

# Meijer LPGA Classic

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Blythefield Country Club

## Sadena Parks

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside the press room here at the Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give. Joined by one of our sponsor's exemptions this week, Sadena Parks.

Got in here, you won the John Shippen Invitational in the women's division. Just tell me how excited you are to be back here at Meijer and playing golf.

SADENA PARKS: Yeah, most definitely. It's my first tournament back since I took the time off to work on myself. So it's the first LPGA event back. I'm amped, excited. Some of the girls acknowledged they're excited to see me out here, if I'm going to be out here more often; that is my goal.

He earned it. I earned this spot here, so I just want to hold that and carry on this week and see what happens.

**Q. After taking that much time off, how much did it fire you up to be able to win the John Shippen and earn this exemption?**

SADENA PARKS: It just shows that the hard work that I'm doing, it's paying off. That's really it. I'm trying to keep it in the moment, keep it simple, stay focused. Like I said, it's the first LPGA tournament back in a really long time, so getting back in my element, feeling like I earned the spot, and making sure I keep that same energy.

**Q. What's different from the last time we saw you tee it up on the tour?**

SADENA PARKS: Gosh, you could say a lot, but most importantly, my maturity level. I experienced so much on and off the course, and whatever I experience off the course I'm going to make sure I can carry what onto the course in a positive aspect.

Just like I said, I worked a lot on myself as well, so I'm going to take that and learn a little bit and make more birdies, have a few chip-ins.

I'm just trying to manifest good thoughts and just envision

good moments. That's it.

**Q. Had you played much of this event before? Have you been out here to Blythefield?**

SADENA PARKS: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I remember Juan, he's the one in the pro shop. We connected a lot when I was out here playing on the LPGA Tour, so seeing him again is awesome. So bringing back old memories, good memories.

But I remember everything about this course. I love it. I see that you guys changed the layout, a few holes are swapped, so I'm interested to play within that layout and just, like I said, play good golf, hit good shots.

**Q. Having experience here, what makes this golf course really -- the scoring is always low here. Where are the teeth in this golf course?**

SADENA PARKS: For me, I think it's just about putting. This course it's placement shots, so it gives you an opportunity to be smart and doesn't give you an opportunity to just smack balls.

So as long as you play the hole as it's planned out, you're fine. That's where the true madness happens, is on the green, making sure you can make good putts.

**Q. The Shippen, was it played here?**

SADENA PARKS: Yeah.

**Q. Does that give you extra confidence that you're stepping out onto an arena that you did so well on?**

SADENA PARKS: You know what, the confidence is always there, but it's a different field, right, so I'm just making sure they understand it's the same course.

Like I said, it's a new week. Each day is a new day. I'm just making sure I play shots and hit them straight down the middle, hit on the green, two-putt, get out of there. If a putt drops, hurrah type of shit, you know what I mean?



Yeah.

**Q. Can you expand on your time off? Are you happy with the work -- as you say, you see things paying off. Are you pretty happy with the work you've done on yourself?**

SADENA PARKS: Yeah, I seem pretty happy, right? But I'm just trying to stay in the moment, stay confident, positive. Like I said, when I took time off it was mostly just to work on self. I did a lot on the golf game, but not a lot off the course, so I think it's paid off.

I think there is a lot of work that I still need to do, but a lot of the work that was done got me to this point. So I earned this and I'm making sure that I just continue the legacy of what John Shippen has brought as well.

**Q. When your game is going and hitting on all cylinders, what do you see as the strength of your game?**

SADENA PARKS: You know what, who knows. Each day a different, right?

But putting has been my hot spot. Putting has always been the key to my success for winning tournaments on the Symetra Tour, now the Epson.

When I'm in Top 5, Top 10, putting has always done it for me. I'm lucky I got C.J. on the bag this week. He's a member here. Awesome kid. He knows how to read the greens. With our matchup, I hope to go pretty low.

**Q. I was working at Golf Week I think when we had you on a cover years ago. Here you are all these years later. What do you make of this golf journey, where it's led you, and what kind of challenges it's been?**

SADENA PARKS: Challenges, not so much. I think just a lot of opportunities. I met a lot of wonderful people in this space, so I'm just going to continue that.

And making sure I hold myself accountable for when I am in the right rooms, making sure that I can show that I am capable of playing this sport. I am capable of getting W. That's really what I'm working hard towards.

**Q. You mentioned the legacy of the John Shippen, and we're starting to see him in particular carry that mantle and partner with tournaments like Meijer. What does that mean to you? Obviously diversity and inclusion in this game has been a topic for a number of years, but what does that mean to you personally to see some of these companies step up and try to make the**

**game more diverse?**

SADENA PARKS: It's hard to explain. Role models are hard to find in this sport, for me at least, so my first role model I have to say is myself and God right now.

But most importantly, John, the John Shippen has brought a lot to the history of golf, and I really want to continue that. I don't want to put pressure on myself at all from that, but I also know that if I can be a good example, that's really what I'm looking for.

**Q. And I think you are.**

SADENA PARKS: Yeah.

**Q. I feel like when we hear about leaders in diversity in golf your name is always mentioned. Is it different for you now that you have all these kind of younger players coming up that may look to you as a role model? Do you think about that a lot?**

SADENA PARKS: I try not to. I appreciate that as much as a role model I am to other players, and especially younger players coming up in this sport. I know I'm also -- I can be trouble at times, too.

I have to understand that me being me and me being authentically me is the only best way for me to succeed in this sport and exceed what I'm trying to accomplish.

I don't want put too much pressure, but I do understand that there are people that look up to me and really want me to accomplish the goals that I have set out for myself.

I'm just making sure I stay humble, stay myself, stay positive, and go from there.

**Q. With John Shippen growing and diversity in golf growing, both between race and gender, what do you think golf looks like in five years?**

SADENA PARKS: It looks like a lot of wins under my belt, a few majors under my belt. From there, who knows what that could do for women's golf.

So like I said, I'm just trying to stay in the present. I think in five years, if I continue this path that I'm on, it could boom; could be something really exciting.

I don't think I can change a lot, but I think I could bring a lot of excitement to the sport.

**Q. I was about to say, with your outfit, shoes, socks, hat, I love it.**

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SADENA PARKS: Appreciate it.

**Q. Do you think about that at all, kind of changing the narrative of what golf is for men and women? Kind of this very strategic box of collared shirts and whatever, and you're out here in Jordans and a baller hat. Is that intentional for you or is that your style? How do you hope that will rub off on to other women who play golf as well?**

SADENA PARKS: You know, it's so funny. It's hard to explain that, but it's just the element and the culture I grew up in. If I go home to people that I grew up with, this is how we dress, this is how we look. We bring a little bit of our culture.

Like I played basketball, so the high socks has always been in the mood. Js, I used to play ball. Ball I have to say was my first love, basketball was my first love, so Jordans on my feet is just like no question.

I love fashion as well, so, again, me being authentically myself and showing that a little bit, it just comes natural to me.

**Q. Would you ever want to own your own women's golf brand?**

SADENA PARKS: I want to do a lot of things. I'm a mess. I'm telling you, I'm trouble. I want to do so many things in this sport. I know the sport has so much to offer, it's brought so much to me, so I want to kind of broaden that to the other girls that are growing up that don't know much about it and help them expand, and also understand they can bring so much to the sport as well.

Again, just showing who I am, being a good example, that's all I could hope for right now.

**Q. One last question: What's your favorite part about playing on this course, and what do you think that do you well on this particular course?**

SADENA PARKS: Listening to my caddie. (Smiling.) I'm telling you, I don't think -- I'm strictly a player. I tell people all the time, the wind circulates here, just swirls, so you don't know if it's down our into your face or crosswind.

Having a good caddie and having C.J. has helped out tremendously. Listening to him, knowing where to place it, keeping things simple, that has worked out for me on this course.

This course does want to challenge you at certain points,

but for me, if I just keep my head down, put a good putting stroke on it, I think I can shoot well.

**Q. I think every golfer has some chance meeting, some opportunity, some spark that got them on the path. You talk about loving another sport, but what was the spark that set you on this path of golf?**

SADENA PARKS: The spark for me? I mean, I can go really deep on this, which -- yeah, the spark for me is that there hasn't been an African-American women that's won an LPGA event. That's my spark. That's my ambition.

Not saying that I can be the one and the only one, but I would want to be that one, so that's really what I'm motivated to do.

So that's my spark, what keeps me going. Like I said, I really do want to make some good noise out here, just be a good example.

**Q. That was your spark even as a youth, or did something else get you going?**

SADENA PARKS: Yeah, at an early age. Again, how I grew up and what we understand about the game of golf and what Tiger brought to the men's tour, my dad kind of instilled that in me. I wanted to play basketball. I thought I was going to be a WNBA star. Good track athlete. I did a little soccer, baseball.

But my dad really instilled that golf is a good path for me. Like I said, puts me in the right rooms, gives me great opportunities, and now it's cool that you get to play golf with some of the legends who do play basketball as well that understand the importance of the game, too.

So having those conversations with basketball players and understanding that they really want me to accomplish the same goal I want to accomplish is very motivating.

So that's my spark, is just to make sure that we all continue the legacy really.

**Q. First event back. I know you're probably trying to manage the expectations. What are some the goals here?**

SADENA PARKS: My goals on the course? If I can hit a fairway I'm happy. You know, I'm telling you, you just -- it's just easier to make sure you can execute that approach shot. The rough out here is pretty long, it's pretty thick. I want to make sure I'm not getting entangled in that.

My short game saves me, but at the same time, if I can



minimize that and give myself a great birdie opportunity,  
that's really what I'm looking for this week.

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