

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

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Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Karrie Webb

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center at the ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. Karrie Webb, LPGA Hall of Famer, coming back into the field here after not playing since 2022 the ShopRite. Just talk a little bit about what it's meant to be here this week and how excited you are for this week.

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, so it's always fun to come back to Shoprite and the Seaview Resort. Always have a lot of memories and friends and family that come and watch over the weekend.

Just a really good atmosphere, and when I think about attempting to play these days, there has to be a little bit of enjoyment to it as well, so I do like coming back here.

Q. And you've made several starts here. Just talk a little bit about the course and the community and how much it's meant to you in your career to keep coming back here.

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, well, it's been on our schedule for -- since I've been on Tour. We had a break for a couple years I think around 2009, '10 time.

But since then it's been a regular on our schedule. The community has always supported this event, so always nice to come back, you know, and to an event, to a sponsor that has supported the LPGA Tour since I've been on tour.

So it's nice to have some familiarity at an event like this. You know, it's definitely one of my favorites.

Q. How has your experience as a champion influenced your approach to the tournament now?

KARRIE WEBB: I think after I won in 2013 I think the fondness with the staff here at the Seaview and the tournament staff went up a notch because definitely got a hard hit on the Sunday night.

So I think, yeah, since then, you know, I get treated like a local when I come back.

Q. What memories do you have that stand out the most?

KARRIE WEBB: I think just since I've had so many friends and family travel to watch this event, I think that's my fondest memories, is that, you know, it's getting to catch up with people I don't always see very often.

I don't get to really have that much fun with them until the Sunday night, but I get to hang out with them during the week.

Q. How important is the fan support, and what does it mean to have them here cheering you on? On social media they're all ecstatic that you're back.

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it's nice to feel the love about coming back. I think that's why I've never said the "R" word, because every once in a while I get the itch to compete.

It's never going to be a regular thing. It's just because I still love to see what I've got left in the tank. When you practice and show a little bit of form you think, oh, maybe I'll go and play.

By the end of the week I'll know why I don't play regularly probably.

Q. So you obviously have the itch to play. How many events do you think you might play this year? What's your schedule?

KARRIE WEBB: Well, your guess is as good as mine. I think the main reason I'm playing a few events through the summer is I wanted to play in The Open championship at St Andrews in August.

So I felt like I couldn't show up there -- going to be at the Olympics for three weeks not practicing prior to that, but felt like I needed a little bit of competition under my belt



before I tee'd it up there.

Q. This might be an obvious answer, but I want to hear it anyway. Why do you want to go back to the Old Course?

KARRIE WEBB: I just think St. Andrews and the Old Course is such a magical place. I've never worked out how to play the Old Course well, but I just love everything about being -- staying in the town, being there, even being on the golf course.

And even though I can play in the Open until I'm 60, the Old Course hasn't been on the radar since 2013. Even if it did come back, might be 58 or 59, and I'm definitely not teeing it up with 20 year olds when I'm that old. I feel like it's my last opportunity to compete at the Old Course.

Even though I did hesitate because I will be at the Olympics for three weeks not practicing, I thought I would regret it if I didn't.

Q. I know you've been close with a number of Founders over the years, Louise in particular. The rest of the Founders will be going into the World Golf Hall of Fame here formally and be celebrated. What does that mean to you personally, that all 13 will now be in the World Golf Hall of Fame?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think it's a long time coming. I think one of the categories in the World Golf Hall of Fame is contributor to the game of golf, and there haven't been any bigger contributors to the game of golf than the 13 Founders, especially to women's golf.

They're all deserving to be in there as contributors. Obviously six of them are in there for their playing ability. As contributors, they should all be in there together.

Q. This tournament, 54 holes, at one point the LPGA Tour was mostly 54-hole tournaments; now this is a rarity. Is this a throwback to what your life was like on the tour early '90s, late '80s kind of thing?

KARRIE WEBB: I was still in high school then. Don't age me too much.

But when I came on tour, '96 was my rookie year, there was still I would say probably 10, 11, three-round events. Now I think we've got two or three. I think two, yeah.

So it is a bit of a throwback. I think what this tournament does for charities in the local community is a huge thing, and it's probably why it's remained the three rounds.

I would say any one of the girls that played in the U.S. Open last week would probably be really glad it's three rounds this week because they get a bit of a breather before they have to tee it up.

Q. This tournament has been around since 1986 and there is not many regular events on the Tour left that a Nancy Lopez won, or a Juli Inkster won. This list of past champions here, including yourself, is quite impressive. What does it mean for keeping the history of the game alive, this tournament's list of past champions?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it does have a list of great past champions. You know, even the Bay Course here at Seaview is kind of a throwback golf course as well.

You know, I think it's great that we've had an event in this area for that long. I wasn't aware that it was '86 actually. I was playing with a younger player yesterday, and when I said that it had at least been here at Seaview since '97 or '98, she thought anything in the '90s was 100 years ago.

It's great that this tournament has been such a big part of LPGA history.

Q. You've supported and mentored many Australian players on tour, including Hannah who has won twice this year. How gratifying is it for you to see their success?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it's been really special and rewarding for me just to be a small part of their careers, and to see them as amateurs and -- you brought up Hannah's name. Last week at Lancaster Country Club, that was her first when she came -- she won my scholarship in 2015. Her first ever trip to the United States was to watch me play at Lancaster in 2015.

So I remember even the words she said when we first drove in on the first practice round day. She's come so far in not really that long a period of time. For me it's just been really rewarding to watch her journey, Minjee Lee's journey, so many other girls out here. Karis Davidson, Grace Kim, have all been scholarship winners.

So I'm a wreck watching live scoring or watching the telecast these days. I feel like their big sister I guess, but I know what my parents went through watching me in live scoring all these years.

Q. So as an example, Hannah is here this week. When you see her this week, as playing together, what's the conversations going to be with you and Hannah this week?

KARRIE WEBB: We had an Aussie dinner last night, so all the Aussies in the field got together last night. So that's always fun. A bit of banter and catch up.

For me it's not as often now. I think the Aussies are probably as tight as they've ever been out on Tour. They're all really good mates. For me, I love catching up with them when I can.

Q. I just wanted to go back to the Olympics for a second, ask the captain a question. How do you view your role during that time in Paris in terms of how you will most help the players?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think it's obviously a very different role to like a Solheim Cup captain. I don't get to pick the team or do anything like that.

I think my role, along with Stacey Peters, who is sort of -- she's behind the scenes doing all the majority of the heavy lifting -- is that we just want to create a team atmosphere, even though we're not -- we're still just playing individually over there.

We're not staying in the Village, so we're just trying to create as much of a team atmosphere as possible and for them to really feel like they're at the Olympics.

For me, growing up as a kid, the Olympics, you know, I had a cousin that represented Australia in women's basketball. I grew up not thinking I would ever make the Olympics, but golf being back in the Olympics is super exciting.

I think we just want everyone to feel that those two weeks.

Q. You were just saying that you don't know if Australians have ever been closer on Tour. What do you attribute that closeness to?

KARRIE WEBB: I don't know. I think the young ones that are out now, they all played amateur golf together. I think differently to when I was coming through and we had Shani Waugh, Rachel Hetherington out here, we didn't do tons of overseas trips together. If money wasn't there we never got sent overseas much.

So if we weren't representing the same state we didn't really bond as much, but these girls have traveled all over the world prior to turning pro together and have formed good friendships.

Then I think the big thing that sort of brought the core of the them together was International Crown last year. That team was a really fun team. I think everyone had a great

time. It sort of just poured out to the rest of the Aussies on tour.

Q. Just along the lines of the Olympics, what would it mean as well being a part of that team and coaching for Australia to medal and potentially win gold at the Olympics?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think on both the men's and women's we have a really good chance to medal. To win gold would be even more special.

I think -- I don't know what happens in the U.S. when an athlete medals, but in Australia medalling in the Olympics means your sport is gonna get more funding from the government.

So it's hugely important. When the Australian government at the tippy top of their priority list of who is going to get the funding, it's how did you go in the Olympics.

We only get to compete for two medals going against swimming. They're probably 30, 40 medals. It's important. Is it more important than winning majors? I don't believe so.

But as funding goes from the Australian government, it is more important.

THE MODERATOR: Just taking us back to your victory here, what do you remember most about that year and winning this tournament?

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, it was a little bit of a come-from-behind win. It was a year that was super windy all three days. The greens were probably a little bumpy so it was more -- you know, it was a test of patience probably more than some years here.

I just remember in the last day having a chance but an outside chance, and it was just blowing. Got off to a really good start through three holes. I think I was 3-under through the first three.

So just taking advantage of that, and I think setting a number in the clubhouse. I think I was two groups ahead of the last group, so it was hard to chase on this day because it was just so difficult.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thanks so much, Karrie, appreciate it.

KARRIE WEBB: Thanks.

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