

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

Minister Mona Fortier

Liz Hoffman

Garrett Ball

Press Conference



Women's Open. Garrett is kind enough to give me a tour afterwards of the club, and I must say that the team at Golf Canada and the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club have done an outstanding job at preparing this course for the tournament.

In Ottawa our community is very fortunate to be able to enjoy so many incredible events and festivals throughout the year, and to bring millions of people together with their shared love for sports, theatre, music, food, art, culture, and of course many other things.

These events have significant economic impact across the region, and help draw tourists from all over. The festivals attract tourists and bring revenue to local businesses in our communities, drive local economic growth, all while creating good jobs in our regions.

Many organizations play a role in bringing festivals and events to Ottawa, and today we are here because of Golf Canada. Golf Canada represents more than 270,000 golfers and 1,400 member clubs across the country, and plays a significant role in the lives of Canadian golf fans.

Early this summer the RBC Canadian Open men's tournament took place in Toronto in celebration of the 111th anniversary, and it was also the only Canadian stop on the LPGA and PGA circuit, and drew in golf fans from all over.

Now, the CP Women's Open has been Canada's national championship tournament since, when? 1973. And it is televised in over 160 nations, and has playing members from over 30 countries.

Because of the pandemic, Golf Canada had to cancel both tournaments in 2020 and 2021, which meant of course lost revenue for the cities hosting the events, as well as less tourists supporting our small businesses.

And now that we are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that we continue to ensure major events and economic drivers, like the CP Women's Open and the RBC Canadian Open, have access to the right tools and funding to continue to thrive and grow in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome everybody. Welcome to the media center at the CP Women's Open. Very special announcement today. A little bit different from a lot of our press conferences during today and yesterday, but very special, very important.

Please welcome the Honorable Mona Fortier, president of the treasury board and member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier, speaking on behalf of the Honorable Helena Jaczek, minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, FedDev Ontario.

We are going to introduce our next speakers following up.

MINISTER MONA FORTIER: Thank you very much, Dan, and welcome to Ottawa everyone. Merci beaucoup to the media who is here, and for this wonderful day that starts this wonderful weekend.

We brought the sun, so it's good news.

It's really wonderful to be with all of you today on behalf of my colleague Helena Jaczek, minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Before I continue, I would like to recognize that we are here in Ottawa, and the land on which we gather is the land of the Algonquin (indiscernible) people.

I also want to recognize of course Golf Canada's Liz Hoffman and Garrett Ball, and also recognize Brian Crawford from the RBC Canadian Open and Ryan Paul from the CP Women's Open.

It is very exciting for us to be all gathered here at the CP



Now, to do this, our government created the Major Festivals and Events Support Initiative to help these events rebound from the pandemic and welcome back visitors.

This brings me why we are gathered here today. I am pleased to announce that the government of Canada, throughout FedDev Ontario is investing nearly \$4.4 million in support of Golf Canada.

This investment is supporting the return of CP Women's Open, which has just begun, and provided support to the RBC Canadian Open which took place in June.

Now, Golf Canada is improving its digital presence, enhancing on-site offerings, and accommodating more attendees with this additional funding from our government.

The RBC Canadian Open in June was a huge success, and even, I understand hit a new tournament record with 132,000 attendees. That's pretty incredible.

With the additional funding, Golf Canada was able to purchase a temporary two-storey viewing platform and trailer system that acted as a hub for on-site fans at the RBC Canadian Open, allowing more tourist to take part in this event.

This hub will also be used here at the CP Women's Open, along with the introduction of digital signage, which I will see on my tour. A new app and charging stations.

Now, these installations will be reused for future tournaments, making Canadian Open events better than ever. Now, it's wonderful to see these events return to help bring excitement back into our communities. Congratulations to Golf Canada, and also break a leg to all participants in this CP Women's Open.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you Minister Fortier.

Next I would like to pass it to Golf Canada president, Ms. Hoffman, for remarks.

Liz.

LIZ HOFFMAN: Thank you. Today I have the privilege of thanking the federal government via FedDev Ontario for their investment in Golf Canada's professional events.

So special. Thank you so much for being here. Our national professional championships are significant to golf in Canada. The impact of two years of cancellation has been felt coast to coast. After two years, we were determined to put on tournaments that thank the fans,

volunteers, and spectators for their perseverance over the past two years. We believe we have put on shows and will put on a show here that achieve just that, and set us up for success for the future.

I can tell you that when I arrived on the grounds on Sunday, and then again for the skills challenge and here again on Monday for the pro-am, I could not stop smiling. I felt like I just couldn't stop smiling. Here we are again. You know, it's been a while.

As the national governing body for golf in Canada, we have developed a strong partnership with the federal government. We welcome the opportunity to work together and value their support in every way.

The FedDev Ontario investment will have a profound impact on the RBC Canadian Open and the CP Women's Open going forward through enhanced spectator experience, profitability, and long-term viability, and most importantly, innovation.

This investment in our game is a game changer.

And now, over to you, Garrett, our chief operating officer, to highlight the benefits that everyone will see from FedDev Ontario's investment as they walk through this fabulous facility here.

GARRETT BALL: Thanks, Liz. I hate going last. The two of you did an excellent job reiterating everything.

I will mention when you said 4.4 million the hair on my head rolls, and that's is difficult thing to do. (Laughter.)

I want to take you back to 2021. Our team was approached by FedDev Ontario in assisting to make the two tournaments, RBC Canadian Open, CP Women's Open. At the time the slogan was provided to us was bigger, better, faster, and safe from COVID-19.

With the leadership of our tournament directors, Brian Crawford who is sitting there having lunch, and Ryan ball, Brian Newton from the operations side, we sought out to develop an idea that would do just that.

With the support of FedDev Ontario, Golf Canada has invested in several things. You highlighted a lot of them. The one I'm most excited about is the tournament-specific mobile application, which the fan experience has just been upgraded twofold.

An array of digital greens and spectator player wave finding technology that we didn't own in the past, and now have those assets at our disposal.



A new double Decker hospitality structure. Unfortunately was not in use at either tournament this year, but we will but will be in place in 2023 and it will be the first of its kind in Canada, particularly for a golf tournament, so we're so excited to see that.

Several new hospitality trailers, which we have dubbed the ParVs that were launched at the RBC Canadian Open, well as a mobile traveling heritage trailer. We will see that on the tour. It's just located just behind us here near the first tee.

Simply put these are innovative assets that will benefit the championships for the foreseeable future. As you said, in fact, at the RBC Canadian Open in June these assets were major factors in the announcement of record sales, record crowds, and record media impressions, and those were all objectives of the Major Festivals and Events Support Initiative.

So Minister Fortier, I would like to provide you with a sincere thank you, and please extend that to Mr. Jaczek. For years we have been told Ottawa is government town and it's going to be a tough market to sell tickets to. I would actually like to declare that Ottawa is a golf town, evidences by the record crowds that will line the fairways this week.

We're expecting over 70,000 fans, which will be a record for a women's golf event in Canada. Certainly FedDev Ontario's investment has made our events bigger, better, faster, and stronger, and so thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Garrett, thank you very much. Minister, thank you, and Liz as well. We will turn it over to the room for questions.

Q. First question is for Minister Fortier. Tourism Ottawa reports that Ottawa has not recovered from a tourism perspective since the COVID-19 pandemic. Numbers aren't up to the 2019 levels. As the local MP, I am curious, what are your hopes and expectations for this week's event and what it might do for local tourism?

MINISTER MONA FORTIER: First, thank you for that question. Yes, Ottawa was hit hard. Not only by COVID, we will remember the convoy, which brings a lot of pressure in trying to attract people back to Ottawa and showing that it is a safe city.

I had meetings with of course Ottawa Tourism and all of the different organizations, and we're all working together to make sure that we do have events like Golf Canada

coming here for the Opens and making sure that it is safe, but also a attracts tourists. I hear it's working, so this is a good event, and we will continue of course to encourage Canadians and organizations to come and discover Ottawa and its great place to attract tourism and events.

Q. As a follow up, I'm curious, normally funding for national sports organizations comes from Heritage Canada. What drew the FedDev to golf in particular?

MINISTER MONA FORTIER: Well, thank you for that very. I might want to also demonstrate that the government of Canada during the pandemic really wanted to support many organizations, but also workers, businesses, and Canadians during the pandemic.

We thought it was very important that not only during COVID, but after COVID we needed to support organizations like Golf Canada to have these events in different cities across the country.

Now, we have to know that these two events -- this one taking places and the one in June -- are in Ontario and in FedDev's geographical place.

GARRETT BALL: Catchment.

MINISTER MONA FORTIER: Catchment, thank you. That is why FedDev is supporting these two events and funding Golf Canada the amount of \$4.4 million.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Liz, Garrett, thank you for joining us as well. We do have a copy of the press release, English and French. We'll have had on the walls. This is the end of our formal program.

MINISTER MONA FORTIER: I just want to add one thing. Thank you to the media for being here. It's also helping to show how Ottawa is really a great destination for tourism, so thank you again for being here.

THE MODERATOR: Couldn't have said it any better. Thank you everybody for joining us here in the room.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports