

# Golf Channel

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**Kay Cockerill**

**Karen Stupples**

**Beth Hutter**

Media Conference



up to speed. A little different. Normally we usually are able to meet in person and bounce around ideas. Now that's all done via Zoom or Microsoft Teams calls, so that's always a little different.

Interviewing players for the announcers, that's all going to be different. Standing outside the ropes at the driving range and the practice putting greens and interacting with players, that's all be different for our announcers.

For us, we're kind of learning as we go, as well, so I think this week will be more of a learning curve for everybody, but we're extremely excited to get started and to continue on with the 2020 PGA season.

THE MODERATOR: Karen and Kay, similar question as far how much you're looking forward to the start of the season. You're traveling here, Karen, and we were talking earlier about you and Jerry's fun road trip that you had up to Ohio. Karen, just talk about your anticipation for the return of women's golf, not only for this week but also next week at the U.S. Women's Amateur.

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I think firstly, I think I speak for everybody that we're all incredibly relieved that women's golf is back, and it's been really hard for me sitting on the sidelines watching golf go ahead and not watching the women play. It's been tough, knowing that golf can be played and played safely, and so sitting and waiting for the women's turn has been hard.

That being said, they obviously have learnt a lot of stuff from watching the men and how that's taking place, and it's been quite fascinating, too, that now the time is ready, and they're going to showcase their game on a fantastic golf course in Inverness that's going to provide an amazing test of golf.

First week out is kind of a bit like being thrown in at the deep end, but we'll see who's ready to take on that challenge. But not only that, I find it incredibly exciting that both Kay and I will get the chance to cover the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship, too, because when I think about amateur golf and my time playing and obviously Kay being a two-time champion, she knows all about that probably more than I do.

It seems to me that it's like going back to golf in its purest

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining our roundtable call this morning. PGA producer Beth Hutter, Golf Channel analyst Karen Stupples and Kay Cockerill are on the call. We are previewing women's golf returning, both the PGA Drive On Championship this week and the U.S. Women's Amateur next week.

Beth, I'm going to start with you to kick things off. Kind of looking forward to this week and all the preparations that you guys have been doing, not only for the PGA but we have five tournaments going this week, so it's kind of our big kickoff week, so talk a little bit about the preparations and just a little overview on safety first on the safety measures and how you're looking forward to this week.

BETH HUTTER: Yeah, well, obviously we're very excited for the PGA's return this week. Last event we played and produced was back in January, Gainbridge in Boca. Everyone on the crew is excited for the PGA's start, and we're happy they were able to put this event on at Inverness Club. I know they pulled it together in about five or six weeks, so kudos to the PGA for putting this event together and having back-to-back events in Toledo, which makes it easier obviously on players and television to sort of be in this bubble for two weeks and not really have to go very far.

It's a brand new world out here for everybody. We obviously are social distancing in our compound, as well, so everybody is really spread out. You'll see a little bit of a difference when you see our booth. We only can have one announcer on camera because we can't place two announcers next to each other. Same with in our trucks. We're all spread out, so we've had to come up with unique ways for everybody to do that.

When we arrive on-site, we do get a temperature check. Everybody on-site has their face masks on, and everybody is social distancing on-site in our compound, as well.

Doing a lot of video and conference calls to get everybody



form when winning the trophy is really what it's all about. It's not about a top-10 finish. You lay everything all on the line, particularly in match play, so I'm really excited that NBC Golf Channel get a chance to cover that championship again.

THE MODERATOR: Kay, same question.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, well said, Karen. I ditto obviously all that Karen said regarding the delay in the LPGA and women's golf starting, but I think we just have to look at it as a positive as pent-up demand, and I think a lot of people are going to turn their eyeballs to the LPGA because they're very curious what have these women been doing, how have they been managing themselves, how prepared, what are their games going to be like, and we'll be able to tell all of those stories this week.

My husband works in baseball for the San Francisco Giants, and they've already seen amazing TV ratings just because people are so starved for sports. I think it's a great stage that we're on right now for women's golf this week for the LPGA starting back, and as Karen said, next week we're both tremendously excited to be involved with the USGA events that are back with Golf Channel and NBC Sports. I have covered 18 Women's U.S. Amateur Championships, and so delighted to be back on those telecasts.

First and foremost this week, here with the LPGA here at an amazing venue, Inverness, that has hosted a handful, a large handful of men's championships. Now we'll get to see the women play this great golf course in a preview, sort of a big preview for the Solheim Cup next year.

THE MODERATOR: Beth, do you want to touch on the fact that this is going to be a Solheim Cup preview with Inverness this week and also talk about kind of some of our production elements with the group that's being mic'd up on Saturday.

BETH HUTTER: Yeah, we're super pumped to get a preview for the Solheim Cup one year out. Good news is I'm hoping the conditions will be pretty similar. The course looks amazing, so we're really excited about that.

On Saturday, we have three players that will be mic'd up: Angela Stanford, Amy Olson and Madelene Sagstrom, two Americans and one European. Stanford will be the assistant American captain, so that will be awesome, kind of hopefully getting a little bit of a preview from her talking about the course with her caddie and how to play it.

I'm excited to hear what they have to say. I know a lot of players are talking about -- I talked to a few last night just

after Wednesday's practice round, and they were really excited about playing this week and this course. They said it is going to be a true test. If you hit it well, you can play great. If you miss it a little bit, there are some rough spots. And the rough they said is as thick as it can be. Nothing like a welcome back.

THE MODERATOR: Just FYI, this will be the first time on the LPGA that we're mic'ing up a group, a threesome of players. Years and years ago, Beth, you probably remember back at the McDonald's LPGA years and years ago we tested this a little bit, but this will be the first time that a group is being mic'd up.

KAREN STUPPLES: I was actually mic'd up one year in Mobile, Alabama, by The Golf Channel, so I've had experience with it. So there you go. And it was pretty cool. I had no problem filtering out what I needed to filter out, even though golf has a tendency to bring out some of the worst in me, but it was good. It was fun. I enjoyed it.

KAY COCKERILL: And actually I was mic'd up in I think it was '96 or '97 in Youngstown when Golf Channel was in its first couple years and we were doing a lot of experimentation and I was still playing and starting to dabble in television, so they mic'd me up, and I think I missed the cut and worked on the weekend. We're rejuvenating a lot of these old ideas, but we've never done a whole group, so that's definitely new.

THE MODERATOR: With that, since you have experience on both ends now, right, so naturally you're mic'd up for your broadcast and mic'd up as a player, how do you see this -- this is what we're doing for the PGA TOUR. How do you see this as kind of a future of live tournament telecasts?

KAREN STUPPLES: I personally think it's fascinating, and it's the way forward. If you can make the players feel totally comfortable and at ease wearing a microphone without it feeling like a constant reminder that they're on air or that they're on air all the time, I think it's a great sort of window into what goes on inside the ropes, inasmuch as Kay or I or Jerry or whoever, Judy or whoever is commentating in the broadcast, we can never fully put into words exactly what's going on with the players at that one moment in time. We can try, but it's not the same as hearing it from the players' mouth themselves.

It's a crucial part, I think, to grow the fan base of golf, to get an insight into the players, but it all comes down to how comfortable you can make the players feel when you're doing it.

KAY COCKERILL: And I think it's important for the players

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

to push themselves a little bit and try to get past the self-editing mode and be natural, which is kind of hard to do when you know you have a microphone on you, but if you can just be natural -- I find one of the more interesting aspects is post-shot and what they comment, how they comment on their shot good or bad, and we can learn a lot about those comments.

**Q. I'll ask the most obvious question. Obviously you're coming back after quite a bit of time away, so there's going to be some rust in terms of the procedures that you're going through. How have the procedures in terms of social distancing and being away, having to keep your distance away and all the procedures they're going through there, how do you feel about how comfortable you are coming back?**

KAREN STUPPLES: For me I feel like everything is really good, like in terms of how the LPGA Tour have gone about their business and getting the players tested and making sure that they have a nice little sort of bubble around them in terms of protecting them and the people around the Tour. I think they are -- they're pretty strict in many ways, and I think that's a good thing. This is still a slightly unknown, and I think as always -- I know it's always been the case with women in many aspects, we're always held to a slightly higher standard in many respects, so I think that they all understand how important this is to get off to a good start, and I think everybody is excited for that, and from my perspective, Jerry and I drove up here, and we take it all very seriously and have done throughout the course of this. Neither one of us want to get sick or have to go into trouble because there's so many unknowns.

We both feel actually very comfortable where we are with the travel, with the places that we've chosen to stay and how that's all worked out. It's been quite good. I feel very comfortable, actually.

KAY COCKERILL: I have a little trepidation just because I flew here, and that was the first time on a plane since February, but everything went really well. Delta was fabulous with their protocols.

My husband and I have basically been holed up in our house for the last four and a half, five months. I've only gone to one restaurant, outdoor restaurant for lunch. So just a lot of the different -- taking sort of your bubble out into the world is a little -- I've been a little anxious and a little worried about how everything was going to play out, but I know once I get to the golf course -- the golf course is probably where I'm going to feel the safest because we're outdoors. Golf Channel has tons of protocols in place. The LPGA, as well. I think that's going to be no problem. It's more where are you going to eat, how are you getting

from point A to point B, the next tournament, et cetera. Here on-site I feel just fine.

**Q. How much have you guys been able to get out among the players, and what are you noticing that looks different? Are you seeing masks? Are you seeing players -- different things that you notice COVID?**

BETH HUTTER: Well, I don't think Karen and Kay have been here yet. I was at the course all day yesterday. One thing that kind of caught me off guard, I don't know if y'all know, the players do not have to take caddies this year if they do not want to, and I actually saw a player with a push cart, and I kind of went to a rules official, and I was like, I didn't know. I knew they didn't have to take caddies, but I knew they could carry their own bag, but they can absolutely take a push cart if they want, and there are a handful of players in the field doing just that, that do not have a caddie.

That was kind of interesting, and I got a chuckle out of that.

The players, yeah, they are wearing masks. I think when they go -- I've seen a couple as they walked around going from the clubhouse to the putting green and/or the range, and it's funny, in a sport where players don't wear masks and obviously have numbers to identify themselves, i.e. football, hockey, in golf I'm so used to -- I can tell who a player is obviously by what they look like, and I had to do a couple of double takes yesterday with a mask on. I'll tell you what, it gets a little hard to recognize somebody with a mask on, so that will take a little bit of getting used to, as well.

But like Kay said, I was outside. I had my mask on, and I felt comfortable everywhere I went outside. People were far apart. It's a beautiful grounds here at Inverness, and outside definitely felt safe.

**Q. Who had a push cart?**

BETH HUTTER: Now you're going to quote me. I mean, you're killing me. I'd really have to study that one. The top of my head I'm not going to say because who I think it looked like -- it may have been -- I'm trying to think.

KAREN STUPPLES: I think I saw that Louise Ridderstrom doesn't have a caddie on the caddie list; Jacqui Concolino doesn't have a caddie listed by her name on the caddie list.

KAY COCKERILL: They said there were four or five players that weren't going to have caddies, so we'll have to get back to you on that one.



BETH HUTTER: I think it was Linnea Strom. I'm pretty certain it was Linnea Strom.

KAREN STUPPLES: Yep, she doesn't have a caddie listed by her name either, Beth, so you're probably right.

**Q. Kay and Karen, what's the challenge of no caddie this week, especially at a course like Inverness?**

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I think it very much depends on where you've just come from. I think players like Ridderstrom and Linnea Strom, they've been used to not that long ago playing college golf, so in college you have a pull cart or you carry a bag and you do your own numbers and the rest of it. But in college you can use a laser. Here they'll be using a yardage book so they're going to have to pace off and get all their own yardages. They're going to have to rake their own bunkers, clean their own balls, make sure they have everything -- there's nobody there to really back them up or check their work if they get -- sometimes when you're playing you can get tired and you can slightly miscalculate a number or you can get emotional over a shot and try and pull off something crazy that a caddie might say, hey, wait just a second, there are other options here. So sometimes there are other times that a caddie can say, look, just cool down just a little bit and think about what your other choices are.

And I think with this golf course, too, it's going to be a challenge for these players because it's not an easy layout, and I think there are lots of intricacies that two pairs of eyes would be very beneficial for. That being said, I think the players that are without a caddie this week, they have come from a place where they feel very comfortable being out there on the course on their own and making sure that they can do the work.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, I was just going to say on the flipside of that, if you don't have a good caddie, maybe you're better off on your own. And I think this sort of makes sense coming off of this long stretch at home by yourself playing golf as a solo or just playing with one or two other people, playing golf like we all do at home with no caddies. So I don't think that transition will be very tough for them coming back into competitive golf.

It also can kind of renew a strength and a belief in your own ability and your own sense of intuition and maybe tapping back into your own strengths as a golfer and not being influenced by anyone else's input.

**Q. These books, how detailed are they? How much work does a player have to add to a book, or is a lot of it already there?**

KAREN STUPPLES: A lot of the work is already there on the books, but they're still going to have to pace it off. They're still going to have to do the math. They're still going to have to figure out their pitch and rolls, how the ball is landing on the green, how much it's going to release, where they want to land it, where the best place to attack a hole location might be on any given day. And typically for the second round, a caddie will know where the hole location is going to be because he would have already scouted out where that flag is, and generally I think a caddie can kind of ease the workload on a player, but as Kay said, good caddies are worth their weight in gold, but bad caddies, most players could probably do without them.

**Q. Following up on that a little bit, as far as the course and the challenge and the test, Karen, you touched on this a little bit with the push cart and the no caddie, but what kind of a test will these women face this week after such a long layoff, and how significant is it that they are starting out at such a storied club like Inverness this week?**

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I think that because the break has been so long, I think that if you're an experienced player, if you're somebody like an Angela Stanford or a Cristie Kerr, I think this break has been probably beneficial because when you're been on the grind for so many years on Tour, it's always good to take that little bit of a break, just to take a breather from it, and they've played golf for so many years, they've played tournament golf. This isn't going to be much of a big deal for them. I think there will be maybe a few more nerves than they would normally feel just because it feels so important to get off to a good start because they've been off for so long, but I think that there are younger players, the ones that are going to be really anxious to get out there to play, I think they're going to be nervous on the first tee, and I think their expectations that they'll place on their shoulders will be quite high, and that is hard because you've got to hit quality golf shots on this golf course.

We heard from the rules official in our meeting that the rough is tough. If you miss the fairway, it's going to be tough to get yourself in position to score from. And around the greens, too, I've heard from a couple of players that even just sort of the little chips and pitches around the greens when you miss, those are tough, too, because of the thickness and lushness of the grass that's around them. I think it's going to play quite long, and I think it's just going to be a challenge all around, and I think there are going to be a number of players that are going to relish that, and it's going to be fun to watch.

KAY COCKERILL: I think the strong players always are going to come to the top, but I do think this is an instance



where the younger less experienced player might have a little better footing or a little better advantage because it's more of a level playing field because nobody has competed on this golf course before, and those veterans don't have that advantage of knowing the secrets around this golf course. Everyone is trying to learn it at the same level.

Also, the fact that there's no ropes and stands and galleries, it's going to be a lesser -- it's going to feel more casual for the players, and particularly for the rookies or the lesser experienced players. Maybe that will instill in them a more relaxed attitude, and just like they're playing maybe a Symetra Tour event or a Cactus Tour event and they can take that sort of -- not putting extra pressure on themselves from all the visual distractions and just focus on the golf course.

And also some of those lesser names have been competing in some of those mini-Tour events, so they in some regards will have more competitive rounds in the recent months under their belt than the big-name players.

KAREN STUPPLES: That's a great point.

**Q. Speaking of that, I wanted to talk about a rookie for a second. Haley Moore has not only won three Cactus Tour events, she set two course records including one at Troon North. She shot 62. Anybody seen her hit a shot? What do we think?**

KAY COCKERILL: Oh, yeah, I've watched her. She's incredible. She reminds me a lot of Laura Davies, both in physique and the way they swing and go after it hard, hits it really strong and long. And also just a beautiful touch around the greens, as well.

Her negative in the past, watching her in college golf, has been her emotions. She has been emotionally a little immature for her maturity physically on the golf course, and she has had some meltdowns and some times where she gets really angry and herself and she just goes into a complete spin in a negative way.

But I think playing through college years has allowed her to grow in that department, and I think she is a big talent with a lot of potential. I really look forward to watching her play professionally.

KAREN STUPPLES: Yeah, there's definitely, as Kay was saying, a lot of upside to Haley Moore's game. She's a very powerful player. She hits it out there a long way. I think it could be quite beneficial on this golf course. But I think there's more to play on this course than just hit the ball well. But when you can come into this championship

with confidence knowing that you're tournament ready, I think that's going to be kind of huge.

I mean, but if I could throw out another name that I'm really looking to this week it's Jennifer Kupcho. She's played -- she won in Colorado at the women's event there, and then she played in the men's event in the Colorado Open, as well, with her brother, and she played quite well. She just missed the cut by one. But I think she's a player that has a good bit of distance off the tee that she might need around this golf course, and to Kay's point, I think playing without crowds, I think sort of in that kind of cool sort of damp sort of atmosphere that you might get without a gallery around you, I think it might actually be great for her, too.

**Q. I also wanted to get in a question about the news that Lydia Ko apparently has gone to Sean Foley, so that's six coaches in four years. Just wondering what you guys think of that.**

KAREN STUPPLES: I mean, should we be really surprised that she's got another coach? It seems to be her MO. She's definitely searching for something. I don't think there's anybody on this call that doesn't wish her well in finding it to be honest, and hopefully Sean is the guy that can bring that out in her. It remains to be seen, but she's definitely been looking for something, and she's been working -- you can tell from looking at her Instagram and Twitter that she's been working particularly hard on her game. I wish her well with it. I hope that he's the guy.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, I ditto Karen. I'm surprised that she's with another coach, but then I guess not surprised because of her recent track record. It looks like she's swinging pretty well on the Instagram posts. It looks good. But it's just -- boy, Karen, you know you get the old adage, paralysis through analysis, and the more information you're bringing in and the more changes, how do you take that to the golf course and just clear the mechanism and play. She's remarkable in so many ways, and she's withstood so much, and her attitude is tremendous, and I hope that prevails and allows her to have a great year. She's wonderful for the Tour and she's an amazing person, and I wish her the best. But boy, I think she's sometimes complicating things when they needn't be complicated.

KAREN STUPPLES: I also think, too, maybe in this time of COVID, she's based in Orlando, Sean Foley is based in Orlando, too. Maybe it was just being in the right place at the right time, the pair of them can be together. But he does like the numbers side of things, and maybe she's looking for something like that. Maybe she's -- I mean, I feel like she's always been such a great feel player, so visual with her shots and so creative. I mean, we talked so much about how great she is around the green, how she

visualizes how she's feeling shots that not everybody has. She's just magnificent with a wedge in her hand.

My fear, and I think we've seen it over the last few years, she's lost a little bit of that skill that she has because she's so concerned with technique and trying to get everything right, and I'm sure Kay will say the same thing, too. If you make changes in your swing, it's hard to not have those thoughts go through your head even on the shorter swings and the shorter shots because it just takes a while to work everything through the whole bag.

I really hope this is exactly what she needs. I really do.

**Q. The South Koreans, the No. 1 and No. 3 player in the world, four of the top 10 won't be there at Marathon, and in talking to their agents we probably won't see any of those in the next month, and then it's unclear whether they'll even come to the ANA. Jin Young's agent and Sung Hyun Park's agent both said they're going to watch COVID-19 and what's happening with it in the United States before deciding on that. What do you guys make of that and how it affects a restarted season?**

KAREN STUPPLES: I think obviously the LPGA prides itself on having the best players in the world playing on its tour, but this is a very different situation, and everybody is trying to do the best for themselves. I think to be fair, I don't really blame them for staying in Korea and playing there. They have a fantastic tour for themselves that they can play tournaments on, and in many respects it's probably quite enjoyable for them to just be close to home, to be with their families, to see things in a different perspective again from the rat race of trying to keep No. 1, trying to stay up at the top of the LPGA, trying to get on the Olympic team. There's all manner of different things that the Korean players have to go through, and I think maybe just a little break away from that to play on their home tour is something very refreshing for them.

But I also think that it's a great opportunity for some of the other players over here to just like kind of establish themselves and to gain a lot of confidence in their own games by playing the tournaments here and potentially winning on the LPGA Tour. It's going to be very interesting watching players like Lexi and Nelly and Cristie Kerr and Jennifer Kupcho and Danielle Kang and how that possibly is going to play out over the course of these few tournaments, and it's going to be fun to watch.

I think that the LPGA has got deep, deep talent, and it doesn't matter where they come from. I think we're going to be watching some tremendous golf.

KAY COCKERILL: I completely agree with everything Karen says, and I think it's an amazing opportunity for the players who are playing knowing those women aren't going to be here because you can pretty much bank on those players finishing win, place or show every week, so that opens up an opportunity to win or have a top-5 finish and move up more on the Rolex Rankings not having those players here that are so consistent.

They've all had tremendous years in the last two, three years, and they have to be exhausted, so right now it's kind of like a forced sabbatical for them to maybe recharge and reboot the system a little bit.

**Q. Following up on this week and also looking ahead to next week at Marathon, for the players who are playing next week at Highland Meadows, because the Marathon has been there for years. As Beth mentioned there's going to be no grandstands, no fans and no ropes, so Karen and Kay, for the players that have played there for a lot of years, they may use some of those grandstands as sight lines and such, is it different? Are they going to prepare different with no grandstands or no galleries or no sight lines for next week?**

KAY COCKERILL: I think it'll be a little bit of a different look, but players adjust very quickly to finding a treetop or the top of the clubhouse or left edge of a bunker to reestablish their target lines. And I think more for the PGA TOUR players, I was laughing thinking about how often they use the galleries, the galleries end up containing their golf balls from going so much further into the rough or into the trees or banging shots off of grandstands or sponsor tents. But the women aren't as wild as the men are, so I don't think they're going to have as much of a disadvantage in that regard.

But I think visually it'll look a little different initially, but they'll get past it very quickly.

KAREN STUPPLES: I think Kay is right. Highland Meadows Golf Course, when I think back to playing it, I don't remember really using a grandstand as a target because you can pretty much see most of what you want. There are a couple of blind shots, but typically you had to pick a tree out in the distance more than you actually would a grandstand, so that I don't think is a big issue.

The golf course there is more tree-lined than anything else, and the rough really didn't come into play a huge amount from the times that I remember being there. So having big galleries walking down, trampling the grass down, that doesn't really come into play. As Kay was saying, the LPGA players are so accurate that they rarely miss the

fairway anyway, and I think that the only downside to not having any spectators on the course next week was the fantastic atmosphere that they created there at Highland Meadows. The fans really came out and supported the players and the Tour, and it was always -- it always felt very special kind of walking around the clubhouse area because there was always people cheering you on or wanting your autograph and things like that, so that will be a big adjustment for the players. Yeah, that'll be strange for them.

**Q. Since we're spinning ahead to next week, I wanted to ask you guys about the U.S. Women's Amateur. It appears as though much of the college golf season might go away. We got an announcement yesterday that the ACC will not be having a fall season. You played high-level amateur golf; what do you say to some of these amateurs who are in this flux and in this state of uncertainty now if they enter what is the biggest event of the year?**

KAREN STUPPLES: I find it incredibly sad, when you think about the college teams that are going to have to put their season on hold. I had a chance to talk to the coach from Florida State - obviously I went to Florida State - Amy Bond, a little bit yesterday, and they're going to try and create some fun things for the players on their teams, both the men and the women there at Florida State, so they can play some matches. They're going to try and do some Ryder Cup matches amongst themselves, but they won't be allowed to play other schools or have other matches like that. That's not part of the rules that they're allowed to follow, but they can play amongst themselves and they can have the players go and play as an individual somewhere, not under the FSU or ACC banner per se. I think it's very difficult because most of the players, their dreams revolve around either playing tournament golf or getting a degree at the same time, and certainly for the players that have come from overseas, this is an avenue for them to potentially move to America, to play on the LPGA Tour, to live a different life, as well. It's a big thing, and it's sad, but I can understand why the NCAA and the ACC are doing this.

You look at football, football, the SEC are still planning on football. The NCAA may take that away, and it's hard seeing one sport being able to go ahead and not others, but in the big scheme of things, that's the money maker right there.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, with regards to what Karen says, just to add on to that, though, I'm really good friends with Nancy McDaniel, the Cal coach; Dana Dormann, San Jose State; talked to Carrie Forsyth at UCLA; Anne Walker at Stanford, and they all don't really know what their

schedules are. They still don't know. Pac-12 hasn't made a decision with regards to the fall sports like golf.

But think about golf really is the only sport that goes all year long, so they can very easily start in January and play a couple of regular-season tournaments, then go into their conference championships, regionals and nationals and still have a very robust year and crown a great champion, because quite honestly, the events they have in the fall really don't correlate and they're kind of meaningless by the time you get to May and the NCAA championships. Sure, they might filter out who's in the top or you're kind of testing some of your young players, but that's such a long time span between the start of the season and nationals that I think they can do without the fall quite well and just get themselves balanced, get themselves back to school or doing the virtual schooling and become students and just kind of deal with all this turmoil in the world and get themselves in the right state of mind, work on their game. Like Karen said, some of these little one-off events, and gear up in January and February for their season. I don't think a shortened golf season will diminish things as all.

As far as with the Amateur, Women's Amateur, at least they've been playing a couple of tournaments leading up to the Women's Amateur, the North-South, the Western, and then going on this week is the Ladies' National Golf Association Championship because the winner and runner-up will also get into the field next week.

Yeah, it's a strange, strange time, but I think everyone is just trying to deal with it the best they can, and it's certainly a great sign that the USGA is having this championship, the biggest women's championship in amateur golf. We're going to be excited to be there to cover it and see a big -- kind of like the LPGA, some of the international amateur stars aren't going to be there, and that's going to be the only real negative is that you're not having the supremely strongest field.

But regardless, there's enough strong players and we're going to have a great -- we'll crown a great champion.

KAREN STUPPLES: And I think to your point, as well, you can look to some of what's happened on the LPGA Tour with Albane Valenzuela. In this quarantine period she's taken advantage of her time and gone ahead and got her degree and graduated, and she said it was much easier for her to do so without having to play tournaments, so it worked out well for her, and she turned it into a positive.

I think that's all anybody can really do in these crazy times is to try and turn all of these things that could potentially feel like they're derailing you, just try and make a positive out of it as best you can.



**Q. Karen and Kay, on that point, do you think with a lot of the players, with the uncertainty of the college golf season, granted, for amateur golf this is the biggest event in Women's Amateur golf next week, but do you think some of these players are going to have extra incentive knowing that their fall college golf season might be up in the air?**

KAREN STUPPLES: I don't really think that it will change too much for them. I think that obviously this is a fantastic opportunity to get your hands and be called -- the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship is about as pinnacle amateur golf as you can possibly get, and regardless of what's happening in the world around you, I think that people when they get to that championship they want it more than anything else, and so I think that it's -- they're going to focus all their attention on it, and it's a great opportunity for players that are in the field to go ahead and win it.

I do think as the season goes on, I think there will be little amateur tournaments that will pop up and spring up for players to enter and to play in. I think people will find a way to be competitive.

I think you have to look at what's happened to a lot of the LPGA players. A lot of them have found mini-Tour events to play in and other things to kind of occupy them because obviously being competitive is important, so you don't get to that first tournament and be completely rusty.

I do think that this will be an interesting time but also one where they will be in a good hopefully safe environment in their colleges and their universities and they can still work on their game and do what they need to do, and that's get ready for the fall, as Kay was saying.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, and I think with basically the LPGA, Karen, there's no Q-Series this year, right, because everyone just has the same status for next year, so there's really no enticement to turn professional because you're not going to have status on any Tour. You may as well just stay amateur and continue on with your schooling, and we are seeing some players take that fifth year and get that extended year of eligibility to start working on their Master's Degree and complete that, quote, senior year that they missed out on.

Yeah, it'll be interesting to see how all that plays out.

KAREN STUPPLES: I think, Kay, with many things, like in life, right now it seems like it's such a tough thing, but when you look back on it maybe in five or ten years' time, you'll think, you know, I was really lucky that that happened to

me because I was able to get all this stuff done. I was able to get my Masters, I was able to have that extra year of college. I wasn't ready to turn pro yet, even though I felt like I was. There could be some really good things that come out of it. If we could focus on that, it would be great.

**Q. Karen, next week Sophia Schubert is going to be walking along with you and Curt next week. Talk a little bit about having Sophia on the team next week.**

KAREN STUPPLES: It's going to be fun to have her along. It's a fresh face, fresh perspective, somebody who's won the championship recently. She won it in 2017. She's very excited about being part of the crew, and I don't blame her because we've got a good group of people there working. And I think she's going to add some great insight and perspective into the championship and what it's like being a winner and what the matches are going to be like.

I think Kay and her will spar off each other quite nicely with both of their experiences of winning, and from my perspective I hope I can show her the ropes nicely, but I don't think she'll have too much trouble slotting in to the run of golf tournaments. It's just going to be the mechanics for her, learning how to turn the pack on and off and getting ready to go. But she's going to have a lot of fun doing it because we're a good crew, and Brandt Packer, who's going to be producing, he keeps things light on the golf course, and he's always given us a lot of grief at times, in a funny way, in a funny ha-ha way, so that's cool, and he'll have fun with her, and I think she'll be great.

**Q. Also shifting just a tad for a second, Kay, this is more for you, so next week, in addition to you working your favorite event of the year, the U.S. Women's Amateur, you'll be watching the Marathon in Ohio, and also you have a hometown event next week with the PGA Championship at Harding Park and we're announcing this in about an hour that Michelle Wie West is going to be a part of the broadcast team next week. Talk a little bit about -- I know there's going to be no fans next week, but talk about the PGA Championship in your hometown and also with Michelle joining our broadcast team next week.**

KAY COCKERILL: Well, that's great news. She's going to be a wonderful addition. I'll just start off with her. I think having her, she's done two or three things already for us in the studio, commenting on the Solheim Cup and some other events, and I think everyone was a little curious how well she would do, and she exceeded a lot of expectations. I mean, of course she has the resume and she has such a great amount of followers and fans, but she articulated very well a lot of the thoughts and feelings that players go through, and she knows all the players so intimately, at



least the LPGA players, and even PGA players, she hangs out with a lot of those guys when she's been down in Jupiter. She has a close relationship with many of the men on TOUR, and she's tied it up in men's events, so she knows what it takes to compete out there, and she'll bring a wonderful, wonderful perspective.

The PGA Championship, it's sort of bittersweet for me and the whole San Francisco and Northern Cal Bay Area. We haven't had that many national championships in our area, and we've been gearing up for this for the last couple of years, and Harding Park is a very special place and everyone was so excited to be out there in attendance. Lots of volunteers were on dock to help out, so all that has dramatically changed and certainly all the sponsor tents are not going to be there.

It's really going to be a bit of a letdown in some regards because I don't think San Francisco is going to be showcased to its finest, and we're also losing out on millions of dollars of revenue that were going to be pouring in from all the fans and people attending the event from out of town, spending money on hotels and restaurants. We'll still have a little bit of that but not to the degree that you would normally think, plus all the ancillary activities that they would have in and around the championship.

They're dedicating a statue to Sandy Tatum, and that was going to be a big celebration. They'll do a piece on it on television, but it won't be the same as all these people attending in person.

You know, it's going to be a bummer, and I wish I were there. I would have loved to have been there. I was going to help out a little bit with Golf Channel, as well, and bring that San Francisco perspective to a few pieces, but you know, for me, at least I'm going to be on the other side of the nation working an event I dearly love in the Women's U.S. Amateur, but I will certainly miss being out at Harding Park. It's a very special place, and I think it's worthy of a PGA Championship.

**Q. Going back to this week at Drive On and the LPGA, with the 2021 status already secured, you guys kind of touched on this a little bit, how does that free up players who have yet to win out on Tour who are just starting out with their status secured for 2021?**

KAREN STUPPLES: I think it just -- as you say, it will free them up to play. I do think that there's still a certain amount of pressure on the players in that many of them don't have huge sponsorships, and the pressure to make money is a little different for those new rookie plays and those young players that are out. It's not just a simple question of keeping your card and being able to play next

year. Obviously as you said, that's not the case, but it's the pressure of making money and being productive that I think that will be somewhat of an issue. I think the players that have good sponsorship and good deals in place, they're the ones that can be really free. They're the ones that can go out there and free wheel it and rip it around that golf course, and it is what it is. But the players that need to make money, the ones that don't have a lot of backing, they're still going to feel the pressure.

KAY COCKERILL: Yeah, I agree that it's a huge relief in a lot of ways because all you're thinking of, I remember my rookie year thinking, I have to finish Top 125 on the Money List. I mean, that's your whole goal. You do not want to go back to qualifying school. It's the worst experience in your entire world that you'll ever go through, and you want to avoid that at all costs.

Just kind of having that relief I think should give them a little bit of freedom to perhaps just play their normal game, but if they can get past like what Karen says, the money aspect, money -- a lot of these gals just don't have big bankrolls, big bank accounts and they're living week-to-week, so if they can get past that and not think about it and just know, hey, I've got a full or a pretty good full slate of events coming up, let's see how good we can be, and if I stumble a little bit, I've got next year to make up for it.

THE MODERATOR: With that we will wrap things up. Karen, Kay and Beth, thank you for joining. Much appreciated, and enjoy being back out on the road this week.

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