

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Wednesday, June 19, 2024
Sammamish, Washington, USA
Sahalee Country Club



Brooke Henderson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, good morning. Pleased to welcome in the last winner of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship at Sahalee, Brooke Henderson. Brooke, welcome back. Just reflect on your win back here in 2016. What do you remember most about it?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Honestly everything just went so perfectly that week. I felt like it was meant to be, especially that Sunday round on that back nine shooting 4-under I guess and the eagle on 11 and clutch par save on 18; everything was falling my way.

So it's definitely an extremely special week that I'll remember forever. This place, Sahalee, is special to me regardless of what happens this week, it will always hold a special place in my heart.

Q. Very tight off the tee this week. What's going to be the strategy to attack this course and what do you remember about 2016 that maybe you'll lean on?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I love the huge towering trees and the tight fairways. It's almost majestic. Feels very peaceful and amazing, but at the same time a little bit stressful because you have to hit it so straight.

That's the number one priority this week is trying to hit a lot of fairways, keeping the ball in play, and giving your self good looks for birdies when you can and making those clutch par saves when you need to.

Remembering back to 2016, this course played really tough. Not very many people were under par at the end of the four days, so I think just capitalizing where you can and just making the most of what you have.

Q. Yesterday you were made an honorary member here at Sahalee. How special of a moment was that for you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Absolutely. To come back here and to be given honorary membership, and to have a plaque on the 18th hole with my name on it forever is extremely special and meaningful. Like I said before, this place will always hold a very special place in my heart.

I think back to eight years ago and a lot of those moments, I think they'll live in my mind forever. Just such great feelings. I'm hoping this week to go out and be grateful for the opportunity I have to be back here playing in a major championship and hopefully make the most of it.

Q. Obviously among all the different announcements yesterday you announced a partnership with T-Mobile. How excited are you for that partnership and what does it mean to see T-Mobile give so much to the women's game?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I'm super excited to join the T-Mobile family. There are so many elite athletes with Nelly on the women's side and Tony, Max, and Wyndham on the PGA side. Just to see all that T-Mobile is doing to elevate the women's game with all the technology they're bringing in, it's really exciting.

I'm just really happy and proud to be part of that team.

Q. You were asked a lot about Sahalee in the weeks leading in. Actually getting on property and feeling and seeing it, does it bring back a lot of emotions you didn't know would be there?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, definitely. Played all 18 holes in my pro-am yesterday and just every hole it was -- just kind of brought a smile to my face. It did bring up a lot of emotion and almost like chills, you know, just walking the fairways and remembering some of the good things I did, and some of the bad things I did, but mainly the good.

Just great memories, and I think this place for everyone just kind of brings some peace because it's so beautiful. I'm hoping to lean into that week and just enjoy the week.

Q. I was going to ask you your thoughts on the changes at 18.



BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, 18 used to be a really tough tee shot. You had to hit a big draw or hook it around the corner to be in play and give yourself a good opportunity to hit the green.

It was a very tough hole.

Now being a par-5, it's very exciting. I think it'll be a great finishing hole for all the fans. You could get pretty close in two if you want to.

I think it'll make it really exciting and just a different finish from 2016.

Q. I feel like so much has stayed the same for you but a lot has changed. How would you evaluate yourself as a competitor from 2016 to 2024?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that's really interesting the way you worded that, because a lot is very similar: same coach, same caddie, same person, I guess.

But at the same time, a lot of things have changed. I've grown up a lot. I have more victories out on tour now. A lot of good things have happened.

Golf is full of ups and downs, but I feel like overall I've been able to ride out the lows pretty well and celebrate the highs when I've had them.

Just thinking back, I'm proud of the journey that I've been on these last eight years since that win, and I think just continuing to try to grow and get better and push forward.

Q. There is a really cool dichotomy out here between the par-3s and Par-5s. Par-4s are kind of typical. For you, what's the strategy on both the par-3s and Par-5s out here to have some success? Obviously had a win...

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. The par-3s are long generally and they play pretty tough, so making sure you're coming out with at worst par is probably the key on the par-3s.

And the par-5s, like any course, if it you can take advantage of them you can pick up a few strokes or really just keep pace with the rest of the field. Most weeks it comes down to the par-3s and par-5s, who is playing them the best, and I feel like this course is no different.

Q. You've been playing really solid golf this year. I know still looking for the first win of the season, but what have you been doing to keep the expectations in

check and let it come to you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. I feel like my game has been trending in the right direction for a long time now. Start the season was pretty hot. I was getting a lot of good finishes, seeing some great results. That was really exciting.

Kind of cooled off for a couple months, but feel like I'm heading back in the right direction now. It's a great stretch of golf to be picking up speed. Excited for this week and Dow next week with Lexi and Canadian Open in a few weeks, the Olympics. A lot of great things happening.

It's a good time to be trending in the right direction; hopefully that just continues and we'll see a win here hopefully soon.

Q. The 11th hole was pretty pivotal for you last time around. It's had some changes too. What do you make of that tree being gone and just describe what the atmosphere was like after you drained that 90-foot putt?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Sure. I was happy to see that tree -- I was sort of happy but also a little bit sad to see that tree gone, because I played it pretty well back in 2016 with that tree there. It was very intimidating and very tough.

So it is kind of nice now. It's a lot more open and makes it a little bit maybe slightly easier of a hole now. But draining that eagle putt, really put me in contention. I was having a solid day that Sunday afternoon prior to that. I was 2-under I think at that point.

But draining that long eagle was definitely a huge bonus and it was like, okay, now we're in it. Just tried to keep pushing forward and tried to just really enjoy the energy and adrenaline from the crowds. Tried to make a few more birdies and was able to do that.

Q. I remember you put a new putter in the bag that week.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Uh-huh.

Q. How long did you use that putter, if you remember, and any recent changes to your bag?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that putter, I believe I put it in on Tuesday of that week, so I hadn't used it very long. Then I continued to use it for a long time after that.

And then this week I actually just changed putters yesterday, too, so hoping to rekindle some magic there.



Yeah, hopefully the same thing will happen.

Q. From what to what if I could ask?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Back then or now?

Q. Now, this week, yeah.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Honestly, I think it's MC37 maybe. Something like that. It's really pretty anyway. It's the Reserve. It's TaylorMade. I really like it. I was using a Spider before.

Q. Were you just looking for a different look?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, different look, different feel. I feel like this year I've kind of tried a few different things with my putting, pin in, pin out, left-hand low, more of a traditional grip. So just kind of trying to feel it out and trying to find something that works.

Q. Welcome back to Sahalee. First question is: Does your sister still have the car that you won from the hole-in-one?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yes, she does.

Q. Second: How does this course rank compared to some of the other courses that you go on a week-to-week basis or tour?

BROOKE HENDERSON: This is a tough course, yeah. You can see it from the scores back in 2016. Not a lot of people under par. It was a struggle to make birdies and save pars on certain holes.

Definitely be a huge challenge this week, but at the same time, the course is in perfect condition. It's very beautiful here. The greens are soft right now, which I think is really helpful. As the week goes on I think it's supposed to get a little bit warmer so might firm up a little bit. Soft greens will definitely be helpful in working your way around this course.

Q. You were describing the trees, landscape, the beauty. Talk about playing golf in the middle of nature or forest like this and how it helps your game.

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. When you're standing in the fairways, walking the fairways, you don't feel like you're on a golf course. You just feel like you're in amongst nature. It's just a great feeling.

I love just kind of looking around and breathing deep and feeling that fresh air. It's an incredible feeling.

Yeah, I mean, this is just such a special place and so beautiful. Outside of golf I love spending time in nature, so here is the best of both. You you feel like you're in amongst all the nature in the forest, but you're actually playing golf so it's perfect.

Q. More in general, what should be the relationship between golf and nature?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I think if we can be as sustainable as we can, golf is an amazing sport because you're outside all the time and you're getting all the fresh air, all the benefits from being in nature. I think if golf courses can be very -- as least harmful to the environment as possible I think that's great.

It's one of the sports that I think is one of the best sports for being helpful to the environment and helping people be outside and enjoy the fresh air more.

Q. You said your sister still has the car. Does she actually drive it?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, no, it's still in great shape. It was an amazing car, so I'm glad I won it for her?

Q. You talked about out here being peaceful. In what way is out here intimidating or difficult outside of just the greens and the way the course is set up?

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. I feel like it's a great mix of being intimidating and scary and also peaceful and beautiful and calm. It's kind of opposites I guess. Every tee shot you have to really pay attention. Can never really take a break out here.

Even the approach shots you got to know where the slopes are and where your misses are. But at the same time, if you're playing well and you can kind of lean into the beauty that surrounds you and soak it in, it makes for a really nice walk around this place.

Q. You and Lydia had such a memorable showdown. Take us back to the first time you met Lydia Ko and how your relationship has evolved since 2016.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Sure. I didn't meet her that week but the first time I was really watching her and super impressed by her was at the Canadian Open. I was playing in my first one and I was 14 and she won that week and she was 15. I thought I was doing pretty well just by being there.

She's an incredible player and an incredible person, and



it's been really cool for me to grow up alongside her and watch her and learn from her. Her career has been phenomenal, and winning here in 2016, being able to beat the No. 1 player in the world at the time, somebody that I looked up to, it was a huge turning point in my career. Gave me a lot of the confidence and momentum.

When I saw the tee sheet yesterday I was pretty excited to see that we were paired together, with May, too, who finished third here. I think that's a great group.

Q. Obviously golf is golf and life is life, but when you won the major at the age that you did, would you call that win life changing or how would you describe it?

BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. It definitely changed my life back in 2016. I received a lot more attention from the fans and the media, and just what I believed I could do moving forward I think changed. Felt like anything was possible after this victory. I really gained a lot from playing and winning here in 2016.

I feel like it's been a great career and a great journey since then, and I'm excited to be back here and to have the opportunity to tee it up tomorrow and try to shoot four low scores and try to do it again.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously this is the last event to qualify for the Olympics; looking like you're going to represent Canada once again. How excited are you to go to Paris and represent Canada once again?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, any time you can go and represent your country it's a very proud moment. To be able to wear the maple leaf and go to Paris is really exciting for me. Rio was great; Tokyo not to great.

To go to Paris this year, I'm really looking forward to it. Hopefully, again, just play four solid rounds in the of golf and see what happens.

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