

# ShopRite LPGA Classic

## Presented by Acer

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Galloway, New Jersey, USA  
Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

**Cara Banks**  
**Karen Stupples**  
**Paige Mackenzie**  
**Kay Cockerill**  
**Judy Rankin**

Press Conference



So it's really great to see them back this year.

JUDY RANKIN: I was just going to say that I think it's by it's a bit of a throwback event from the kind of events that built the LPGA through so many decades. There were so many community kind of events. There were events that were Chamber of Commerce, Jaycees, groups like that would put events together in smaller communities, and it really was the core of the LPGA for so many years.

I see this as a little bit of a throwback for that reason because it's such a tight community, and it feels like coming to a smaller community event that is very well-received and very well-attended and so on.

Having said it was kind of a throwback, we are not. We're a throw-forward, aren't we?

KAY COCKERILL: It reminds me a little bit of some of the older events we have on Tour like Corning Classic up in Rochester where it's truly a community event. I think the setting here with this hotel being right on property, it's just a fun, relaxed event, too.

You don't even need to use a car to drive anywhere. You can eat here. You just walk to the driving range, walk over to the first tee.

For the players, I think it's just a really relaxing, wonderful atmosphere, and the golf course is just a ton of fun to play and I don't think anyone ever gets tired of playing it.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: It was always top of list of events that when I wanted to play each year when I was playing, and it's top of the list of events I want to return to as a broadcaster.

Because there is, there's such a comfort and ease in this community and staying at the resort and being so close to the golf course. Plus, it's so well-received by the community, echoing what everybody has already said.

CARA BANKS: To that point Paige said to me that it's my

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center for the 2021 ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. A pretty cool week here at Seaview. Not only a world class field competing on the Bay Course, but the first all-female golf broadcast in US television history. Host Cara Banks, analyst Judy Rankin and Paige Mackenzie, and on-course reporters Karen Stupples and Kay Cockerill. Thank you ladies all for joining us today.

I'll open up the floor to start it off. What makes this event such a staple not only to the LPGA schedule but to the community?

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I think honestly, having played in it for many years, I've always enjoyed the atmosphere that you get when you're out on the golf course playing. The fans all come out to support the event.

It's just a really well-organized, well-run tournament on a golf course that isn't the longest, but it is particularly challenging in all manner of areas.

I think the players really enjoy that as a golf course. They have scorable opportunities out there, plenty of birdie chances, but they also know that there's danger waiting in the wings. There's always an element of drama involved in covering this tournament, and certainly I find it very dramatic when I played it at times.

But it was a lot of fun for me. I really enjoyed the spectators, the fans. When they all came out, they all knew the players, they all wanted autographs. They were a very well-versed gallery out there, and it's a lot of fun for the players to be involved in that.

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favorite event on Tour. I just love it. Actually I came down here for the media day which was nice ahead of this week, so got a bit of a feel of the lay of the land and the proximity that everything is, as the girls have alluded to.

Yeah, it just seems like a great atmosphere, so good place to start.

THE MODERATOR: Karen and Paige, if you can expand a little bit on your competitive days here, maybe a couple memories that stand out. I know you both have some special connections to this place and just what particularly made it special to you.

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I do think that the course is not one that you see week in, week out on Tour. It's very challenging. There are some particularly tough holes, and there were holes that you used to dread getting to I remember. You'd tee off at the first, have a nice easy first hole, no big deal; then you get to the second and it's like, oh, good grief. This one is a brick beast, and then you get to the third and it's not too bad, and so on and so forth.

It can hit you in waves, this golf course. As a player, that's what makes it so much of a challenge. It's not the longest, but boy does it pack a punch when it has to. You're never really sure what you're going to get. You're going to get some interesting weather.

For me coming from the UK, this always kind of felt a little bit like home. It's close to the shore, but it's not really on the shore. It feels linksey in many respects. It's pretty wide open in terms of there's no real tree-lined holes, and I feel like to me it kind of felt like home.

I really enjoyed -- this is going to sound crazy, but when you're a player these things matter. But the practice rounds, it was a big practice ground. There was never any fight for a space to go an hit balls or anything like that.

Literally you used to feel special when you were walking around this golf course because the fans all knew your name, they knew what you'd been doing, they knew where you were on the leaderboards. They were so well informed, and as you went around they wanted your autograph, and as a player it makes you feel so special.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: I liked it because you didn't know what you were going to get each and every day depending on the wind direction and if you went off in the morning prior to winds kicking up, the golf course played so differently. It's a course that it is different every single day depending on the conditions, and I'd just add that I know McGettigan's is quite popular, but I actually prefer the Greek restaurant right down the street.

So there are little things like that when you come here year in and year out that you really look forward to when you return.

**Q. Cara, you're handling play-by-play duties this week. What's it like to lead such a talented group?**

CARA BANKS: Well, I don't know yet, but I'll tell you after the first day. It's an honor, obviously, to work with these girls who do it week in, week out. Like I said on the media day, I'm a rookie here. This is a new position for me to be in. They're all experts, tried and trusted experts, so I feel like I'm in very safe hands.

We're all good friends. We've all worked together. Even though I haven't been in booth before doing the play-by-play I've been out on various women's events doing interviews or covering it for Golf Central, whatever it might be.

We know each other well and I'm excited for the opportunity, and hope it'll come to pass well on the broadcast.

**Q. Kay, do you feel even with the rookie in the mix, there's a great group effort and kind of that camaraderie with everyone?**

KAY COCKERILL: Definitely. I think Cara said, we've all worked together many times, but this is the first time that we've worked together on the same event, and so it's unusual in that fact.

I told Cara, she needs to dumb it down for the regular golf telecast. She does all these amazing events, particularly all the pre, the Live Froms, the postgames, so much going on that she has to handle. This is going to be a piece of cake for her. We're all here to support. All she needs to do is get the show going from point A to point B, and then we're all going to do our roles to the best that we can. I think it's going to be pretty seamless.

**Q. Judy, I'd like to ask you about some of the players this week. Seven of the top 10 in the Rolex Rankings are in Galloway. Who's one player or maybe a couple players, I'm sure you have a list, that maybe you've seen take their game to another level this year and someone that fans can keep an eye on this week?**

JUDY RANKIN: I think former winner here Anna Nordqvist is having a pretty spectacular summer. She must love this place. I remember when she won here, her mom was with her, and I think that is the first time her mom had been in a tournament in the States when she won.

So I see her as being a factor.

I don't think you can go anywhere in the world and Jin Young Ko isn't a factor, but there's so many good players who are actually playing quite well.

I think it's also the kind of golf course where we might see somebody get that first win, somebody who's been flirting with it but hasn't quite had it come to be.

The field is so strong that I was really impressed when I read the field list and all the players that are playing. You can look at players who you think could win, maybe should win, but you can come out here, too, and see Dame Laura Davies, those things that I think make golf and the LPGA so special.

If I could just add a couple of things, listening to everybody, Kay will not have trouble walking to the practice tee because she walked 30 miles last week at the Ryder Cup. She'll be zipping along.

One of my very first experiences with Cara was on a windswept practice tee at the Open Championship when she was doing interviews with the guys, and we would remark quietly to each other about who was really easy to get and who made this job great and fun and who -- I'd just rather not. That was one of my very first experiences with Cara.

We really had a good time up there for a couple of hours every day working on me getting a little interviews, she getting interviews. We had fun.

**Q. You kind of led into this, it touches on the Ryder Cup. Kay, you were there. I think Paige, you were there, as well, covering at Whistling Straits. If I can just get your perspectives on having -- it's one thing to have both competitions in the same year. What makes the two similar and different in the buildup, in the pomp and circumstance, just the whole experience?**

PAIGE MACKENZIE: I would just say the most similar thing is the pride that all the players have for competing in it, for getting to that point in their career where they've qualified for their respective teams, and the pride of showing up.

You saw that in Rory's interview after. It wasn't really about the result. It was about the experience and being there with your teammates and being able to put on the team uniform and go out there and try to compete.

To me, that is universal between both the Solheim Cup and

the Ryder Cup.

KAY COCKERILL: And definitely the energy on the first tee. Both have incredible energy. It's just a unique phenomenon in our game that you'd have this stadium atmosphere, and with the Solheim Cup music blaring and people just going insane -- the men didn't have any music on the first tee, which I thought was a little odd. They just had a -- we missed in both events the European contingent.

At the Ryder Cup there was a couple small groups of Euros that were leading songs, and that gets the Americans excited, too, to have something to have a counterpoint, and I think it kind of gears up the American fans.

Certainly the infrastructure, the amount of crowds -- the Solheim Cup had great crowds and the Ryder Cup, as well. People were just really excited to be out there rooting on the players. Team golf is unusual, match play is unusual, so I think the fans in general just really get up for it.

**Q. Is there a sense of history here or is it just another week of work?**

KAREN STUPPLES: That's an interesting question. I think for all of us, we all have been doing this for a long time. Like this isn't our first rodeo in terms of broadcasting. We come here and we do a job, and we do it week in and week out to the best of our ability regardless.

However, I do feel there's a nice little special bond between all of us because we have this opportunity to do this. I feel like we've all worked together at various stages in various different positions, but much like we talked about the Solheim Cup and the Ryder Cup, we actually can come together as a team for this week and work at this together.

I feel like that we have a nice little bond that will never be broken now because we have this, and this is a shared experience.

I think this is a tremendous opportunity for all of us, and I think that moving forward, I would love to see all of us do this at a men's event, just to throw that out there.

CARA BANKS: I would say for me it probably feels a bit more historic than it does for everyone else, because it is my first time doing this role; whereas it could be another week for everyone else, but a bit different because we have this unique setup.

I'll probably feel the pressure a little more than everyone else, and you know, it's great to have some media

coverage and attention and people wanting to give us some exposure for what we're trying to do. I can't speak to them, but that's how I would expect it to feel between us.

**Q. Judy, not only were you one of the first women to do this, you were a woman with men all around you in the entire industry. How much pride do you feel seeing what's taking place now?**

JUDY RANKIN: You know, I don't think about this very often, but one of the -- I cannot tell you all the great things that have come about for me because ABC Sports gave me a chance. I worked with an awful lot of really wonderful men who pushed me along, helped me along, all those things. Made me comfortable when I wasn't comfortable at all.

When I look back, and I'm looking back more, and forward is probably not a long story now in my career, I am really -- I honestly am really pleased to see that women who can do the job and are very capable of doing the job, whether it be women's golf, men's golf, any kind of golf, are well accepted now, and even searched for.

I suppose if anything really good, other than a very good life I've had because of television and so on, that's the one thing that I really am pleased about. I think women will be a fixture in golf, not just women's golf but in golf, from now on.

KAY COCKERILL: I would just add that Judy has definitely been a mentor of mine. I think back to the days that you were first working men's events, and I think of Donna Caponi, Marlene Floyd, Donna White, Mary B. Porter King. They were few and far between, but they were out there putting their footprint in this world of covering sports.

Judy definitely being the one that was doing the men's events was groundbreaking at the time, and she's really made it possible for all of us to be doing what we're doing today.

**Q. I don't think a lot of people know about your entry into broadcasting. Can you kind of give us that story?**

PAIGE MACKENZIE: Sure. I first was asked to do a Golf Central at the end of 2012 when I didn't qualify for the CME Group TOUR Championship, and it was terrible.

It's one of those, you don't ever want to see your first tapes ever again. I never want to see that. But I worked on it, and Comcast at the time had a broadcasting coach that they hooked me up with, so I got a couple phone interviews or phone lessons, and I came back in 2013 U.S. Open -- I didn't qualify at Sebonack. I kid you not, I was on the plane

kicking myself for flying across the country to work on a week off, and then I realized I love it.

I never once wished I was playing Sebonack. I never once wished I was with everybody. I loved it. I loved every minute of it. That was on the morning show where I felt like I could be myself a little bit more.

So yeah, I was more of a -- I got the ask and I said yes, and it changed everything.

KAY COCKERILL: It was a funny story. I was speaking at the Pac-12 championships in northern California. Cal Berkeley was hosting. After I spoke to all the girls, this was like the pre-tournament dinner, Paige comes up to me, introduces herself and says, I want to do what you're doing. I want to work in television.

And I'm thinking to myself, Yep, I've heard this story many times before. But lo and behold, she ended up finding her way to it. I'll never forget that, that she had the gumption to see it and ended up making it a reality.

**Q. Golf seems to be one of those sports where having a woman commentate on men's golf is pretty standard. Nobody thinks about it anymore. If you heard a female voice at a basketball game, for example, it might throw you off a little bit. Why is that, and do you think that'll change, as well?**

JUDY RANKIN: Well, things are changing, but the thing about golf is -- she's an expert broadcaster and an expert on most all things golf, but the rest of us all played golf.

The fact is, whether it's men's golf or whether it's women's golf, at the core of what it is, we all understand the same thing. That does not necessarily mean that I can play the shot I just watched played, but I know why the shot was played and how the shot was played and those kind of things.

I think any of us who have been around the men's Tour would also give one little nod to the vast majority of those players who respected the fact that we had some knowledge and gave us access and all those things, so that is one of the big reasons why it worked for me.

So I think golf is different in that regard because you can be very knowledgeable about football, but you haven't actually done it. So golf is different in that regard.

I'm not sure that every woman would want to do it or can do it, but the women who are doing it now -- and I would give a nod to Dottie Pepper, because I took Dottie to her first show. I thought she would be able to do it, and then



one day she told me she wanted my job, and I think she has it, I'm not sure. (Laughter).

I think it's going to be part of the game now. We say all the time, It's a game for everybody, so let's stay with it.

CARA BANKS: From my perspective there's no difference for me calling women's golf or men's golf. I say calling it. As Judy pointed out, I am a broadcaster amongst a group of analysts here. We're not going to be short on expert opinion of what it takes to play the shots we'll see on the golf course here at Seaview this week, so it should make no difference from my standpoint.

And as Rich Lerner told me last week, he tells everyone it's like being a bingo caller. To 12, or whichever golf hole we're going to.

Yeah, looking forward to calling my numbers this week.

KAY COCKERILL: And I think we are starting to see some women in other sports calling the sports. We've seen Jessica Mendoza in baseball, Hannah and Andrea Kramer did football via Amazon. A woman who's from the Bay Area just got called to do the Philadelphia 76ers, Kate Scott, and she'd been working her way up through the ranks doing Pac-12. Before that she was on KMBR sports radio.

So there's a female voice edging her way into the men's world of sports. It's a novelty at first, I guess, but as more and more women do it, hopefully it'll be more the norm.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: Yeah, I just don't think it's weird that a man calls a women's golf shot, right, so why would it be weird if a woman calls a man's golf shot? It's still a golf shot.

**Q. Since this is the first all-female broadcast, this is a pretty big deal. Do you all notice as you're working the absence of men?**

CARA BANKS: Well, I would say that our crew behind the scenes is actually largely female, as well, which is great and really adds to kind of the special factor this week, but there is, of course, plenty of men in our crew, teams. Our director, for example, Hembo, is a man this week, as he is most weeks on the LPGA Tour. Doesn't change. (Laughing.)

I don't know, I. Don't typically work, as you know, on the commentary side on the LPGA Tour with these ladies, so they would be better speaking to how it feels I'm sure not to have the guys around, but we do still have plenty of guys on the team behind the scenes.

KAY COCKERILL: Grant who? Jerry who?

KAREN STUPPLES: I would say Jerry Foltz who normally does LPGA coverage, he is here this week too. He came up with me and will be driving my golf cart around this week. He was going to try and caddie and that didn't work out, but now he's going to drive me around in the golf cart.

It maybe won't feel quite strange for me because I'll still have him out there on the golf course and he'll still be giving me grief I'm sure at times during the round about some of the things I'm going to say, but that'll be just the norm for me.

JUDY RANKIN: I encouraged him to go get a bag in the pro-am. He wasn't much for that.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: I don't know if it's going to feel any different, honestly. We're used to hearing each other's voices individually. Maybe not all at the same time. So I don't think it's going to feel that strange.

Most of us just listen to what's being said instead of how it's being said.

CARA BANKS: Paige and I were just working together last week at the Ryder Cup on Live From, so we've been talking back and forth across the microphones for the last seven days anyway, so that'll be a nice transition.

**Q. Can you comment on gambling and its growth in the game and where you see it, especially with PointsBet and The Golf Channel and how it has become a factor.**

CARA BANKS: This is our expert.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: Thank you. To me, the addition of betting in golf is creating a deeper engagement, and so I think there's a lot of positive outcome that could come from the addition of gambling with golf, because the fans are suddenly that much more interested in the outcome of what's going on.

We're just seeing the very, very beginning of what can be, and I think the very first time I saw it integrated into a broadcast on one of the made-for-TV matches, it blew me away at what that could mean for the sport and how that will change the fan engagement and potentially growth of the fans that would access the sport.

**Q. Going back to the tournament here, Megha Ganne was in here earlier talking about this week. She's playing here on a sponsor exemption for the second**

**year. Y'all covered her when she did what she did at the U.S. Women's Open. She's got her family and friends here this week. She didn't really have that last year because of COVID. Talk about seeing Megha this summer, and what are your expectations this week and the comfort level of playing at home this week?**

KAY COCKERILL: Well, I know Karen and I both were out there, and Judy too, at Olympic Club. I followed her on Saturday, and I've known her and been following her through the years and seen her at USGA events, and I can't believe that she's not in college yet.

She's so mature for her age. It's like, you have one more year before you go to Stanford? I'm surprised she didn't bring Mike Finn, who caddied for her. He's an Olympic Club member. I'm surprised she didn't fly him out to caddie.

She's going to have a blast this week, and she can feel -- whenever any of us played close to home, whether it was on a home course, which was rare, or even in the vicinity, it felt like you had an advantage and just this extra push to get you through both physically and mentally.

She's so familiar with this golf course, and I look for her to have a really good week. She's such a beautiful putter and really has a great all-around game.

I actually saw her at the Ryder Cup. She was playing in an exhibition there, and then a lot of the kids, they caddied for the celebrities in a celebrity event. She's used to getting a lot of exposure and being in front of cameras. She's well-spoken, can handle the attention, and I think she'll do really well.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: I just remember meeting her at Drive, Chip & Putt. She would have been like 12 at the time maybe. Even younger. No, she's an impressive young woman. She's always composed, does her best to represent the sport well, a great ambassador of the game at such a young age.

I think she loves the spotlight as much as anybody that plays out here for a living, so I think she's going to thrive.

CARA BANKS: It'll be fascinating to see because this will be the first time she's teeing it up in competition being as well-known as she now is. We got to know her during the U.S. Women's Open thanks to her good play, I would say the wider golf audience.

And she's in one of the featured groups. We're going to be teeing her off live on our coverage, which we can't wait for, so I hope and I'm fascinated to see how well she performs

now with the new fame that she has in the golf world.

**Q. Do you have a word or two about what Beth Hutter means to the broadcast team and how she keeps this ship afloat?**

KAREN STUPPLES: Well, I don't think there is a bigger presence for any of us around us women within the sport than Beth. I mean, she's producing golf. It's the hardest sport in the world to cover, to produce. You've got balls in the air all over, 18 different playing fields at any one time, and she does it with ease.

She's never -- well, I want to say never very angry with us. Every once in a while she will lose it a little bit with us when we do something very silly, but for the most part she is absolutely tremendous to have on headset, to have in your ear.

She's a very calming influence on all of us. Always has been willing to give us tips and help along the way just to make sure that we do the job better for her. But she makes it look so effortless and so easy, and now she's a mother, so she's juggling being a mother as well as producing golf and travel and everything else that goes along with it.

I mean, she is just impressive across the board. She played sport in college, she was a soccer player, so she gets it. But there's nothing that she would like more than to play golf at this level, too. She knows what it's all about playing golf. She knows the competitive side of things, and she's a lot of fun to have in that compound. She's just been a tremendous influence, certainly on me, and I pretty much feel like I can speak for everybody here.

KAY COCKERILL: Beth has become a very good friend. We would do things -- you're out traveling, it can be lonely, it's tough being on the road. And so when you create friendships with some of your coworkers, it just makes life a lot easier when you can go out and have dinner together.

Beth is super outdoorsy, loves to go on incredible hikes, and just do fun things. I'll always be hanging around with her and figure out ways to eat up a few hours in the day, either before or after work or whatever.

But I admire her. She's passionate, energetic, fun. She keeps everything working seamlessly between the operations, technical side, and what she's looking at through our vision, as well, and keeps -- just keeps everything functioning really, really well and seamlessly.

CARA BANKS: Yeah, she's been so supportive. This will be my first experience working with her, but she's always

there. She's reaching out on email, cell, this is my number, shout if you have any questions, whatever you need. We've just already been with her this morning.

For me I feel a real sense of ease as the first producer in my ear doing this. I sat in the booth with her, or I should say in the trailer, in the truck with her at the U.S. Women's Open when she was producing most of these ladies at Olympic Club, and she just has, yeah, such a nice tone and manner about her.

I'm looking forward to getting to know her better.

JUDY RANKIN: I think Beth is really responsible for putting this group together.

KAY COCKERILL: It was her idea.

JUDY RANKIN: I think Kay is right, it was her idea. Anyway, we're going to try our best. Just so everyone at home knows, when we're all together with a lot of the men that we work with, it is the most -- it's the most pleasant work atmosphere. In our group of people, you never, ever have to eat dinner alone if you don't want to.

That's one of the really great things about The Golf Channel and all the people in production and our cameramen and all that. We've all become really -- Golf Channel and this golf environment in television has become another one of our neighborhoods.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: The only thing I'd add is I think Beth is incredibly conscientious. I think she does a great job. But the one thing that I will never, ever get out of my ear is the impromptu giggle.

Like if you say something funny or something is going on, her laugh, she has such levity while she's doing her job, which helps us have a better work environment to do our job.

KAY COCKERILL: Or a funny one-liner or something.

PAIGE MACKENZIE: Exactly, that she causes you to crack up and you don't want to come on air?

CARA BANKS: To Karen's point, she's the ultimate working mom. I just saw her this morning. She just dropped her three-year-old off at child care and there she was at the golf course running a production meeting. It's pretty impressive to watch.

THE MODERATOR: Well, it's obviously special to have all of you in one team this week, and we can't wait for many more to come. Kay, Cara, Karen, Paige, Judy, thank you

so much for joining us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

