

# LIV Golf Chicago

Wednesday, 7 August, 2024

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

## Phil Mickelson

Captain, HyFlyers GC

## Mayor Mary

## Alexander-Basta

Village of Bolingbrook, Illinois

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome. Thank you so much for joining us today. We're here to talk about LIV Golf Chicago, which is coming very soon. We are joined by two special guests today. We are joined by Mayor Basta of Bolingbrook. Welcome, Mayor.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Good morning. Thanks for having us.

THE MODERATOR: We are also joined by six-time major champion and the captain of HyFlyers GC, Phil Mickelson. Thank you guys both for joining us today.

Phil, I just wanted to kick it off with a couple questions for you that are specific to Chicago. Chicago is going to be an important event for you and for the HyFlyers for two reasons. First and foremost, you guys are going to be filming your very first Pros Versus Schmos on-site at the event. Your YouTube creations and golf videos are very candid and very you, which fans love to see. Can you tell us a little bit about your approach to YouTube and Pros Versus Schmos and what fans can expect from that first recording in Chicago?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I'm very new to this, and YouTube isn't really the world I grew up in. I'm kind of learning a lot from Bryson, who's really spearheaded a phenomenal campaign on YouTube and a great following, and I'm trying to learn as we go.

But what I see it being is a great opportunity to interact and engage on a more intimate level with the fan base. That's why we're trying to open up the opportunities to be a regular schmo and come play against a pro and get full handicaps and deal with the smack talk and deal with the challenge of the golf course and deal with all the things that go along with trying to play against some of the best in the



# CHICAGO

world. So it's a fun opportunity to embrace and something that is new to me, and I'm learning as we go, but we have really a great model to follow in Bryson. He's so personable and easy to engage that I've learned a lot. We've had a lot of great conversations and he's given a lot of insight.

Like I say, this is new. We're going to have a little groundbreaking event in the village of Bolingbrook and have our first kind of interactive Pros Versus Schmos.

This series is just getting started. I've basically done one or two of these and we're going to do a few more and then in the off-season be able to do a few more, and hopefully in the process of these shows answer some questions, give a little bit of insight behind the scenes but also some instruction and help people enjoy and play the game more.

I think there's an opportunity to embrace it, and like I say, Bryson has done a great job and somebody that I'm going to try to model after. Not that extent; I'm not going to be to that level, but it's a great model to look up to.

THE MODERATOR: Is it true that any fan can go to HyFlyersGC.com and sign up for a chance to be the schmo and to play with you?

PHIL MICKELSON: That's all you have to do. You just have to go to LIV X and click on the HyFlyers and follow our team and then submit a video. I want to see your personality. Can you handle it? Are you going to be sensitive? Are you going to be a little soft? I want to see if we can get the right fit, get the right personalities to make it entertaining and enjoyable.

I'm curious not just on the two that make it, make it to the finals and into the competition, but also I'm curious to see the videos of those that are submitted that don't make the cut. I'm kind of curious how those go, as well.

THE MODERATOR: I also understand that HyFlyers is going to be partnering and working with bunkers in Bagdad at LIV Golf Chicago, which is an organization that donates golf equipment to our troops. HyFlyers has already donated over 13,000 golf balls and has sent golf clubs to over 106 veterans worldwide. Four military units have already reached out for equipment, and I understand fans



in Chicago can help you, help the HyFlyers and help Bunkers in Baghdad by donating a dozen golf balls at HyFlyers drop boxes, and if they do that, they get grounds passes for the day to come to the tournament. Can you tell us a little bit more about your partnership with bunkers in Bagdad and how fans can get involved in Chicago.

PHIL MICKELSON: Bunkers in Bagdad is one of the best organizations that we've come across because 99 percent of revenue goes directly to the men and women who have served or country to help them get involved in the game of golf. Over 15 million golf balls, over 1.5 million clubs have been shipped out and sent to current and former service men and women of this country.

I just find it a true honor to be able to be a part of that. There's some great synergies, as well, because Callaway has been a huge supporter of this program for many years, and I've had a longstanding relationship with Callaway. It's another great synergy.

All the guys on the team really enjoyed it, so if you bring some clubs or balls and come out to LIV Chicago, all you have to do is donate and we'll give you a pass for the day, and hopefully it'll help fans get more engaged and understand how people in this country are helping others and doing really good things.

It's a source of pride for us, the HyFlyers, to partner with Bunkers in Bagdad for all that they've done and all they continue to do.

THE MODERATOR: This year you brought on Andy Ogletree as part of the HyFlyers, and Andy has been very vocal about your mentorship and how much you've helped him with his game. You've seemed to really embrace the team concept with LIV Golf and being a captain and really taking the guys under your wing. Can you tell us a little bit more about life on LIV and how you've enjoyed being a captain and being part of a team?

PHIL MICKELSON: It's been a lot of fun. It's different. It's unique and something I haven't experienced in over three decades since college with the occasional one week for the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup, which was an incredible source of enjoyment, as well.

I'd like to say, we saw Andy at UK in the last LIV event lead, lead most of the final round. I want to cut him some slack because he's been dealing with some injuries this year, and now that he's just getting through it you're starting to see how good this player is. I think he's one of the 25 best players in the world, and you're going to start seeing it because he's not battling the injuries anymore.

He won three times on the International Series last year. He's a closer; even though he hasn't had the year that he wants, he's getting there. He's getting back to the level of play that we have seen and we expect of him, and I think he's going to propel all of us to a higher level.

That's the great thing about the team format is how each teammate can lift each other up and help each other on the lows and continue to push on the highs and get the best out of each other. It's been really a lot of fun to be a part of that.

**Q. Phil, I talk to a lot of people in the Chicago area about golf and people love the game, and it seems I have a lot of people just say, I hate it, I can't stand the men's pro game anymore, there's so much greed in the game. This split has really caused problems. People are disillusioned. You were the first one to leave really. What can you do personally - I know there's these negotiations going on, but what can you do to try to get the game back together and to get people feeling more positive about golf?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I would agree we're in the middle of a disruption phase, but where we're going to end up and where we will be when this gets sorted through is going to be exponentially better than where we were in the path that we were on and I'll give you a couple of examples. Our age group of fan base had increased from 60 to 65 years old on the PGA Tour, and our fan base is after of that on LIV. We're targeting a much different, much younger generation.

We are able to do things on-site like what we're doing at Bolingbrook in a few weeks by having -- we're able to do content. We're able to do extra things on-site that we wouldn't be able to do that are more interactive with the fan base, and so that's going to be an example like in the Pros Versus Schmos where we're competing and bringing in fans into the game and making it a part of the scene and a part of the experience. That's going to be different and unique.

And the global aspect of it is going to be totally different.

What's interesting about golf is the fan base -- all of you probably watch the Chicago Bears, you're probably fans, but I don't know how many of you actually go out and play football. The NFL has transcended to a point where many of their fans do not participate but they love to watch. Golf is a unique sport in that almost all of our viewers are participants and play the game. We haven't as a sport over the 30, 40 years that I've been a part of professional golf transcended out of that into the arena of people that don't necessarily play or participate.

I think that the team aspect has potential to do that, and that's one of the things that we're going to strive for, especially if you are, for instance, the Rippers, a local -- you're from Australia. As soon as you have an identity to a region, people in Australia, whether you play golf or not, they want to know how the Rippers are doing because that's their identity; those guys are from Australia.

We're not seeing it yet, but I'm saying in time when it plays out, that's one of the areas that I think we're going to do differently and better than the path we were on, and lastly the global aspect of it because in any sport, like NFL, baseball, whatever, your schedule is controlled by the team, and so when you go to the cities and so forth, you know who's playing, you know what those matchups are going to be like. In golf we have not had that.

The compensation that we've all received has been basically to give up 14 weeks of the year and commit, say, okay, wherever you tell us to go, we're going to go. We're going to go and compete, and that's all throughout the world. So now when you are Hong Kong and you sign a deal to have LIV Golf come, you know who you're getting. You know who's playing there. Many of the best players in the world are traveling throughout and bringing professional golf throughout the world.

Now, in the U.S., we've always been U.S. centric, so we're not going to see, notice or feel the difference, but when you go to these regions and you see kids that are looking at you in a way that they can't believe you're here, those are the areas that we have an opportunity to inspire and grow the game to a younger generation all throughout the world that we couldn't reach in the previous model.

**Q. There's certainly improvements to make on the PGA Tour, no doubt about it, and certainly a lot of people think that that global aspect is really important and that that's been neglected by the Tour over the years. But when do you think this is going to get resolved? The longer it goes on, the more disillusioned the average fan becomes with the game. It's reflected in ratings, the LIV ratings and the PGA Tour ratings, the Masters ratings, the majors.**

PHIL MICKELSON: For 30 plus years, I did everything I could to help build the PGA Tour brand, and I would be brought in to help close the deal with many CEOs when they were on the brink of potentially signing a deal, whether it was Bob Diamond at Barclays, it was Rick Waddell at Northern Trust, it was the guys at Shell, Marvin Odom. There were about seven to ten times that I would come in and try to close the deal. That was my way to help trying to build the PGA Tour at that time. I'm no longer part

of the Tour.

My focus now is building the HyFlyers team, the HyFlyers team culture, growing the game globally through LIV Golf, and the team aspect has a much longer term -- it's hard to foresee this, but in the decade, let's say, when we have our facility that we'll eventually have, when we have the facility that has world-class instruction, physical training, physical therapy, we'll have the ability to bring in players that wouldn't have access to world-class training, physical therapy, instruction, and bring them into the facility and give them these opportunities.

All teams will be able to do that, and they'll be throughout the world, and these kids that don't have that type of support system and infrastructure will have an opportunity to be part of the professional game of golf.

My focus has changed to building something different. I tried for decades internally to do it with where I was at, and I feel like this is a better way to go to achieve the things that I want to achieve in the game.

**Q. You've played in about every major venue tournament-wise that Chicago has had in your career there. Bolingbrook isn't very far from Cog Hill in miles, but it doesn't have the tournament resume that a lot of the other places have here. Do you know much about it? Will everybody be coming here kind of cold and it will be a new challenge for everybody?**

PHIL MICKELSON: So I have not played Bolingbrook. I'm looking forward to getting back, very much so.

We have played some venues throughout LIV that are truly world class and cover the gamut, from long and hard to tight and a lot of character. We've played many Tour courses. We're going to Greenbrier next week; we've played Mayakoba where they play the Tour; we're playing Hong Kong, Sentosa, where there have been many tournaments played.

I also think there's a value to playing at a course where the public can play very easily and have that connection again, that interaction to the everyday fan, and let them come out and watch us play a course that they can go play the next week and experience and compare, compare their games and compare how it went.

I think that is another way to create a connection.

My time in Chicago, every time I go, I always try to take a little bit of the Chicago culture because there's so many great things to do in the city. So whether it's going to a Cubs game or a Red Sox game or whether it's going to the

museums or what have you -- last year we went and had one of the truly greatest dining experiences in the world at Alinea. So we came in early and had a chance to experience that.

I just think that there's always something special and unique to do in Chicago, and we try to set aside a day to take advantage of that. It's another reason why I love coming back to the city.

**Q. I just wanted to follow up a little bit on your comments about building the HyFlyers and your vision for LIV. Obviously it's not short-term. I'm curious where your game fits into that. You don't seem like you're putting in any less effort. You're working at it. It seems like you play a lot when you're home. Obviously on-site you're working with Andrew and things like that. I'm sort of curious, obviously we don't know when your contract ends, but do you plan to keep playing for several more years beyond whenever that contract is and as the HyFlyers keep going and obviously you're still exempt in the majors for a while?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, my involvement with the HyFlyers is going to be long-term and probably through the rest of my life. I'm an equity shareholder and I'll have the ability to be intricately involved in the growing out of the team throughout the course of the next many decades. But as far as my career, I'm realistic with where I'm at. I'm 54 and I'm putting in the work.

I also have a unique opportunity because of the fact that physically I've been able to withstand injuries and been able to be in better shape to do something at an age that nobody else has done, but I have not played at that level that I need to.

I see glimpses and my teammates see glimpses of me being where I expect to be able to compete at this level, but I'm also realistic with myself, and if I'm not able to I'll step aside and let somebody come on in and take the HyFlyers to new levels.

I'm in every major on the regular tour next year, and I'll be in three of the four majors for the next six, seven years. I would love to compete and give myself a chance to win in those, and I also want to build this out and create a culture that is sustainable and that people strive to be a part of.

How I do that, whether it's internally as a player and so forth, or whether it's strictly from the outside, I'm going to be intricately involved with the HyFlyers going forward probably the rest of my life, and then my playing career I'll be realistic where I'm at, too.

**Q. I really quickly wanted to follow up and ask, what has not gelled for you do you think in terms of your own game? You mentioned flashes of brilliance; you're close sometimes. It seems like you get the ball out there plenty far. Things like that have not left. But what are you not doing do you think?**

PHIL MICKELSON: You know, surprisingly if you look at the analytics, it's been my short game that's just crushed me the last few years. I've been like last in scrambling on LIV. It's been a staple of my game throughout my career, and the last couple years it's been the reason why I have not scored and had the results. That's where I've been focusing.

I finally had a nice little turnaround. If my short game is sharp, I'm going to be in contention. But I've been throwing four, five shots away a round because of short game, and that's been something I'm not used to, and it's probably why it's been harder for me to overcome, because it's different. But ball-striking wise and shot-making abilities are on par with the level needed to compete, but my short game is not. That's why I'm spending a lot of time trying to turn that around.

**Q. A couple of questions building on the Pros Versus Schmos and how to engage fans. In terms of the television audience, how do you bring that across to the TV audience? I know you guys want to grow that desperately because of where it is compared to the regular tour. Then long-term when this final deal is actually made, assuming it is made in our lifetimes, what do you want the tour schedule to look like, how much LIV, how much regular tour? What would it look like to you?**

PHIL MICKELSON: So how that all plays out is really not up to me. I'm not part of those conversations. At 54, my schedule and my desires are going to be totally different than most of the players. So bigger picture we have to do what's best for the players on LIV and the best for the players throughout the game of golf and not just focus on a 54-year-old, so my desires aren't really relevant, I would say, in that conversation.

The first part of your question was --

**Q. How you grow the television audience in the short term. Can anything you do on the golf course translate over to that, or do you have to do something different?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, television and viewership for sports, especially golf, is changing. So the old-school media and way that we've done it, which is be on a network

and so forth, is not the way of the future. It's going to be more digital, more streaming. Our new partner, because our new partner, whoever that is after this year, I think is going to be more focused and centric there because of the opportunities that will open up. But I am not part of those television contracts.

I know they're in the middle of negotiating viewership relationships and partnerships going for next year. I'm not a part of that, so I don't really have any great insight for you check be check. I just know that the old-school model is not where LIV Golf is headed. It's not where the future is going, and we don't want to get stuck in a rut.

**Q. I know you haven't played Bolingbrook before, but have you played an Arthur Hills course?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I played one of his courses at Palmetto Dunes for college tournaments. I think he's a wonderful architect. I think he's done some great stuff. I did not know he was the architect for Bolingbrook, but that to me is pretty exciting because I think he's very credible as an architect, and I'm excited to see what he's come up with.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you another course-related question. Bolingbrook is going to be our 23rd different course that we've played on LIV and then Maridoe the next week will be the 24th. I don't know how many of those courses you've seen for the first time, but I wanted to get a sense for how much you've enjoyed going to these courses, these different courses that are just -- that haven't been a regular part of your career for the most part?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think what I've enjoyed most is the different styles of courses. I think it's important to really test all players' style of games, and you don't want to have a layout that is redundant and repetitive where it only favors the long hitters and only favors the short hitters or the rough is so heavy. We have a great mixture of courses with very little rough or that are short, tight and quaint like Hong Kong with a lot of character or long big courses like Sentosa.

I like the variety, and I think the thing I like most about Bolingbrook is it's a public course and anybody can come out and play it, and that was something that the USGA started and tried to do many years ago to integrate some public courses into their rotation so they came to Torrey Pines, they went to Bethpage Black. I think it's been a really positive thing that everyday fans can go out and play. It just feels a little bit more intimate and just creates a better connection, and I'm happy that we're doing that.

It's not to do it every week. Like I said, we need to continue doing what we're doing with a nice variety of different style of challenges for the players.

Before I go, I do want to thank Mayor Basta and the entire village of Bolingbrook for embracing us and bringing us to this competition here in a few weeks, and I just want to thank you for that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Phil.

We'll shift over to Mayor Basta. Can you tell us how excited and what the vibe is in the village of Bolingbrook right now knowing that the very first LIV event is coming to your town just around the corner?

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Yes, absolutely. First of all, thank you all for joining us this morning. It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Bolingbrook as we prepare for this exciting world-class event, the LIV Golf tournament right here in the Bolingbrook Golf Club. As many of you know, Bolingbrook has a rich history of fostering community spirit, embracing diversity and promoting excellence. Our golf club known for its course and top-notch facility stands as a testament of these values.

Hosting the LIV Golf event is not just a proud moment for the club, it is a proud moment for the entire community, and this event provides us with a unique opportunity to showcase the beauty and the hospitality of Bolingbrook to visitors from all around the world.

We're thrilled to welcome some of the best golfers and sports enthusiasts to our town. It's an honor to be part of an event that brings together top talent, passionate fans, and the global golf community.

We're committed to ensuring that this tournament runs smoothly, and all the participants and visitors have a memorable experience. Our team has been working diligently to prepare and we're very confident the Bolingbrook Golf Club will be a fantastic venue.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the LIV Golf series for choosing Bolingbrook, to the sponsors, partners for their support, and the media for joining us today and also to share the exciting news. We're very excited for a successful tournament and a wonderful celebration right here in Bolingbrook, and we're already on the final countdown.

**Q. We understand that ticket sales are trending incredibly well and it's shaping up to potentially be one of our biggest domestic events to date. Can you talk about the atmosphere and the excitement in**



## **Bolingbrook right now?**

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: You know, Bolingbrook is extremely exciting. This is the buzz around town, if you will, is do I have my tickets, how can I volunteer, how can I help. Everyone is really excited to surround this event, welcome all of the guests that we have, and we truly do have a diverse and beautiful community, and we're all very much looking forward to highlighting that.

**Q. It must be very exciting for you to have these great world-class players coming to your city. I know the way that tournaments work, sometimes tournaments pay a site fee, and sometimes communities maybe contribute to the tour to bring the tournament there. It's all public record and everything, so I was just curious about how did that work? Did LIV pay you a site fee or do you have to pay them? How do the economics break down for the taxpayers out there?**

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Well, we did not pay a fee, so to start that out. They came, they toured the club, they loved the club, they loved the course, and that is how they came about to be utilizing the facility.

Obviously there's a cost to that, correct? Our clubhouse is out of play and out of use for the members from the 8th through the 16th. It will be taken over for the golf tournament, and there is obviously financial monies or fees that are associated with taking over the golf club A to Z. So yes to that.

**Q. Is there an amount that you could tell us?**

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: You know, it's really based on consumption of what is used, how much is used throughout the days, so there's not a -- I don't have a full amount because we don't know what we don't know. We don't know how much usage, we don't know how much food, we don't know how much beverage. We'll find out closer to the date.

**Q. Just curious if you know how many tickets have been sold and what kind of a gallery you expect each day?**

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: So we do not have specific numbers, and it's my understanding that LIV does not share those specific numbers at any venue. We do know that this event is expected to exceed all others, so we're very excited to be a high-level event host, if you will, and we'll, I guess, find out when we find out, but we don't have specific numbers.

We are told that ticket sales are on par or exceeding par at

this point.

**Q. You have to have parking lots set up. How many cars are you ready to park? You have to have a clue on how many people are going to roll into Bolingbrook.**

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: We do. We do have remote parking lots. LIV handles all that. LIV and their partner operators handle everything.

So the lots are remote lots. They're very large lots and they do have coach shuttle buses that will be transporting attendees back and forth. So there will be no parking in the area of the golf club because it is a residential area and we don't want to clog up those arteries and displace our residents. The golf club lots will be limited to players and caddies, and all of our attendees will be on remote lots.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you guys so much for joining us today. I know I can speak on behalf of LIV Golf and that we are extremely excited to come to the village of Bolingbrook, and we will see you there next month. Thank you so much, Mayor, for your time today.

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