

# The Chevron Championship

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

## Brooke Henderson

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here with Brooke Henderson at the Chevron Championship. You can see the big grin on her face getting in a selfie with the GOAT, Lorena Ochoa back here.

Welcome to the desert. I will kick off by saying Brooke, had some exciting Hall of Fame announcements. How cool it to see Lorena back here, out on the tour where she belongs now?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's so cool. Lorena was a huge role model for me growing up. I have a poster up in my childhood bedroom, and being a Ping player, too, always someone I looked up to.

Happy she got into the Hall of Fame, and it's nice to see her here this week.

**Q. Someone that certainly you seem to have followed in her footsteps as giving back to the game, as enjoying the game. I think it says a lot for what she did outside the ropes just as much as inside the ropes. Your thoughts on that?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, absolutely. When I was able to play in Mexico the couple times a few years ago, to see the impact she's had on kids there and the community, it's really -- I kind of get chills because that's amazing to see all the hard work she put in and all the amazing outcomes she's been able to improve some of the lives down there.

**Q. This week back in the desert in Rancho Mirage for the Chevron Championship. You have come close to this title. You have a lot of experience here. The runner-up two years ago, and this is your eighth start here. Overall what's the experience like coming here to the desert and teeing it up at the season's first major?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, to be here, major championship, it's always amazing. And just the beauty that surrounds this golf course and the golf course

itself, it's always an incredible feeling.

I played a pro-am this morning, and walking you up to 18 green and by the Dinah Shore statue and right by Poppy's Pond and just seeing the Wall of Champions, too, thinking about Sunday afternoon and all the fans that will fill those big stands is just an incredible feeling.

I definitely look forward to it every year, so hopefully this will be a good year, and I'm just excited for the opportunity.

**Q. It's an exciting year. Chevron has come in and really stepped up the presence here. It is bittersweet I think is the word we're all saying about moving the tournament, but how special would it be, or how extra special is it this year knowing it's the last year here at Mission Hills?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, as you probably heard from every player that sat in this chair, it is a little bit sad to leave behind the tradition and history that this course and Poppy's Pond has. It would definitely be an amazing chance to have that last spot in history of making that leap into the pond.

That would be very cool.

At the same time, very grateful to Chevron for stepping up and helping to push the women's game forward, bigger purses and well-run events, so it's definitely a step in the right direction I think in terms of growing the game, which is exciting.

But definitely going to miss this place.

**Q. This week you've opened the season incredibly strong. No finish worse than 11th, four top 10 finishes, four top 6 finishes. I do know you're coming here with a new club in the bag, a new driver. How are you feeling as come to the desert?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's definitely been a strong start, which is really exciting. Especially after last year wasn't my best year it was important to get off to a fast start. I've been able to do that so far.



Been in contention and played in a couple close to the final groups, which is always fun and getting close to the lead on the weekend. So hopefully continue that the rest of the season.

Yeah, I do have a new club. 46-inch driver will be in play this week. Gripping at the end, which is also another big adjustment. It's been good.

I'm looking forward to hopefully hitting it well this week and putting myself back in contention.

**Q. I know you said you were testing drivers since last year, when did you finally settle on the one that you have now, and what difference can you tell when you're on a monitor in terms of distance and accuracy?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, so it's definitely been a big process starting last year when the announcement kind of came out that there was going to be the rule change.

Went through a lot of different shafts and weights, et cetera, et cetera, but was able to I guess early January late December to pick one that I have in the bag this week that I felt was going to be the right club.

Definitely miss my 48 driver, but this one, it's good. I think as I get used to the timing and the rhythm of it I'll be able to gain back some of the distance that I lost.

It's just a little bit of an adjustment now, but moving forward I think it'll be good.

**Q. Did you consider putting it in the bag earlier ahead of a major?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I've played over 46 inches since I was 15, so I was going to use the 48 up until I couldn't anymore. But it was nice to have such great finishes with it coming into this week.

Yeah, I'm going to miss it, but definitely excited moving forward. I feel like I have a solid driver in the bag, and hopefully it'll do the job.

**Q. How much distance are we talking about?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, I was able to switch to the TP5X ball early this year, too, so I was able to gain some distance that I lost by switching to the 46. It's only a few yards, and if the fairways dry up around here, then it shouldn't be too big of a difference.

**Q. Technique-wise you mentioned about gripping at the end of the grip now. What has that done as far as the difference between gripping down like you have in the past?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, the thought process on gripping at the end was to gain back some yardage that I lost by choking up, so definitely -- when I talk about timing, rhythm that's part of it, you know, just getting used to that feeling at the end.

But it's been working out so far.

As I said, it's definitely a big adjustment since I choke down on everything else, but I think it's what needs to be done to get some distance back.

**Q. I was just wondering, you talked about the driver stuff. Chevron obviously has increased the purse this week. A lot of history as well this week. How do you block that all out and focus on golf specifically? What are some techniques or how are you going to have more of a laser-like focus on just golf once Thursday rolls around?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, exactly. I feel like I'm at peace with the driver now and I'm just excited to be playing in this championship for the eighth time, to be able to step up on No. 10 tee, my first hole tomorrow with Lydia. Just excited to go out, and hopefully both of us can make a lot of birdies and play some great golf.

This year has been a strong year so far, so just excited to hopefully keep that going. And I think around here you have to hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens if you're going to play well. The rough is very long and it's always a challenge, so definitely trying to keep it straight.

You know, hopefully if I can start off with a good round tomorrow, carry it on through Friday, and then hopefully on the weekend I can put myself in contention and compete for another major championship, because that would be pretty cool.

**Q. Thinking about just a quick one on Poppy's Pond. Obviously a very iconic celebration in the game of golf. Have you allowed yourself to wander to Sunday night and what it would feel like if you could make that leap?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I think everyone that gets invited here has it thought. How would they jump or what that feeling would be like and how the fans would react. It's definitely crossed I think every player's mind. It's definitely a bonus of this week.

It's super fun and super cool tradition we've had here over the last 51 years or something like that, so a long time. But at the same time, you really got to just stay in the moment and string four solid rounds of golf together, and hopefully Sunday afternoon on the back nine if you have the opportunity, just give it your all and see what happens.

**Q. Obviously you've had a remarkably strong start to the season. Curious what's been the key to that consistent play for you?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, in the off-season I tried to put in quite a bit of work with my team on some areas that I was a little bit disappointed in last year. Was able to make some big gains, which is really exciting.

I think when you see hard work pay off it feels really nice, and hopefully we can just continue to put that hard work in and continue to see some results. I feel like I'm really close to getting the W, so if it happens this week, that's amazing. I feel like it's right around the corner if not this week.

**Q. What areas did you and your team work on in the off-season?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: A lot of short game. You know, also a lot of testing drivers, et cetera. But short game I think is where I felt like I could really make the biggest difference in my game, so spending a lot of time around greens and just kind of mentally my mindset was a big change as well.

**Q. You mentioned I guess in Japan at the Olympics how tough it was being away from your dad, your coach. Did that play a role in things, that you got to work with him in the off-season?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that was great that he was down in Florida and we were able to put in some solid work one-on-one while he was in person and not via FaceTime. I think that was really important, too. Just having that support there was really nice. We have been able to work well apart, too. He's not here this week; he's up in Canada.

But he's always there and I always feel that support, but having him right beside me has made a big difference, too.

**Q. I forgot to ask the specs on your driver. What do you have?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Good question. (Laughter.)

Other than it has a Ping head and the same shaft but

shorter than my 48, that's pretty much all I know.

But --

**Q. How many different shafts did you test?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Oh, a bunch.

**Q. To wind up with the same one.**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it is a lot.

**Q. About a dozen?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Oh, more.

**Q. Oh, wow.**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, but this one works, so...

**Q. Did you test different heads, too?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah. So this is the same head that I was using, too, so a lot of things are similar. Ping did do some work up in the grip and things to make it feel a little bit better, but for the most part, a lot of similarities.

**Q. Do you think you might on the rest of your clubs end up gripping them the same in time?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I thought about it. After I was able to make this adjustment pretty easily I was considering might be easier just for timing and rhythm and the way it feels to start to gradually grip everything at the end. That's something time will tell.

**Q. You mentioned about getting off to a fast start this season. What do you think contributed to that?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: A lot of hard work in the off-season. I didn't finish off the season -- finished the season off pretty well last year but the middle wasn't the best, so I definitely wanted to come out to a faster start.

I think I put on a lot of focus during the off-season on making sure that I got some solid rounds under my belt early and some good finishes.

**Q. About your driver, obviously it's going to be the big question this week for you. When you were fitting and testing, did your fitter look at maybe adding a little bit of weight to the butt end of the club to maintain some sense of balance?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, there is weight in the end



of the grip. For further questions on that you have to ask Ping and Scott, my rep.

But do I know there is weight in the grip to help with that feeling of like as if I was choking up on the 48.

**Q. With the elimination of the wall on 18th this year again, how will it change your strategy, and if so -- will it change your strategy, and if so how?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, with the grandstands back there, with the wall back there, if you were in between clubs you could always hit the longer club and know that you had a backboard there if you needed it.

Not that that chip was easy though, so to be honest it did make the shot coming in look a little bit easier, but it is really important to make sure you get the right distance on that hole if you want to have an easy birdie, either chipping up or two-putting.

So I think visually it makes a big difference, but in terms of what you physically have to do, it's about the same.

THE MODERATOR: I'll wrap up with one more question: A great highlight this week of our last week in Rancho Mirage is going to be having the fans back. You always you have a strong fan base here. I'm going to put Gordy back here, who I met at the pro-am party last night. He is the head of the walking scorers and a proud member of Brooke's Brigade, so I told him to come out and listen. What does it mean after two years of strangeness here being able to celebrate this last event with fans and be able to do it right?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's amazing. Even out in the pro-am early this morning I had people following along, and it's just a great feel. You miss the energy and the adrenaline rush that you get by having the fans here, especially on 18 with those huge grandstands and having them filled on the weekend is such an amazing feeling. Hopefully people come out and watch, and hopefully Brooke Brigade is pretty strong too, because I always enjoy having their support.

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