

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Sammamish, Washington, USA

Sahalee Country Club

Stacy Lewis

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by KPMG ambassador Stacy Lewis. Welcome back to the KPMG Women's PHA Championship. We heard from some of the heads of state here with KPMG, PGA of America, and LPGA; just kind of share your thoughts on the news that broke from this.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it's obviously a really exciting day. Any time you see a purse increase from the players' side you're excited. But the CHAMPCAST and what we're doing with ShotLink this week is really going to enhance the experience for fans and those watching on TV.

I think everybody should download the app. The app part is going to be a really cool enhancement to the week. Yeah, just really excited about the week, and every time there is an announcement it's kind of like in my head I'm like, okay, what are they going to do next year to top this.

Tuesday is usually an exciting day here.

Q. Obviously as a KPMG ambassador you helped plant the seed for this partnership and this tournament. As we reflect 10 years, can you share the story of how this maybe came to be and where you've seen them grow the women's game over these ten years?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, so I was doing just like a sponsor day for KPMG and we were here in Seattle. Not at Sahalee, but here in Seattle. After the event was over I just got -- kind of got up and started talking about women's golf and how I thought we needed to improve and areas that I thought we could get better in.

Then chairman John Veihmeyer, his wheels started going in his head. That was really where the idea for the championship came from, that day in Seattle probably I would say maybe 12 years ago now.

So yeah, so been a part of it since the beginning. KPMG

has picked my brain over the years how we can get better and what do we need to do to enhance the championship. Everything I said they did and continue to do.

So it's been a great partnership for me personally and a tremendous partnership for the Tour.

Q. Obviously another year of Solheim Cup as the U.S. team captain. Last year you really utilized the KPMG Performance Insights including piloting the AI-powered predictive analytics that's now being used across the Tour. How did this data and analytics help you in decision making and roles as you went through your time as captain last year?

STACY LEWIS: It was huge. I know I probably talked about it too much at Solheim at times. It was really big in the decision making, and provided reasons to why those decisions were being made, and it justified things to the players, which helped a lot.

We were predicting who was going to make the team, whether it was via points or Rolex. Then it was from there predicting what pairings were going to specifically work out together. That helped out a lot, because we had a lot of rookies last year and no pairings that we could really take from previous years.

So it was starting from scratch, and it gave me a great starting point. We obviously had a tremendous week, so we're using it again this year for sure.

Q. When you look at the early days of this tournament just as a concept, how big a part of the puzzle was the iconic venues?

STACY LEWIS: The venues, it was basically one of the top ones. I said the purse needs to be bigger, the venue has to be better, and we got to have network TV. Those were my big three I guess you could say of what we needed to do just to elevate women's golf in general.

TV being I would say the most important of those, and the other two -- you know, the purse obviously has to get there eventually, but then the golf course just helps with kind of



the credibility and to compare that we played this golf course as the guys have played the major championship here.

So I would say those were the Top 3.

Q. As you quantify what the courses have meant, how do you quantify that as far as is it excitement among the players?

STACY LEWIS: You know, it's funny. It's amazing to watch. The players that have been on tour maybe seven or eight years, they expect this at major championships. They expect to walk out and see the big tents and see the golf course perfect.

15 years ago, that was not the case. We were getting on venues that just hopefully wanted to have us and maybe they didn't shut down the golf course ahead of time and there were divots everywhere. You got what you got basically.

So just I think you feel important when you walk on property, and that's something that the new players haven't had to worry about that those of us that been out here a little longer had to worry about.

Q. This golf course, I mean, looks so narrow off the tee. Looks like just a beast. Having been here in '16, are there any holes that stand out and can you give some thoughts on the 18th specifically?

STACY LEWIS: They all stand out. You're basically trying to hit the center stripe off of every hole. The target is the center stripe or the end of the walkway.

I think the biggest change is you have 18 now being a par-5. We played it as a 4. It was a silly par-4, so I'm glad it went to a par-5.

And then the tree being gone on 11, so there was a tree in the middle of the fairway up by the layup area that really caused a lot of havoc. It was not a great place. I know the members are probably happy that it's gone, too, and so are we.

Q. I know Par-4s at majors are Par-4s, but the par-3s and par-5s out here are going to be really critical. What's the strategy on those two kinds of holes?

STACY LEWIS: The strategy on the whole place is fairways and greens. It's softer than I remember from '16. We had some rain yesterday and I think rain last week, so golf course is a lot softer than I remember, so it's going to play a little bit longer.

You still have to be in the fairways. The rough itself, it's a little bit spotty. Some areas it's really thick, but then some other areas you can get some good lies. Even if you have a good lie the tree could be in the way.

It's one of those I think driving it straight but then wedges and putter, because you're going to have some holes you're going to drive it in trouble and you got to go get up and down from 100 yards. It's going to test everything.

Q. I know every time you get in front of a microphone we have to ask you about Solheim Cup. Had a really standout impressive playoff last week with two of your hopefuls. What are you so impressed with Lilia and Lexi?

STACY LEWIS: One, we had lots of American flags on that leaderboard, which was really great to see. Lilia, the most impressive was the amount of time that she took off and then just comes back and wins.

That's not -- that is really hard to do, because you come back, your short game might be rusty. I was most impressed with that. I was happy -- I figured Lexi would start to play better once she got the news out. I know the Open was a hard week for her.

She always plays good at Meijer. Hopefully she can continue that momentum and continue that climb up the list.

Q. So we just had a long conversation about the growth of women's golf and the growth of business of women's golf.

STACY LEWIS: Yes.

Q. Can you give us some real life examples of some things that have impacted you the most about this?

STACY LEWIS: Gosh, well, I mean, the growth of women's golf, I mean, you can look at it in women's sports in general. You see it in corporate America supporting our tour. I look at the companies that are supporting our tour right now. You've got Ally, Chevron, AIG, KPMG, Ford. You got some really great, I mean, top companies supporting us that we didn't have ten years ago.

So I point to that probably first as just the companies that we have themselves.

And then the purses. Obviously the investment, the money that's going into it. And I think just those companies seeing the value of working with us and wanting to bring their

customers and their people they do business with out to have this experience to wine and dine and make it a great experience for them.

I mean, that's ultimately what we're trying to do here. But I look at playing, the quality of golf is so good now. I mean, so good. Like just the talent from top to bottom. It's harder than ever to win. That's what makes Nelly's run so much more impressive, is how good everybody is now. You can walk that range and the ball striking is off the charts.

So we've made a lot of strides in ten years since this championship started. I'm excited to see where we go.

Q. One quick thing about the data. You loved it last year. It was a big tool; will be a big tool this year probably. What things do you learn that cannot be predicted that cannot be connected with data?

STACY LEWIS: Well, there is your gut. There is instincts and there is gut. If you went straight off data last year, there is no way Lexi should have been in that first match or play in the matches she did.

I had a feeling and she was playing a little bit better and so I went with it. But the data really shows a lot when you dive into it. You can see trends. You can see who is kind of moving in the right direction.

A lot of times there are players, you look at them and like they might finish 30th. It's like they have positive strokes gained and like maybe one bad putting day and drops them to 30th. They do that two, three weeks in a row, and boom, they win. You can see it coming when you really dive into it.

That's what the predictive analytics do when they show you. So for me, it's finding those players that are going that way, and that's what I'm looking for the last month or so in those picks.

So, I mean, I love numbers and I'm a nerd about it as you can tell, but it's really interesting to do it, to watch, and to -- because you can predict who is going to play well.

Q. Just from a skill improvement position, how do those numbers and the data, to have the real-time shot data right after in comparison to the men's, because the men have that in almost every tournament?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, so normally just for context the way it works is our caddies fill out stat cards. They send it in overnight, and it's probably two days later your stats from -- say Saturday your stats from Thursday show up.

So then you already played Friday, so you can't fix anything basically, right?

So this week with ShotLink is literally you finish your round, you go on this app, and you can see exactly what I did today. And this just shows this is where we would like to get to ultimately. We want to get to the point where this is available every single week.

Obviously got to figure it out. There is a cost to it and we got to figure out to make that cost happen. But for us as players, as soon as I finish my round there are things in my head I know I need to work on. I can say I need to go work on 125 to 150 or need to work on my hybrids and longer clubs in that 175 to 200 range. Helps you dial in your practice.

Really after the rounds you've got a limited amount of time before the next day. Just helps you kind of pinpoint what was going on that day.

Q. From the added broadcast angles as well, how much do you think that can grow the popularity of the women's game?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I think it just adds to the broadcast. It's adding graphics to the screen or showing things while somebody is reading their putt. You have stuff to talk about instead of just watching somebody sit there for two minutes reading their putt.

It makes the broadcast move along and makes it more entertaining. I love the predictive part of this person had a zero percent chance to win and all of a sudden they do.

There is just some really cool stuff to that. They just make the broadcast more interesting for those watching. I'm excited the CHAMPCAST though, being able to go on that app and actually -- because the guys have had this forever -- where you can pinpoint and see all the shots.

My family at home or sponsors or whoever, they can go on this app and go see exactly how I'm playing. You know, commercially what that does for us down the road is drives traffic to the website. You can sell more sponsorships. There are just the things that come from this, hopefully eventually we can get the ShotLink paid for via these sponsorships that come from the increased traffic.

Q. You talk about having those same opportunities that men do. I think we see that in junior golf, too. Young girls have opportunities to compete but maybe not as many. How cool do you think it is to have more opportunities like that for young girls to compete in these tournaments that are continuing to elevate?



STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I talk to a lot of kids, and with my husband being a college coach, they play a lot of golf now. These junior golfers, they have a lot of opportunities to play. You know, something I've done with AJGA for a number of years via KPMG's help is I do an AJGA event where the guys and girls actually play together. They play together in groups and there is also a boys versus girls leaderboard.

So they're competing against each other and there is a trophy. I think the girls won this year, so for me I want it to be like the norm. That's all they know growing up is the guys and girls playing together. There is a lot to learn there, too.

Q. I know that tournament kicks off next week at Pine Needles. For the girls just starting out, get their feet under them with professional aspirations, what advice would you give to them?

STACY LEWIS: I guess play a lot of the sports. You know, we don't need to specialize super young. Play a lot of sports. Have fun with it and enjoy it. Don't get stuck on the range.

Play a lot of golf. Be creative and work on your short game.

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