever social media you look at, Instagram, he's there.

It's critically important for us. It showcases that we the LPGA and the PGA of America, that we've got great talent. We've got great talent in instructors. We own and operate some of the best golf courses in the country. I'm a golf shop owner, right, so we instruct, we run programs, we run Drive, Chip & Putt, we do PGA Junior League, and then to have those individuals come out here and compete with 98 of the top 100, and I mean compete -- they're just not showing up, they're showing up to compete.

It says a lot about our industry. It says a lot about both the LPGA and the PGA of America. So it's extremely important.

**Q. I'm not sure who wants to field this one, but we all know how important TV exposure is for every event, and I'm just hoping someone can give me a little background on the meeting of the minds that happened after this championship last year that led to the TV hours nearly doubling this year.**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAN: I mean, I think for us, the investment in the women's game is really, really important, and investment comes from corporate partners but it also comes from access and exposure.

I think we're very much in partnership, so we sat down and said, what can we do to continue to elevate women. What do we need to do. We've got a great partner in NBC, and we all just sat down and said, this is really important. This is a critical component to the world knowing our athletes, being able to use this platform.

So what do we need to do? I think we were all like-minded on it. Let's do everything we can do to get more hours and get more exposure. I think there wasn't pushback on any level. We all agreed it was something we needed to do and make a commitment to that, and I think we all know it really matters. I think we still have a ways to go. We need more exposure. We need our women on in the most dramatic way because the championship is so good and

the golf course is so good, the players are so good. We just need that opportunity.

I just think that we all sat down and said, how do we do this, and our partner at NBC said, we're in. Let's go try to make this happen. So I think we increased by 12 hours this year. You can really see the championship round from start to finish, which is really important, and we're going to continue to grow on that.

JOHN LINDERT: I don't think you'd get that without a good product, and we've got a great product. It's probably underviewed. I said last night, I've been going to LPGA tournaments since 1981, and it's some of the best golf you'll ever see. Without the great product you probably wouldn't have the expanded coverage, and they've got a great product.

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: But if people don't see it, it's hard to tell that story, so it's really important we continue to focus on that.

**Q. Is it fair to say that was a priority?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: It's always a priority, and I think it was definitely a priority of all of our partners in this event. I think we prioritize it all the time. You start from behind the 8-ball if you can't get that product out there. We do such good work, and as John said, the athletes are so good, that we need to show that to the world.

**Q. John, what does it mean, we talked about what it means to the LPGA Tour as an organization, but what does it mean to the PGA of America organization to be this catalyst for change that's always pushing it for us to go higher and really elevate women's golf?**

JOHN LINDERT: Well, I think that's one of our core foundations is that we try to diversify the game. We want the to be for everybody. The game is a game of invitation, and we want everybody to feel welcome. So it's important for people to see people that they can relate to succeed in that field.

Having this LPGA -- the KPMG Women's PGA Championship is important. It's important to grow the game for women. It's important to grow the game for juniors.

This is just another avenue that we can utilize for that.

**Q. Kerry, with the weather coming in, how penalizing do you think or do you expect the rough to be come the weekend?**

KERRY HAIGH: 50 percent sunshine (laughter.)

**Q. Is it going to be like punch-out rough, like just get your wedge?**

KERRY HAIGH: No, I think you may have missed -- the rough will be as it is. We are mowing it again tomorrow evening, as we did Sunday evening, as we did last Thursday evening. What you see is pretty much what you get.

Yeah, if it rains, it'll grow -- it's certainly going to grow in four days, but right now it's sort of about how we want it. It's tough. You can't control it but you can move it and you can hit it.

That's why we're mowing it. We are prepared to mow it again Friday night if we need to, but we'll sort of play that by ear. I'm hoping Wednesday will be sort of the last mow, but if we need to, we will, and we'll do what's necessary.

**Q. Kerry, it's really firm and fast out there out on the Lower Course. Is there any plan to water it with the weather coming in? 50 percent sunshine, but the potential for weather to come in, do you have any plans to water this course before they tee it up on Thursday?**

KERRY HAIGH: Yeah, we watered it yesterday, last night. We'll see how the weather does. But certainly one day at a time.

THE MODERATOR: I think that will do it for all of us here. Thank you for joining us on this sunny, sunny Tuesday afternoon, and thank you once again and best of luck for a great week.

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