

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

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Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Celine Boutier

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon everyone, and thanks for joining us at the ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. We're here with Celine Boutier. Celine, first of all, congratulations on your second career LPGA Tour victory.

I know on the ride over you said kind of seems surreal. You weren't expecting to win, but you won. Take us through the day, the performance, and what it was like in those tense moments waiting for final groups to finish up.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it was such a surreal day. I just feel like this morning I just knew I was couple shots back and I knew the course was scorable, so I knew I had to shoot a low score to even have a chance.

And then after 18 I just knew I had left everything out on the course, but couple of groups were left out there and I was expecting to go in the playoff coming -- when I saw the last group coming into 18.

I was already in my mind going into the playoff and having to prepare for that. And then just the fact that neither Jin Young or Inbee birdied 18 really left me, I don't know, like kind of stunned. I'm still a little bit surprised about it.

But it's honestly been a great tournament. I played really solid from start to finish. Super happy with the way it ended obviously.

Q. Yeah, you matched a career low for 18 holes today I believe with your final round performance. Also matched a couple names in French lore that some LPGA fans might remember, Patricia Meunier-Lebouc and Anne Marie Palli. You tied them with obviously your second win on tour to join them in a tie for first. So your next win you'll have quite a mountain to yourself.

Take us through what it means representing your country week in and week out. We just had the Solheim Cup, and to be paired with some historic names from French golf like

that?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it's really hard to describe and to even realize what it means, but I fortunately know both of them Patricia and Anne Marie, and they're the nicest people. And Patricia has won a major, so I feel like I'm not even at that level yet.

But it's just so great to be able to tie them. We're not that many French players out here on tour, so it's just always amazing and super proud to be representing my country every week, and hopefully a lot more players from France are coming.

Q. Anne Marie won this event I believe in 1992 in a playoff, one of two playoffs in this event, and you avoided a playoff today against the No. 2 and No. 3 players. Is it a testament to how strong your game is, the position it is in right now, and what you were able to accomplish this week?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes, I feel like I've been playing solid all season. Just my putting has been a little bit inconsistent from round to round, so I been working on that pretty hard. But I feel like, yeah, I've been playing really solid, and I knew if I just trusted the process I would give myself more chances to play for the win.

It happened this week, and I'm just so grateful for everything that's happened to me so far. Looking forward to more in the future.

Q. Congratulations. First of all, what were your realistic expectations going into today, and was there a point in the round where you just stood back and said, Wow, I've got a chance to win this?

CELINE BOUTIER: I'm not sure what I expected in terms of result because it's really hard to obviously manage yourself, but to even think about what other people are doing and playing, it's not really manageable. So I just honestly tried to focus on myself and shoot as low as I could.



And then I did realize at some point think after nine holes I was 6-under and that kind of really -- but I felt like, I mean, my putting was really solid and my game in general has been really good since Friday, so I knew if I kept going and kept trying to give myself chances, I would have a chance.

But if I'm 100% honest, I didn't expect that it was going to be enough to win. I was like for sure I'm going to go in a playoff, but at least I give myself a chance to go in the playoff.

So yeah, it's just been crazy.

Q. Were you in the clubhouse while they were putting? In the pro shop? The locker room? Where did you watch their putts from?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, on the putting green then after that I ended up in the locker room. They have a TV there and it was very quiet, only like two or three players were in there, so I felt like that was the perfect place for me to watch and not really worry about anything else.

It was pretty nerve wracking, to be honest.

Q. Did you expect them to make them?

CELINE BOUTIER: Oh, yeah, for sure. Like in my mind I was just preparing myself to go in the playoff already. Yeah, it was a crazy turn of events.

Q. You birdied No. 2. Most people consider that the toughest hole on the course. Did that get your round going? You had six birdies on the front. That was the first one. How big a spark was that birdie at No. 2 for you?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I was a little bit on the fence about my putting because I hadn't putted very well yesterday. So just to get that putt, I think it was about 25 feet or so that I holed out on 2 for a birdie gave me a lot of confidence going into the round.

Like you said, it's one of the toughest holes out there, so it was great to have a birdie there.

Q. You came to 18 tied for the lead. Are you a board watcher? Did you know?

CELINE BOUTIER: I'm not a leaderboard watcher, but I knew. I had seen a couple of leaderboards like early in the round, and I knew obviously 18 is par-5, reachable, so I know that very likely they're going to birdie it.

So I knew I had to get at least a birdie to go in the playoff,

and then just, yeah, just did my best of tried not to think too much about it. But, yeah, I had a general idea.

Q. Collin said that was a 3-hybrid. You hit it out to the right, is that correct, on 18?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes. Right side of the green.

Q. And what did you chip with to get within, what was it, seven feet or so?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah. I had a 58-degree wedge.

Q. And that was about a seven-footer?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes.

Q. Was it a difficult seven-footer? Was it fairly straight?

CELINE BOUTIER: It was left to right, maybe a ball outside, a half a ball maybe.

Q. I just wanted to know when you walked off the green at 18 you had about an hour wait to figure out what was going to happen, how did you spend that time and what was going through your mind as you waited?

CELINE BOUTIER: Honestly I just was obviously very happy with my round and I didn't really have any regrets. I feel like I played the best I could today.

So I just signed my card, kind of checked my phone a bit. Obviously my mom was texting me. Then I went out to putt a little bit just to get ready for the playoff. I knew it was going to be a long time because they were only on like 17 or so, so ended up in the locker room and watching them come onto 18 green.

Q. And you mentioned earlier about your putting. How good do you think that was today, and are these greens really hard to read?

CELINE BOUTIER: They're a little bit tricky just because there is a lot of undulations to them, so you have to definitely hit your approach shots close. But even when you're close sometimes it's a little bit tricky to read them.

But, yeah, I just feel like my putting has been something that's been the most inconsistent in my game this year. Feel like I've been playing so solid, but if my putting was better I would give myself more chances.

The fact that I was able to putt this well today on the last



round definitely gives me a lot of satisfaction and confidence going forward.

Q. It's been a good last month for you between Solheim Cup and winning today. What's the year been for you?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it's been an insane year. I have to add also the Olympics to that, which was the most amazing experience, and to back it up with winning the Solheim Cup on U.S. soil is definitely very special.

To top it off, winning my second win is just unbelievable. I can't even rank which one is better. It's just so different. But it's definitely going to be a very special year for me.

Q. Talking about the Solheim Cup, I'm curious if you feel like the win kind of helped propel you to this win today, if you got good energy from at that team win.

CELINE BOUTIER: You know, I think it give me a lot of energy. So my next tournament after the Solheim was the French Open, which I won, too, so it kind of help me for the French Open.

And then the French Open help me get more confidence coming into these weeks on the LPGA. I just feel like I'm having some really good momentum, and, yeah, hope to keep going until the end of the season.

Q. There is a lot of really good putters on the LPGA Tour obviously, but was it especially surprising to watch Inbee miss on 18 today?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I mean, honestly both Inbee and Jin Young, I was expecting Jin Young to two-putt for sure and Inbee I was like, I shouldn't even watch it, it's going to go in.

But, yeah, I mean, it's just so crazy. It tells you how difficult these greens are, and you really never know until the last putt, because, I mean, under pressure -- obviously she knows what pressure is; she has won like 50 times.

So, yeah, just unreal. I still can't believe that they both missed.

Q. How does this win compare to your first?

CELINE BOUTIER: It's so different. It's hard to compare them, but I feel like this one I been -- the first one was very unexpected. I guess this one was too, in a different way. The first one was unexpected and so early into my career that I think I had like -- I think it was my second year on tour.

Just the fact of having -- I think it's been almost two years or two years and a half since my first win. You know, I know how hard it is to win. It just makes it so special. I been trying really hard to get my second one. It's hard to describe. Yeah, it's hard to compare them, but they are both very special.

Q. Just a lot of players made a lot of birdies on the front nine, including you; not so much on the back nine. Did conditions change, and how did you stay so steady on the back nine when a lot of other players faltered coming in?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I think the front nine is definitely more scorable. I feel like the back the wind kind of started to pick up and then we had some longer par-4s and stuff like that.

So I don't know why it's not scoring as well, but I definitely feel like I honestly didn't really make any mistakes, even though I didn't really birdie as many as the front. Just had to stay patient.

I knew with the wind picking up it was going to be definitely a little bit tougher on the back.

Q. And just curious how well do you know Anne Marie Palli? You were obviously born after the year that she won the tournament here. Just how well do you know her?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I know her quite well actually. I got to know her my first year on tour because she lives in Phoenix because we used to have the Founders tournament there every year so she would come out and watch. That's how I met her, and then I've stayed with her before in the past. She was actually here had week playing in the Pro-Am, so I saw her Wednesday and Thursday.

It was kind of crazy. She did mention she had won the tournament in '92. Yeah, it's just -- she's awesome. I just really love her energy and I'm sure she was watching, too.

I hope she's happy. (Laughter.)

Q. A lot of players talked this week about how firm the course was playing compared to years past. Do you think that playing firm made it easier today so you could just go out and freewheel it rather than leaders under pressure trying to hold those greens?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I feel like the greens were definitely firm this week, but I feel like they were a little bit

softer today actually. I was able to control my wedges really well, which kind of definitely helped me to get some birdies.

But I feel like for me, in general I feel like the tougher the course the better for me, so I just, yeah, just tried to do my best. You never know what can happen. I wasn't really paying attention to what the other players were doing throughout the round, so, yeah, just tried to focus on each shot at a time.

Q. Do you think there is a reason that you prefer tougher courses?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think it's because I don't normally shoot very low, or like in general. I'm more like a steady player, and so I just feel like when it's too many birdies I just tend to not do as well when the scores are really low.

And I just feel like -- I like to think of myself as a very steady player, like from tee to green, so usually when it's narrow and like thick rough it's an advantage for me.

Q. You mentioned your lowest career round to be 63. Have you shot lower than that at home or in the past?

CELINE BOUTIER: No, never.

Q. Congratulations.

CELINE BOUTIER: Thank you.

Q. You've never been a long hitter. Do you ever have to fight the temptation to try to play somebody's game other than yours when your fellow competitors maybe are longer hitters than you are?

CELINE BOUTIER: I have in the past for sure. I've learned from it. I feel like you have to focus on your own game. Everyone's game is different. It's obviously hard not to compare yourself on the other players, especially when they're better than you, like better ranked.

I feel like I've gained some distance in the past year, year and a half, so that's definitely helped me a little bit. Definitely actually, because I was able to reach all the par-5s this week, which is normally not happening that often for me.

Yeah, my gain in distance has definitely helped me, but I also know I'm not going to be a long hitter like Maria Fassi or Patty or Bianca. So I just know that.

And any gain I can get of course is welcome, but I also know that's not the strength of my game. So just know

where you stand and where your strength are is key I think.

Q. Have you done any work to try to add extra distance, or you're content with what you have and what you can do?

CELINE BOUTIER: I mean, like I said, anything that I can gain is going to be welcome, but it's not my priority. I feel like I'm long enough where I feel like not -- I'm not in trouble with too long of iron shots into par-4s, and I can reach some the par-5s.

I feel like I don't really have -- carry like bunkers that I have to carry that I can't really do. So I feel like my distance is average and it's not giving me any trouble, but I feel like of course if I can gain more it's better.

But it's not my game to be bombing it and then having wedges everywhere, so I also know what to do with my strength.

Q. You and your playing partner today, you shot the low round of the week here on the Bay Course; your playing partner today, Brooke Henderson shot the second lowest round of week. Was there a nice competitiveness out there? Could you feel the energy between you two? Did that feed you at all, push you over the hump today?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, definitely. We played so good, especially in the front. It was birdie after birdie. I think Kay told me like if we were playing Best Ball we would've shot 8-under, so it was just so crazy.

I feel like it helped me a little bit because it's nice to have this kind of momentum and keep going back and forth. But, yeah, it was just a good round, a good group in general. Just, yeah, very happy with the way it went.

Q. You won your last professional golf start at the Lacoste Ladies Open in France on the LET a few weeks ago. What confidence did that give you, and how did you adjust to coming back overseas to get ready for the LPGA schedule?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it gave me a lot of confidence. That tournament meant a lot to me because it's the first professional event that I played as an amateur when they give me an invite. Then any tournament I can play at home with my sponsor Lacoste, my family was there, my whole family was there, which is extremely rare, so it meant a lot for me to give myself a chance to win.

And to be able to win on home soil is never easy, so I was definitely over the moon with that win. I feel like what you

learn on tour each week is so different. Sometimes it's not easy to just get a new start every week. Especially when you win. You want to just enjoy it for a little bit more.

But I had to play in Arkansas right after, so I just try not to think about it too much, but tried to move on. And every week is a different week, so you never know. But it definitely gave me a lot of confidence.

But the fact that it's LPGA so it's not LET, it just helped me kind of get a fresh start. It's different players, different fields, and stuff like that. So it was a little bit easier for me to just focus on the week ahead.

THE MODERATOR: You won the 2020 Texas Women's Open last year and the Kathy Whitworth Paris Championship on the women's All-Pro tour. You probably did something a lot of LPGA players didn't do during the coronavirus hiatus, and you went and played as much golf as you could.

What does that say about your competitiveness and willingness to get better as compared to maybe some others that maybe didn't take that opportunity?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think actually I'm getting more and more competitive as I grow up. I feel like when I was younger I definitely did not describe myself as being competitive.

During the COVID time I was in Dallas, and actually my course was pretty much open the whole time, so golf was literally the only thing I could do.

So I did practice a bit, and when you practice but you don't have any tournament coming up or anything to look forward to, it can be very un motivating, if that's a word.

But, yeah, so I tried to look for tournaments to play because I knew I was ready, and I just wanted to have something going on. So I played in this the Texas Open and two other events on the APT, which definitely help to get the competitiveness going and help me get my game ready for when the season on the LPGA started again.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on win No. 2.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes, thanks.

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