

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Springfield, New Jersey, USA

Baltusrol Golf Club

Joanna Coe

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, we're here with Joanna Coe. It's your fifth time here competing in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, first time in your home state.

What's it like coming back to this event but now, like I said, in your home state?

JOANNA COE: It's always great coming back to New Jersey, you know, just to know the grass and the familiarity of conditions. But probably the best thing is food. Pizza, bagels all that. Love coming back to this area, and will definitely hit up all the Italian restaurants.

Q. Have you been to Baltusrol before?

JOANNA COE: I have. Couple times.

Q. Have you been before the renovation?

JOANNA COE: Once before, but I played the upper not the lower.

Q. What's been your impression of the course the few times you've gone out this week so far?

JOANNA COE: Right. Well, we know the great work that Gil Hanse does coming from Merion. It's just some of the walks from green to tee are just so seamless. It's beautiful. Conditions are absolutely perfect. Greens are quick. Rough is thick. It's major championship golf. It's Baltusrol. Lots of history, so it's just an unbelievable facility.

Q. Very unique in the sense that it ends with two par-5s. When you played or practiced, what have been the keys that you worked on to navigate that?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, 17 is kind of -- you have to hit your spots, so got to keep it in play, avoid the left fairway bunker, and then it's a standard shot over the great hazard, Hell's Half Acre, whatever you want to call it. So it's pick



your spot, but 18 you can be a little more aggressive.

It depends on the wind. Today didn't get home in two, but when I played about a month ago I did.

So probably depends on wind direction. With 16, too, that's a long par 3. Yeah, it's going to be a fun closing stretch.

Q. What is to like to fit a major in in this part of the season for you?

JOANNA COE: Crazy. Yeah, it's mid-season at Merion so we are as busy as it gets right now, so I appreciate everyone at home filling in for me, helping with the members, helping with the operation.

So it takes a team, and I'm really appreciative of them. The membership, they're really excited that I'm here and we have a bus load coming on Friday. Hopefully the weather doesn't disturb that.

Yeah, they're all excited and I appreciate the support, because without them I wouldn't be here.

Q. I was going to ask you, it's one thing people are filling in for you. At the same time, they carry the pride of you being here. What's it like for you to go back and what do you take back from a week like this?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, it's funny, on the lesson tee people always ask questions like after the PGA Cup, how did you manage the crazy cold weather? You have to warm up, do certain things with your bead. There are certain things you have to bring with hand warmers and gloves and beanies.

I always come back with a lesson or two from a major championship experience, and they're always very curious of that because they're never going to experience it themselves for the most part, the people I'm teaching. The odds are not in your favor.

So if I can bring that and help them win a club championship or junior or break 90 for the first time to help them understand what it feels like to do it under pressure,



that's what I'll bring back to them.

It's no greater feeling when you do it.

Q. What does it mean to see so many major women's golf events taking place in New Jersey?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I love Jersey. We are a great sports state. I mean, I'm a loyal Philadelphia fan, but between all the great venues up in northern New Jersey and south Jersey and the ShopRite LPGA Classic, I played in that event several times, supporter of women's golf.

It's got New York ties, Philadelphia ties. It brings a lot of different people together, so it's just a great state and always great golf courses.

So it's cool to be at place like Baltusrol.

Q. Anywhere in particular you have to go from Jersey pizza?

JOANNA COE: Well, I know a few spots in Ewing and Trenton with some pizza spots, so I got to explore a little bit more up here. I'm staying with a family so they're not going to steer me wrong. I mean, she already made me lasagna, which was bomb. Yeah, no matter what, I'm going to hit them up.

Q. Jin Young Jo was just in here saying she found at Founders a great bagel spot. She went every day?

JOANNA COE: There we go.

Q. You might have to ask her for that.

JOANNA COE: Yeah, and she's pretty good at golf, so I'll follow her lead.

Q. I remember you had a Baltimore connection. What is your connection to Jersey? Did you grow up here?

JOANNA COE: I grew up in southern New Jersey, Mays Landing, so about 12 miles outside of Atlantic City. I worked at Baltusrol Country Club for six years.

Q. What was it like growing up and learning this game in this state and now getting to play a major here?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, so south Jersey has got great golf, right? Like I said, the ShopRite LPGA Classic was a hometown event for me, so I met Annika there. I was a little girl volunteering there holding up the "shhh, please" signs and asking for autographs.

So the first time I got to like be inside the ropes at the ShopRite was a very special experience for me. And then I met my swing coach down there, Bruce Chelucci, he's at New Jersey Academy of Golf. And so, Kale over here understands that we kind of built something pretty special in South Jersey, and junior golf, Girls Golf exploded in that area. It's really cool they've that influence in South Jersey.

So I didn't get up to North Jersey much as a junior golfer, but now as is professional I understand the just tremendous golf up here with Somerset Hills and Ridgewood and Plainfield. You know, I love the opportunities to play great golf all over the state.

Q. So I remember when you were playing high school and going through -- you went to school in Florida, right?

JOANNA COE: Right, Rollins.

Q. I remember that. So I guess two questions I would have is: What would be your advice to somebody now starting in junior golf? What have you seen as the biggest changes since I'm going to say about 15 years ago when you were playing high school golf and certainly have excelled? And congratulations on being at Merion.

JOANNA COE: Thank you. Yeah, so with junior golf I think the biggest changes would be the equipment is so good now with U.S. Kids, and I was -- my dad was cut down steel shafts trying to figure out a way to hit them hard Rafa so equipment is just so much better. You see especially young girls hit it harder than every because they're just swinging out of their shoes.

The junior golf process is just -- the AJGA are really impressive, so I remember playing in AJGAs and feeling like that was a major championship to me. That's how well run the events are.

College golf has changed a lot with NIL and all those things, so it's a whole 'nother world. But to me it's like stay in college, play all those tournaments, get the experience under your belt, have the best four years of your life, make some of the best friends in the world, and you can make some money on the side, too, which we didn't have that opportunity. So I'm sure the recruiting process is a lot different now.

But I wanted to play golf in the south being a Jersey girl. I was sick of the winters here, so I wanted to play, and Rollins had an unbelievable reputation. Julie Garner is one its best in college golf.

I had a great four years there.

Q. So obviously teaching pro and also played at a very high level. How do you balance being able to practice and teaching a lot as well? How do you make time?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, it's really hard. I mean, Nick back here, he understands that this time of year it's like I was just sneaking it in whenever I could. Hit a few balls here and there, hit some chips, some putts.

I like to play, so our Philadelphia section is kind of the practice rounds for this. I treated Monday as an intense practice round. So I love how many events we have each month, so that's why I show up to as many as I can.

If I just keep my golf swing in a place where I know it can function under pressure, then that's really the goal. I have advisors helping me do that.

And then it's taking care of the health. I've had some knee issues in the past, so working out, eating well, taking care of my body, taking care of those things, because golf is already hard enough, so I might as well make it easier for all these other details.

So get enough sleep and do everything you can at home. When I'm on the lesson tee 8:30 to 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. it's exhausting. Soon as I go home I eat dinner and I'm out. This time of year it's a grind, but I love it. I love it more than anything. I can't imagine doing anything else.

Q. Has your comfort level changes doing five of these now? Does it change year to year? And secondly, do you draw inspiration from what Michael Block did as a part-time player at the PGA?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I think my comfort level has definitely gotten there. First time was Kemper Lakes. I'm thinking back to all my firsts. The ShopRite, U.S. Open, this, you just draw from all these experiences.

I remember when I turned pro, like 21, 22, I just didn't know what it was like to stay composed and execute under pressure. You just have to experience it.

So now I get it once in a while. I get it in the section and then I get the intense one here, so it's -- it takes practice. It really does.

The college golf thing, going back to that question, nowadays college golf events are televised all the time. Back then they weren't.

So the first time cameras were on me I was freaking out a

little bit. You see those girls really are -- there is an advantage to that, Golf Channel televising NAAs and the East Lake Cup, all those things.

Yeah, Michael Block, I mean, I was at Oak Hill. It was unbelievable.

Q. You were there?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I was there doing some work for ESPN+ with the PGA of America. Just trying to bring some Michael Block vibes up in here for the PGA pros, because that was very cool and a great spotlight for PGA professionals.

Q. (No microphone.) (Regarding making time to practice and play at this level.) What is your recommendation with the intensity that you need to practice?

JOANNA COE: Right.

Q. How do you did do that?

JOANNA COE: It's really day by day, because Nick and I joke, people book day-of lessons all the time at Merion. I thought was going to practice for hour and a half and it turned into 28 minutes, so it really changes day by day.

And then when I do have random off days it's usually dedicated to my golf. I took Memorial Day off. Played golf with my husband and we went to a barbecue afterwards.

It was around golf, so I appreciate him always supporting me in that regard. Like all right, it's going to be golf heavy until it's not, until the fall or winter, until life things change.

Yeah, it's difficult. It's day by day. Again, I think it's like Suzy Whaley once told me. There is no work-life balance. Every day is different.

You try your best. You keep people in mind. My husband, family, friends, golf, and you have to say no sometimes to some things and that's what I have to do. There is nothing wrong with that, so I just try and balance it as best I can day by day.

Q. One question with that: What would you suggest to a young girl or guy? How does he get through this battle mentally and physically?

JOANNA COE: Right, it's all just the right connections, right, and finding the right mentors in the industry and someone what has your back and can put a good word in for you. That's how Merion happened. There is no job

description out in LinkedIn. That doesn't happen. So it's just all who you know, the network, right?

So that's -- but that's golf, right? It's a very small network, whether it's the industry or the tour or manufacturers or things like that.

But, yeah, find some mentors and pick their brain and resume build and interview skills and all that. Yeah.

Q. Last thing is food.

JOANNA COE: Uh-huh.

Q. You mentioned Jersey food. I'm Italian, so is like Italian.

JOANNA COE: There we go.

Q. But don't you miss the crab cakes and the steam crabs?

JOANNA COE: Crab feast is one of my favorite things in life and my birthday is August 30th, so it's like prime crab eating season. Yes, I can crush some crabs.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Joanna.

JOANNA COE: Yep, you're welcome.

Fastscripts by ASAP Sports...