

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

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Morgan Pressel
Kay Cockerill
Karen Stupples
Dan Hicks

Press Conference



commentator, Dan Hicks, who was on the broadcast 30 years ago when NBC began its modern run with the USGA at the U.S. Women's Open in '95. Go ahead, Dan.

DAN HICKS: Thank you, Jamie. It's been a long time since those two straight Annika Sorenstam wins back in the day, but it is an honor to be able to be covering this championship again.

We've done a lot of majors, had the privilege to do a lot of majors at NBC, men's and women's majors. And the bait is always for the guys, you know, what's your favorite major? If you had one major to win, what would it be? I think you get a variety of answers on the men's side.

But I think I can speak for the women on this call. They've played in all of them, and I think this one is different. I don't think there's a doubt of which one is the biggest, most prestigious. Maybe Karen Stupples would disagree with that.

But I think this is by and large the one they want, and it's always really cool to come back and do the U.S. Women's Open because it's just absolutely, I think, the most prestigious championship they play, and to put it all on the line is really cool to be able to be a part of it.

Looking forward to getting back to Erin Hills. It's been a long time since I was there. It's been 14 years since we did the 2011 U.S. Amateur when a guy by the name of Kelly Kraft beat Patrick Cantlay there.

I still remember the golf course. It was just this big, huge, grand place, just unbelievable, massive piece of property. And then it got obviously some more exposure through the years when Brooks Koepka won his first of two straight U.S. Opens there. I remember there being lots of runoffs on the greens, some blind shots.

I think the ladies will speak more to it, but I think it's going to be a big study session for the girls to get in there and kind of learn this place because there's a lot going on as I recall.

I'll just end my little intro spiel here by saying that I think it's going to be -- one of the storylines I'm really looking forward to is Nelly Korda, can she, gosh, finally put it together at a U.S. Women's Open.

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to today's NBC Sports U.S. Women's Open media conference call. In a moment we will be joined by play-by-play commentator Dan Hicks, as well as some of our analysts and on-course reporters who know what it takes to win big events, Chevron Championship winner and U.S. Amateur Morgan Pressel, AIG Women's Open Champion Karen Stupples, and two-time U.S. Women's Amateur champion Kay Cockerill.

NBC Sports will present close to 100 hours of live U.S. Women's Open Championship in-studio coverage next week from Erin Hills across NBC, USA Network, Golf Channel, and Peacock. That includes a pair of featured groups each morning and afternoon on Peacock.

For the first time at a women's major, NBC Sports will be utilizing drone tracing technology in partnership with Rolex, so another great production enhancement for our folks in the truck.

Also for all four days of coverage NBC Sports will present The Rolex Hour, as well as sponsor the final hour of uninterrupted coverage each day across USA Network and NBC.

Our coverage will begin with Golf Central live from the U.S. Women's Open on Golf Channel next Tuesday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. eastern. That's going to start 20 hours of live studio coverage on-site at Erin Hills.

We will open it up to questions from the press shortly, and if you would like you can queue right now by pressing star one on your key pad.

But we will begin with opening remarks from each of our speakers. We will start with our lead golf play-by-play



For all the talent and all the wins and all the victories that she's had, it's just been the U.S. Women's Open that has really kind of been one of those championships that she hasn't put it together.

We all remember the 10 she made at the par-3 at Lancaster last year. I think she's got a couple of top 10s in her great career in U.S. Women's Opens, which is really underperforming for Nelly.

Maybe this will be the kind of canvas where she can let the driver loose and show us what she can do at the biggest championship they play. Really looking forward to it.

With that, I'll send it back to Jamie.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Dan. Appreciate that. We will move it along next to our lead analyst Morgan Pressel.

MORGAN PRESSEL: Thanks, Jamie. Hi, everyone. I cannot wait for the U.S. Women's Open next week, as Dan said. This is the championship that I grew up as a youngster making 10-foot putts on the putting green dreaming about one day winning the U.S. Women's Open. I came close; didn't quite happen.

But it is, it's a special event for me, where I first kind of got the jump start on my career as a youngster at Pine Needles.

It's just my favorite championship, my favorite -- the golf courses are the best. The setup is just tough. I love a great tough test of golf, and I have not yet been to Erin Hills, so I'm looking forward to seeing that for the first time next week.

Obviously watched Brooks Koepka win the U.S. Open there, what was that, 2017, and it seems from what I've seen to be a bomber's golf course, but I definitely want to see some more of the nuances in person and will depend a little bit on whether rain and things like that on how the golf course itself plays.

But we've had some tremendous storylines already this year, some young, bright stars. Mai Saigo winning the first major in a five-way playoff. It was just kind of a wild day there at the Chevron Championship; and of course following the dominance of Japan with Yuka Saso winning this championship last year, some great young rookies have done very well so far this year.

You've got Nelly, Jeeno, just some long bombers that you'd think might suit a course like Erin Hills, their games. It's

going to be really exciting to see and a golf course that I think fans are somewhat familiar are, but looking forward to showing more with the first incredible technology we have with our NBC team, and looking forward to bringing all the action.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Morgan. Next we will hear from Karen Stupples. Go ahead, Karen.

KAREN STUPPLES: Thanks, everybody. Dan, obviously the British Open was something I had been exposed to much more than the U.S. Women's Open, but I very much remember Laura Davies when she won the U.S. Women's Open, that it was such a big deal, much more so than winning the AIG Women's Open.

That's always in the back of my mind growing up that that was something that I wanted to do. Then of course when I came over here for college, it became a really big deal because I could see it on TV. I could watch it. I could feel the excitement around it.

Every one that I've played in, it just feels massive. I'll never forget my first one was at Prairie Dunes, and walking from the green to the next tee was lined by spectators all wanting autographs. It's the first time I thought, oh, I really need to get my own Sharpie here because this is taking a long time, because there were so many people out to watch. You really got a sense of how big the championship was.

I have very fond memories of it. Also have had some heartbreak, same as Morgan does, at this event, because we've both been close and didn't quite get the job done. So we know what it's like to be there in the moment and to feel it, of the biggest championship in women's golf. So it definitely has that feel for me.

I can't wait to get to Erin Hills to see it because I feel like it would be the kind of course that I personally would like. I like a longer hitter's course. It does have that feel with the wider fairways, more generous that lodger players might have a great option or opportunity around here to take advantage of their length, which so many courses take that away.

But that will be fun to see. I do know that it's going to be quite strategic in places, too, lots of blind shots, some blind tee shots and blind approaches, so strategically placing some of your tee shots will give players the best opportunity.

Yeah, I'm excited to get there and be part of this. Working with people like Morgan and Dan and Kay, it's always a pleasure to be part of it. Having Tommy Roy produce it, as



well, it's always going to be a pleasure. It's going to be a fun week, and I can't wait for it to happen.

THE MODERATOR: Lastly, we'll go to Kay Cockerill.

KAY COCKERILL: Thanks, Jamie. I think the U.S. Women's Open is my favorite event to cover, and I've been lucky enough -- this will be my 23rd time covering it for television, and I was lucky enough to play in five U.S. Women's Opens, and like Karen and Morgan, I remember the first one I played in.

I qualified. I was in college and qualified to play in the 1986 U.S. Women's Open at NCR, and I was completely overwhelmed and so nervous and so out of my element because of the white tents and the ropes and all of the big names that were there.

There were a lot of amateurs that play in the U.S. Women's Open, that qualify their way in, and it's an impactful moment because it really can change your life.

For me, I missed the cut. I was so nervous. But that experience helped me better handle the U.S. Women's Amateur later in the summer that I would go on to win. I think if you talk to any woman or young girl who's playing in the U.S. Women's Open, they would say it's probably one of the most impactful events in their life, whether they go on to big careers as a professional golfer or remain an amateur golfer or go on into business.

Like Dan, I was there in '95 at the U.S. Women's Open at The Broadmoor, and I think the biggest thing that really hits me is the fact how this has become such an international event. Really in the early years it was primarily dominated by U.S. players, but since '95, Sweden, England, Korea, Thailand, Japan, Philippines have been represented.

So it's truly an international event, and I think worldwide, women look to win the U.S. Women's Open because it's so impactful and so meaningful.

I actually have played Erin Hills. I played it in 2012 en route to Black Wolf Run for the Women's Open that was there. Honestly, I played it under a heat wave. It was 100 degrees. I think I had heat stroke. But I remember it being an impressive, massive property, and I can't wait to see how the women tackle it next week.

Jamie?

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Well said, Kay. Thank you very much. We are ready to open it up to questions from the press.

Q. Thank you, guys, for doing this. Starting first with Karen but then going to maybe Morgan and Kay, on the topic of young players, Karen, I thought yesterday's semifinals of the NCAA championship were epic in terms of the drama and the shot making. How close are we to just a complete dominance by young golfers, and where do you see the difference in the young golfers coming out today versus the ones that defined the sport back in the early part of the century?

KAREN STUPPLES: I think what you're seeing with particularly men's and women's golf, but obviously I'm closer to the women's game than the men's game, is the depth of great players that are out here now and the gap between top amateur golf and professional golf is definitely closing because of the technology that's available to these amateurs.

It's the same as they have in the pros, the college teams. They all prepare them for the moment. They get to show on TV as you saw yesterday. Everything about the amateur game is moving in a more professional direction, and the top amateurs literally could go on to the LPGA Tour and compete any given week.

We've seen amateurs in the past come out like Lydia Ko, Morgan, you were one, just was able to come and compete from a very early age. I think in the women's game, we mature very quickly, and we don't have to hit it a long way physically to be able to compete as well on the LPGA Tour.

I think that's why you see a lot of youngsters able to come out and play successfully. But in general, I am insanely impressed with how they conduct themselves on the golf course, how much they enjoy playing the game, certainly the players that I'm following this week.

Particularly impressed with Lottie Woad, obviously the world amateur No. 1, Mirabel Ting, the world No. 2 who's just won The ANNIEKA Award. These players that will have a successful professional career because they're so organized in their preparation and how they go about their business, and that's something that as an amateur I certainly didn't know how to do.

It wasn't until I became a professional that I saw what the professionals did and thought, oh, crikey, this is what I need to do. But the amateurs now, they all have that because they're taught it from a very young age.

So the teaching, coaching and equipment and access to TrackMan data has been huge for these players.

Q. Morgan and Kay, do you think there's less deer in

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the headlights type feeling among the young players when they come into a U.S. Women's Open for the first time compared to when you guys did?

MORGAN PRESSEL: I would say probably not in the sense that anytime you talk to a player who is at a U.S. Women's Open for the first time or even an amateur playing in a professional event for the first time, there is still a deer in the headlights -- it's hey, I'm sitting on the range next to people who I've watched on TV for years, or in the locker room. I remember that feeling being there.

I don't think that feeling necessarily goes away because it's just so different from what you're used to. So there is still that kind of star-struck feeling that I think a lot of these young amateurs have, and it's what is so fun about the U.S. Women's Open, both Opens, is the opportunity for these players to qualify and to get into these fields that are truly open if you play well enough to qualify.

Following up kind of on what Karen said there, it's just such a difference from -- I'd say even in the last five years, certainly, with the changes to amateur status and NIL and things like that. I walk up and down the range at the Augusta National Women's Amateur and it looks like I could be at a Tour event. They all have launch monitors. They all -- most of them have an agent kind of hanging around. They have their coach. They bring their coaches with them. That didn't -- that wasn't part of amateur golf when I was competing in those events.

So I think those sorts of things have really prepared some of these amateurs better to actually make the transition to professional golf, and certainly I think collegiate programs have really just invested heavily in their offerings for these young players, as well.

All of that kind of combined just in the last five years especially but even in 20 years since I was playing amateur golf has just made a huge difference to the ability and the talent level of these players.

KAY COCKERILL: I think Karen and Morgan verbalized it really well. I think that just across the board, these kids are mentally, physically prepared for a great career in the game, and they're ready younger. The learning curve is a lot quicker for them than it was for us when we were younger.

But look at Asterisk Talley who competed and was in the mix at the Women's Open last year and was low amateur. She would go on the summer and make it to three USGA finals, winning one of them with a partner at the four-ball.

It really highlighted her abilities, and Asterisk is just one of

those fearless players. A lot of these kids are just fearless that bomb the ball and just like -- I think so hyper competitive and so focused. That's why we're seeing them play at such high levels.

Q. For the ladies, are there players out there that look forward to this sort of an examination, to this sort of test, the way the USGA sets things up?

MORGAN PRESSEL: I always looked forward to it. I can really speak for myself. I said it kind of a little bit earlier. But I was never a player who loved a birdie-fest. I loved the tougher the test, the better, par is your friend, grind it out.

I felt like my short game was an important part of my game, and I just thought the tougher the test, the better for me. I relished the challenge.

So from my perspective, I loved it. I'd say some players may get frustrated by it, but that's also what makes the U.S. Open so great and how it separates players.

KAREN STUPPLES: I would say for my part that I also loved the challenge. I think as a competitor, you want to put your game up against the very best that golf has to offer, whether it's who you're competing against as individuals, your fellow competitors, or when you're competing against yourself on any given golf course.

Certainly USGA setups challenged me in every single way possible, mentally, physically, and everything about it was always a challenge. That's what I wanted for myself as a competitor. I wanted to see how I stacked up in those moments.

That was part of the thrill of the competition for me and the thrill of actually playing golf itself.

KAY COCKERILL: I think the courses that they pick, particularly in the last 10 plus years and looking to the future, are hugely inspiring courses that -- people ask you, oh, you won the U.S. Open, their follow-up question is where did you win, and someone like Paula Creamer, when she says Oakmont, oh, people know what kind of venue Oakmont is and what it means to win there. And to be able to say you won at Olympic Club, Pebble, and the ensuing sites, Riviera, Inverness, Oakmont again, Pinehurst. Those are courses you step on to the first tee and you can't wait to see how well you're going to do because you know how great this golf course is.

When you play maybe some courses on Tour day in and day out, they're okay, they're just some good courses, they're in good shape, but they're not these pinnacles of

golf and these churches of golf that you just aspire and can't wait to play, and you know if you make your mark that week playing one of these hallowed venues, it's really going to resonate.

Q. Morgan in particular, is there a name? Is there a player? Not to put you on the spot, but someone that comes to mind that would look forward to this sort of mental and physical test?

MORGAN PRESSEL: I think that you're looking at a player like Nelly, Jeeno, Lydia. These players who are ultimate grinders and truly have games for every golf course.

I've kind of over the last year kind of looked at the three of them as kind of the three real dominant players who have won the biggest events, and to see the three of them kind of coming down the stretch in an event like the U.S. Women's Open I think would be really, really special for the viewers to watch all of their talents come together.

But I think it's a player who -- Karen just talked about the mentality of it all. It is as much of a mental test as it is a test of every single part of your game and your physical abilities. It is how can you stay in it, how can you stay focused.

The longest rounds of the year are going to be at the U.S. Women's Open. You know that right off the bat, longest practice rounds, it's a long week. So those who can best manage their time, best manage their focus, best manage their frustration and their emotions under what I would think is the most pressure they'll have this year, those are the ones who are really going to rise to the occasion and the moment.

Q. I ask this question to everyone on the call. I know it might be a little bit off the beaten path, but the LPGA is set to name a new commissioner in the upcoming weeks and months, and as we head into the thick of major championship season, I was just wondering perhaps what advice or what is maybe something you would like to see the new commissioner implement into women's golf as it continues to be on an upward trajectory.

KAREN STUPPLES: I'll jump in. I think it's an exciting time for the LPGA to have somebody new coming in with a fresh set of eyes, and I think that hopefully they bring a level of excitement with them for the product of women's golf.

I would love for some of the things that made the LPGA Tour great in the first place also be recognized. I think Mike Whan, obviously now has a new role with the USGA,

but I think that he had it right when he came in and brought on the Act Like a Founder mantra that the players really kind of took on board, because it created an atmosphere of -- I don't want to say gratitude, but it certainly was -- there was a vibe of enjoying being out on the golf course, be happy to be there, thankful to the sponsors that they believed in women's golf and everything else, and I think that that's a good place to come from.

I think that I would like to see the new commissioner strive to create more fan involvement, get more fans on the ground, and just grow the game from that area again like women's golf and sort of with a fresh set of eyes.

KAY COCKERILL: The LPGA through the years basically has had to scratch and claw their way to improvement and to hold on to what they have. Things have never come easy to women golfers. So what we've been able to build a foundation on, I think, since Mike Whan came to the scene and really pushing the purses to go higher, getting more television coverage, those are hugely important.

I think there's been a nice trend these days for the purses to keep rising, especially with the majors, and even with the regular tournaments, pushing towards \$3 million purses being a minimum versus one and a half to \$2 million. A lot of sponsors are adding in accommodations for their players or flying the players privately like the owners of Black Desert Resort did, getting the players up from the Chevron to their tournament.

It's just building what we have, and again, getting more people involved in the game. It's a tricky business. The commissioner has to answer to all these women, and you can never make a whole body of women happy, and you have to engage with the sponsors and with the people and keep selling our sport as a place that is a place where -- it's just a positive environment for young girls to aspire to either work with or for the LPGA or do something in golf or become players themselves.

The game is growing, and the big growth in the game is coming from juniors and women in the game, so the LPGA is in a perfect position to use that to keep expanding and growing.

The other thing, they've started to implement slow play policies. I'm a huge believer that the game needs to speed up across the board with the men and the women. We're starting to implement some penalizing situations. But I'd love to see the game continue to speed up.

MORGAN PRESSEL: I can jump in here, as well. I really think a big part of the success certainly of the LPGA Tour's era through Mike Whan was kind of what Karen mentioned



of Act Like a Founder. It was a culture amongst the Tour of how do we leave the Tour better than we found it. How do we do everything that we can to grow the organization, to get more eyeballs on the Tour, to promote it. Because we do have to work harder, as Kay mentioned, than other sports and certainly men's golf in that sense to get people to pay attention.

Look at the talent that we have on Tour right now. It really is exceptional. So I think between that cultural buy-in from the players through this new commissioner as well as being able to capitalize really on the superstars. We've kind of been waiting for who would be that superstar to break out, and of course Nelly did that with seven exclamation points last year.

How do you continue to capitalize on that growth when women's sports as a whole is just hugely trending upward? How do we join in and continue to grow in a more exponential way?

DAN HICKS: I'll just finally add to just piggyback on what Morgan was saying, I think this is one of the most critical stages in women's golf history. I know that might sound a little bit like hyperbole, but I think it's at a critical time.

I think the sport is growing, as Kay mentioned. The sector of young women getting involved is the largest growing section of the sport right now, and you've got to take advantage of that. You had an incredible year by Nelly Korda last year that maybe wasn't fully taken advantage of, and with the Caitlin Clarks and the WNBA and the rest of the world of women's sports I think exploding, this is the time for women's golf to really make a move, and you've got to be creative.

But there's just so much out there, I think. I see these pro-ams going on. I talk to guys that play in them. They have an incredible time playing with the women. They have a better time, I think, playing with the women than they do with the guys. I just think the women are just so much more relatable out there during the course of the week when they're playing tournament golf, which is saying a lot. So they're open to it.

I just think it's a really untapped resource that needs the right mind in the game right now to really take full advantage of it because it's in a great spot right now.

Q. First for Dan, whether it's in celebration of man, whether it's the memories of the U.S. Women's Open, what stands out when you think of this event, and is there a U.S. Women's Open, one specific U.S. Women's Open that stands out for you over the years of all the ones you've covered?

DAN HICKS: Yeah, there's been some great ones, and of all the men's U.S. Opens that we've had, from Tiger doing his thing to all the great moments, there are some special moments.

I think we alluded to it at the top, this shy Swedish girl named Annika Sorenstam winning back-to-back U.S. Women's Opens. No one knew who she was, and then to do it twice in a row was epic.

Another one that really comes to mind for two reasons is the one at Black Wolf Run when Seri Pak won, which opened the door for the South Korean wave of golfers to come over here and follow in her footsteps. But Jenny Chuasiriporn in that same U.S. Women's Open with the putt she made on the last hole to get into the playoff was just mesmerizing for so many reasons.

She was this Duke golfer; no one knew who she was. Her name was hard to pronounce, but we got it out right.

I think the dynamic and the contrast of Jenny Chuasiriporn and Seri Pak and what Seri Pak's win stood for and what it would become was one of the most memorable ones I've ever had a privilege to be a part of.

Morgan might not like this one, but the birdie by Birdie Kim on the final hole at Cherry Hills was just unbelievable stuff, just what it meant to Morgan, could you see her out there down in the fairway and the disappointment on her face.

It was Brittany Lang in the clubhouse waiting to see if she would have a chance, and then just this incredible lightning bolt that happened was really one of the most memorable ones, as well.

Those are just a couple of examples.

Q. Sorry, Morgan, about that.

MORGAN PRESSEL: Dan, that was an interesting point up there about -- I remember that U.S. Women's Open with Seri Pak and Jenny Chuasiriporn as being the first time I remember watching golf and being really invested on TV and being such an inspirational event for me. So that was just a great point, just an incredible U.S. Women's Open that's kind of etched in everyone's brain.

Q. For Morgan, Kay and Karen, Rose Zhang obviously took some time off for the Stanford stuff. Now she's been injured and has been fighting back. Where do you see her at Erin Hills next week?

KAY COCKERILL: I love Rose. I love everything about



her. She's such a fabulous person. As good as she is on the course, she's even better off the course. She's a person that people gravitate to, and I think she's really great and important for this game, but boy, it's so hard when you have an injury.

She injured her neck. I don't know if it's translated into more problems. But physical issues are -- it's the one thing that's held Nelly back from time to time, and if I look back at someone like Beth Daniel, who was an incredible player and who won 31-odd times, she had a lot of injuries and sicknesses.

Those kind of things just can halt your momentum, and it takes a lot of time to come back from because you have to get the trust back in your body and your capability of hitting golf shots because for a while you compensate and make up for that hurt or that injury.

Often one injury turns into two or three.

I hope that she's in a place where she feels mentally and physically strong, but I'm not optimistic about her potential to really be a viable candidate. She's just missed a lot of golf, and when she has played, it hasn't been very good.

KAREN STUPPLES: I can jump in quickly here, too. I had a really frank and great conversation with her at Liberty National when she was playing there. It was only the weekend before she even went out to play, and she was telling me that she's really focused on graduating college.

This year she's increased her workload. She's going to be picking up more classes. She wants to get that done and graduate, and really she's looking towards next year as her really coming-out party for playing professional golf.

Even though she's been playing on the Tour, she's still been a student at Stanford, but she really wants to get graduating behind her, get that all taken care of, because she values that part of her life so much.

She's really focused on that, but she sees next year as her really -- sort of the real professional golfer Rose Zhang coming out. Right now she's still caught in between the two worlds of being a student and being a professional athlete.

She has all of that going on. She says she's healing. She does have to take a little bit more time to get things loosened up. But in general, I don't know how she will be ready for the U.S. Women's Open.

That being said, she is supremely talented, and you never really know with Rose if she can pull a rabbit out of a hat

and perform well.

But I think she feels like next year will be her year.

MORGAN PRESSEL: I don't know if Rose will be in top 100 percent form when it comes to a couple weeks at the U.S. Women's Open, or next week, I guess, at this point. But every time you continue to put yourself under pressure, especially after having a long break, it's not easy.

But I know that she's worked really hard on her body to get healthy, and at the end of the day, I mean, I played through injury during my career for a bit. It was one of the worst things that I did. So kudos to her for taking the time to rehab, to get healthy.

Kind of similar to what Lilia Vu did. It's not easy for a competitor to step away and prioritize their health that way and miss out on kind of a big chunk of the season.

But I'm definitely happy Rose is back, and she's got just tremendous game and the potential to be a really big star. Already is a pretty big star. But the potential to be something really special.

Q. I wanted to ask Dan, I think I heard on Golf Central the other day one of the roundtables that there might be six viable favorites at the men's U.S. Open at Oakmont. I've got to imagine your preparation chart goes a little bit deeper than that for this U.S. Women's Open. Could you speak to the challenges of calling this knowing that a potential storyline could come from just about anywhere?

DAN HICKS: Yeah, I will be honest, I don't do a ton of women's events every year, so I don't want to say I parachute in because I follow the golf as much as I can, the women's game throughout the course of the year.

But there are so many women that continue to kind of come from nowhere, so to speak, where I think even the beauty of a U.S. Women's Open, and Kay and Morgan and Karen will attest to this, that we don't know what we're going to get. But you know you're going to get some storylines that we're not as familiar with that are just going to pop up, especially with qualifiers which makes the U.S. Women's Open so unique.

It will be my job, a lot of this stuff is done on the run. I think one of the things I enjoy most about the job is not only prepping for some of the storylines you think you're going to get, you're probably going to get, the established players, but when these players pop up, you just kind of throw yourself into their storylines and you try to get a hold of their coach or you try to talk to their parents and you talk

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to them and you talk to the caddie and you just kind of put together their story, and my thing and NBC's thing through the years has always been about storytelling, and if you don't care about the people that you're watching, then you don't really care.

It's my job mainly in this whole role is to kind of make their stories come alive and kind of let people know who they are. That's really one of the most enjoyable things I get to do at the U.S. Women's Open when those unexpected stories come up is kind of jumping in.

I do that in all the sports that I do, whether it's the men's golf or the Olympics especially, when every four years people just kind of come from nowhere and become really well-known and do incredible things.

Hopefully we'll get one of those. You know you're going to have it at some point during the four rounds. Can they last? Can they take it into the weekend and the story just continues to build?

That's what I look forward to doing mostly, but yeah, it's a little unnerving to come to the U.S. Women's Open and try to prepare as much as you can for the well-known names, but at the same time you know you're going to have to prepare on the fly.

THE MODERATOR: That's going to do it for our allotted window of time on the call. Thanks, everybody, for joining us today. We'll have a copy of the transcript of the call available on NBCSports.com/pressbox later this afternoon.

Again, our coverage of the U.S. Women's Open will begin next Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. eastern on Golf Channel with Live from the U.S. Women's Open, and the championship coverage gets underway from Erin Hills Thursday at noon eastern on USA Network.

Thanks, everybody, for joining today, and have a great afternoon.

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