

The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Thursday, November 9, 2023

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Brooke Henderson

Quick Quotes

Q. All right, I'm here with Brooke Henderson after the first round at The ANNIKA. Brooke, great round today. Can you walk us through your round and the many birdies you had out there?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, today felt really great to be making a lot of birdie putts. Nice to see the ball go in the hole. And especially on my back nine today, which is actually the front nine, made a lot of birdies coming in, and bonus to get the one on No. 9. It was a long one and definitely glad to hit the hole because it was cruising.

No, it's fun. I feel like my game has been trending in the right direction for a while now, and nice to see a good day happen.

Q. You hit 18 out of 18 greens today, too. Was that kind of a goal going into today, and maybe what you practiced heading into this week to help that happen.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, up until this year ball striking has definitely been a strength of mine, and hasn't been as sharp as I would like the last couple months.

I made an iron switch not too long ago, and as I mentioned, kind of trending in the right direction. So to hit all 18 greens is kind of more what I used to be used to a little while ago.

It feels amazing not to have to get up and down and give myself a lot of birdie opportunities.

Q. And you've had good history here: Two top 10 finishes. Something in particular you like about this course and tournament in general?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love this event. It gets better and better every year. To have Annika's name attached to it this year is really, really cool. You know, I think they just treat us really well, and this golf course is a lot of fun to play.



It can be challenging, but can also provide a lot of birdies, so hopefully just make bunch more birdies on the weekend and see what happens.

Q. How is it playing out there? I know this course obviously last year the rain. Hurricane coming through. Usually it's firm and fast out here. Makes it a little challenging. It's pretty receptive it looks like. How different is it playing than years prior, not including last year?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, today wasn't that much wind compared to other years, so that was nice, too. Especially with an afternoon tee time to get away with no wind out there.

Like you said, it's very receptive, especially compared to other years. You can definitely be aggressive and attack some pins that otherwise you wouldn't have been able to.

I think that's why you see the scores so low today, is because everyone was making a lot of birdies and being aggressive. See how it plays out next three days. You know, hopefully more of the same for me.

Q. I know it feels like it's been a quiet year for you. You still played some solid golf, let's be honest. To get this kind of low one in this tournament, such a strong field, good purse, and then going into next week to start to get some momentum, what does that mean? What does that tell you about where you're heading ahead of the rest of this week and next week?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, definitely trending in the right direction, which is really exciting. You know, I'm trying to finish the year out strong. Three events, including this one, so hopefully just keep doing the things that we're doing and keep seeing improvements and better results.

This is definitely a great day and a bit of a confidence booster. Hopefully just keep going.

Q. How have you stayed patient? Obviously equipment change period, but recent iron change and



really trying to dial in that ball striking. How have you kept yourself in check a little bit? I know you're pretty competitive out there.

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BROOKE HENDERSON: For sure. I love these new irons. They're great and they've definitely given me a lot of confidence these last few weeks and over in Asia as well. I really started to play more like myself, which was really exciting.

To get those birdie opportunities, maybe not every putt falls, but just to have more birdie looks is my goal. Definitely been doing that recently, so hopefully, like I said, just give myself a lot of good looks these next three days and see if I can go low.

Q. When you're preparing for an afternoon tee time and you see two 63s and a 64 already on the board, what's going through your head?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's always tough to play in the afternoon when you see those low scores already posted in the morning because you feel like you're already really far behind.

So just try to stay patient and stick to your game plan. It was nice. I wasn't doing too too much on my front nine, but on the back nine I really gained some ground so that was fun.

Q. I was going to ask about going out there on the front nine. You made some progress but not a lot. How difficult was it knowing what was out there already to stay patient?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, I talked to Brit coming off the 18th green, which was my 9th hole of the day. We just said, we're doing all the right things. Just got to stay patient and stay within ourselves and just see if we can make some putts fall here on the back nine and make a climb, and we were able to do that.

Q. Was there any, not consciously necessarily, but any subconscious switch that got flipped after that little conversation?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think so. I was trying to do it earlier but it did take a little bit of time. I think that's golf. There is always going to be challenges and you're not always going to play as well as you would like. You're going to have to dig in sometimes. And I feel like I was able to do that today.

Like I said, it was a great start, and hopefully just keep on improving.

