

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

Monday, May 15, 2023

Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Brooke Henderson

Press Conference

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Okay, so everybody, thank you for being flexible on this Zoom conference call.

Brooke, thank you for joining us. Sorry to hear that you're not feeling great. Glad to hear your feeling much better.

We just wrapped up media day here at the ShopRite LPGA Classic. Meaghan Francella was just here. Just chatted with her a little bit ago.

She's our sponsor exemption once again this year. We played your recap video from last year in the playoff.

Just talk about last year. Talk about that final round and that playoff victory for your 11th win last year.

BROOKE HENDERSON: It was so much fun and so exciting the way it finished out. Going into the day I wasn't sure. I thought maybe I was too far back to get the victory, but I was just trying to go as low as I could and see what could happen.

Just tried to make a bunch of birdies. I was 5-under through the first nine holes, which was really exciting, and I saw my name climbing up the leaderboard quickly.

So to shoot a bogey-free 64 on a Sunday, get into a playoff with Lindsey, and win with an eagle on the playoff hole, it was just really special.

My parents were there and my sister was on the bag and lots of family and friends were there to celebrate, too. I think ShopRite is one of the -- I think it's one of the best closing holes the way the fans are always there and so excited.

I remember few years ago watching Lexi win there with an eagle putt on 18. I remember listening to the crowd's reaction and the hair stood up on my arms a little bit watching her win. At the time I just thought, man, that would be really cool to do that.



So to be able to basically do that last year, it really meant a lot to me.

Q. How are you feeling, and how is your golf game shaping upcoming into ShopRite in a few weeks?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I'm feeling much better now than I was the last couple weeks, which is really exciting. Been able to get back out practicing and getting the game ready.

I'm planning on playing in Vegas I guess next week, so be a good way to test the game out, and then gives me a couple more weeks before I arrive back at Seaview where hopefully my game will be in peak form as defending champ.

Q. I wanted to ask you, you defended a number of times in your career. I think successfully defended once and won another tournament two times in three years. What's different about being the defending champion when you show up somewhere?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's a great feeling just to see and reminisce about the past year. I see lots of posters and videos and it's very exciting. I feel like you just have more energy that week, a little bit of an adrenaline rush from when you show up on Monday to when you finish on Sunday.

Yeah, been able to successfully defend in Portland and then as well in Hawai'i, and then you mentioned the win at Meijer as well in Michigan.

So it has been good to me when I come in as defending champion. Hopefully this year I'll have that same high energy and be able to give it a good run on the weekend.

Q. Do you feel more pressure when you come back as the person who there is a lot of attention on?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Maybe a little bit. Yeah, do you receive more attention, but I just try to use it to my advantage as best I can. As I mentioned, just having that



higher energy and just trying to use that throughout the week.

But, yeah, it's exciting. When you step up to a place where you know you played well in the past you feel like your game plan, strategy for the course is pretty good, and just gives you a lot of extra confidence.

I think all golfers play better when they're confident and when they're swinging a little bit more freely.

Q. Even before last year you had always played well here at Seaview. What is it about this course and your game that kind of go together?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, this event has always been very special to me. I received a sponsor exemption to this event in 2015 when I was trying to make my way out on to the Tour, and that really meant a lot to me.

As you mentioned, I always had pretty high finishes, a lot of success at this event. I think it's just they were really good to me, and that has always given me that little bit extra confidence and motivation to play well here this week.

The golf course can be very challenging, and I think you have to remain patient and take what it gives you. I think I've learned that over the last few years, and obviously with the win last year I feel pretty confident with the strategy.

As long as the ball striking is in a good place, I look forward to hopefully having another good finish this year.

Q. And I know you started off this year with a win. How would you assess the year so far?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's kind of been a weird year, to be honest. I'm very happy about the win right out of the gate in January, the Tournament of Champions. That was really cool. Really gave me a lot of high hopes for the rest of the year.

Unfortunately the schedule has been a little bit strange. We've had a lot of breaks and off time, and I feel like it's just been a little bit tough for me to get the game rolling consistently.

With this big stretch coming up the rest of the summer I look forward to hopefully putting myself in contention and making some climbs on the weekend.

Q. You came up through the Canadian system, which develops young players. How did that help you develop your game and have success at such a young

age?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, the Canadian National Team was great. It was a lot of fun for me to be able to travel with other top athletes and have a lot of extra coaching. Not only swing and golf coaches, but also physio and strength and conditioning and psychologists, too.

So it was all really well rounded and a lot of benefits, and it added really well to my dad who has been coaching me my entire life.

Between the National Team and my dad as coach and sister always helping me as well, it made a really solid team. It's really helped me get to where I am today.

Q. Brooke, this is Brynn Walker. I'm a player. Actually we've three times. You probably don't remember. We played nine holes together in a practice round. Now I'm switching sides for this week and doing a little media. One of the things as a player, I grew up coming to Seaview, and you have all the names of past champions in the Grille room and there is a lot of history here. It's been here 35 years. Was that something you thought about when you first came? You haven't missed a cut since you started playing. Seeing the history within the clubhouse and everything, especially in the Grille room. Did that cross your mind that you would be a champion?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, as you mentioned, that's one the coolest things about ShopRite, is the list of past champions and the people who have been there at Seaview, played there and stayed there. It's always been very inspiring to see those names.

I'm really proud that I get to add my name to that list of past champs, Annika, Juli, Cristie, Lexi, Nancy Lopez a few years ago, and the list goes on and on. I think it's pretty cool to be mentioned in the same sentence as those people, and now my name is etched on the trophy and among them, which is really cool.

Like I said, and you mentioned it too, it's really inspiring and always a lot of fun to read those names up in the Grille Room and just around the entire place.

Q. Along those lines, this has always been considered maybe the best non-major on the LPGA Tour. It's right up there. What is it that makes this event so special?

BROOKE HENDERSON: The history, the tradition. It's been running for such a long time. Been a staple on the LPGA schedule. All the good they do for the community,



the millions of dollars they helped raise for charities, I think all of us on the LPGA Tour are really proud of being able to play in events where they give so much back and help so many people that need it.

It's a tough golf course, too. I think the challenge keeps us coming back and makes us better as players. The event makes us better people, too.

Q. Is the locale good, too? Get to come to Atlantic City, or do you stay away from Atlantic City?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I don't go there too much. I have been there for a couple pro-am parties.

Q. Is there anything about the golf course that you have learned through the years? I know the greens have tricked me up a bit. Is there anything that you learned playing now eight years that you think helped you win last year?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I think it's definitely a ball striking course. You have to hit a lot of fairways and hit a lot of greens, because the greens are really tricky, so you want to give yourself as many opportunities to make birdie as you can.

I mentioned it earlier, you just really have to stay patient. It's a tough little course and it's very windy. Not so everything is going to go perfectly all the time, but if you can hit a lot of greens, give yourself those looks, and then hopefully make a bunch of birdies, and it'll offset those holes where it's kind of inevitable that you'll bogey.

Q. Brooke, you're only 25 but you've been out here eight years, whatever. Do you sit there sometimes and try to assess where you are in your career or how it's going? Is this how you envisioned it, what the next five to ten years -- what you would like to get out of it?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I'm so grateful for the career that I've had so far. Sometimes I have to pinch myself because it's like when I was growing up I just want to play on the LPGA Tour and win out there.

But you never really know if things are -- your dreams are going to come true. So far they have. It's been so much fun to compete against the best in the world, and I've been fortunate enough to raise 13 LPGA Tour trophies, which is really exciting.

And I think moving forward I'm just always trying to get a little bit better and keep pushing forward. Trying to keep the motivation and keep aspiring to be the best I can on all levels.

With that being said, like I said, I'm very grateful for all that's happened in the past. Just trying to keep getting better and see what will happen the next five or ten years.

Q. You have been the face of Canadian women's golf for quite sometime. Is that a burden for you or something that doesn't bother you at all?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think it's amazing. I have so much love and support from Canada, and as I've traveled around the world and played on tour I've been able to gain fans and friends from all around. I think that is one of the coolest things about playing out here.

But specifically about the Canadian fans and being the face of Canadian golf, I hope that I can inspire everyone to pick up this game, young or older generations. I think it's just a game that teaches you so much about life, so many great values, and can really make a huge difference in everyone's lives for the better.

So just trying to inspire people to pick up the game and I'm just trying to be a little bit better myself.

Q. Do you ever think about going back to like what you accomplished, what you may still accomplish, your place in the game when it's all said and done at some point in the future where you might be regarded? You're off to such a great start so far.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, thanks. It has been a really great start, and as I mentioned, just trying to get a little better all the time and keep pushing forward. Not to get too complacent and just try to keep pushing boundaries.

Women's golf in general right now is really growing and it's really pushing boundaries, and I just want to be a part of that and keep that movement going so that the next generations have it even better than we do right now.

You know, it's hard to say your goals because you never really know what's going to happen. Just trying to make small goals, and hopefully that leads to bigger dreams coming true if the mutual you have future.

Q. You're not even one of the young ones anymore.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I know, it's so crazy. I think I'm pretty young but then I look around and then I feel old.

Q. Before I ask my question, do you think you could tell us a little bit about what you've been dealing with

health-wise that you alluded to earlier?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Nothing too serious. Just had to take care of myself and heal a bit. I'm feeling much better now and energy levels are coming back. That's really exciting, and like I said, I'm back here practicing and getting ready for the rest of the year.

Q. Had you planned to play last week and this kept you out?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah. My intentions were to play last week. I had to withdraw early on, which was unfortunate.

But like I said, I'm feeling better now and hopefully that's all over with.

Q. I wanted to ask a little bit about your schedule. Obviously the ShopRite is leading into a couple really big tournaments, two majors at some important golf clubs. Will you be able to have time to preview Baltusrol or Pebble Beach?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Right now I don't plan on it. As badly as I would like to, just with the schedule coming up it's hard to squeeze in the time.

But trying to look ahead to those courses and do a little research, studying to try to figure out the best way to play them. But I'm really excited for the opportunity to play those big name courses.

Q. Have you ever played Pebble Beach before?

BROOKE HENDERSON: No, this will be the first time. A lot of girls, they've had the opportunity to go out earlier this year and play it and they've all been in awe, so I look forward to that.

Q. I assume Baltusrol you've never played before.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Nope.

Q. You talked about the starting and the stopping of the year. I know you were obviously rightly so extremely excited after winning the first tournament of the year. Do you feel like you lost some momentum there, or I guess what are you trying to recapture as you head into this important stretch?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that was such a high, which is amazing. Then I had a little bit of ups and downs the last few months. I feel like now is really when it counts. This is a big stretch of golf with hopefully defending my

title in a couple weeks there at Seaview and leading into the rest of the four majors and CME at the end of the year.

I feel like now is the time you need your game to started showing up and performing, and hopefully it'll stick with me the rest of the summer. I think golf is always going to be a little up and down, just like life. Everything balances out and you got to try to ride the highs and the lows as even as you can.

Right now I feel I'm trying to climb my way back up to have a lot of energy and be on a high the rest of the summer.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Brooke, thank you. We look forward to seeing you in a few weeks here at Seaview.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports