

TMRW Sports Media Conference

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Mike McCarley

Founder & CEO, TMRW Sports

Craig Kessler

Commissioner, LPGA Tour

LPGA TMRW Sports Announcement

REGINA O'BRIEN: Welcome to SoFi Center. My name is Regina O'Brien, and I serve as chief of staff at TMRW Sports. I appreciate you joining us today as we announce the LPGA and TMRW Sports partnership to create WTGL. Let's take a look.

(Video played.)

MIKE MCCARLEY: Thank you, and thank you all for being here. I appreciate it.

REGINA O'BRIEN: Today we are joined by Mike McCarley, founder and CEO of TMRW Sports, and LPGA commissioner Craig Kessler. Before we get to questions, Mike and Craig, can you please provide some opening comments on today's announcement?

MIKE MCCARLEY: Yes. When we first envisioned TMRW Sports nearly five years ago, it was really about creating these modern media versions of traditional sports and doing it in a way where we could partner with existing governing bodies and partner with the top athletes from that sport, and I think nothing embodies that more than our relationship that we've had in forming TGL with the PGA TOUR, and now what we're excited to announce today is forming the relationship with the LPGA and creating WTGL.

We always wanted these relationships to be complementary, not competitive. For golf, what does that really mean? A lot of you have seen this play out here at the SoFi Center with TGL over the last year or so. We want to make it simple for casual fans who may not be fans of the game of golf, but they're sports fans, and it really ultimately helped the game of golf find new fans in a way that you may not find in the traditional game and attract them in a way that they may not be attracted to the traditional game.



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We wanted to make it simple. Every shot can be seen live by fans who are sitting here in the arena, and every shot will be seen live by fans who are watching on television all around the world.

This environment is an important component to that. It really is very intentionally built to create a gladiators-in-the-coliseum type feel. The shot clock creates a bit of a pressure cooker, too, and with every eyeball on you because there's one shot at a time, you can really feel that pressure, which that comes across to the fans who are here and the fans on the broadcast.

So in TGL and now in WTGL, it's very simple. Like most other sports, two teams enter, and two hours later, one team leaves a winner. Again, it's a modern media version of a centuries-old traditional game. In so many ways what we aim to do is keep one foot rooted in the traditions of the game but the other foot with our partner really trying to help move the game into the future, and that's why with our partners at the LPGA, we're so excited to have Craig here today to make this announcement.

Craig?

CRAIG KESSLER: First of all, thank you. Congratulations, Mike, to you and your entire team on everything you've built. I've been a fan of TGL since day one. Mike and I did a little bit of press earlier today, and I shared, my three boys and I and our neighbors, we had a watch party to watch season 1, episode 1, if you will, of TGL last year, and to now be a part of it is a total honor for us at the LPGA.

At the LPGA, we talk a lot about our four major pillars. It's building trust, fans, visibility, and improving our financials, and I have to say, today's announcement in so many ways is important to our strategy.

I think the platform WTGL will create for our athletes around the world is remarkable. I think that the chance for fans to get to know our athletes and their personalities, again, what a gift to be able to do that, both for our organization, for yours, and for fans across the globe.

Finally, trust is rooted in lots of things, but as you start to get to know people and their passions, their hopes, their dreams, their personalities, which in many ways TGL and

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

WTGL will help to bring out, I think trust will be one of the many byproducts that come from this partnership.

On behalf of our entire team, thank you, and we're excited.

REGINA O'BRIEN: With that, I'd like to open it up to questions.

Q. I'm sure you guys have gotten this question before, but was there any thought on some sort of hybrid league or coed league, or was it just straight WTGL from the beginning?

MIKE McCARLEY: Yeah, that's something we've thought about. It's something we've talked to a lot of different constituent groups about, and I would say it's something that's interesting. I think we wanted to, first off, create a stage, a platform, a real showcase for the women's game and for the top players to really showcase their personalities and provide an environment like this for them, but who knows what the future holds.

I think at some point we'll get to a place where we start to look at alternate versions and other opportunities, but I think first off, we're focused on making sure that we can deliver WTGL with the best players in the world and with the LPGA as our partners in the winter of this year.

Q. How similar of a match schedule length will it be to TGL, and will there also be cities attached to the team names, as well?

MIKE McCARLEY: Yeah, the shot clock doesn't lie, so (audio interruption) that just this morning as the news started to get out, I've heard from most of our team owners who are existing teams in TGL.

We've got, I think, as you all know, six playing now and seventh with the Detroit team being added for next season, plus a lot of other folks from around the world who are interested in seeing what this looks like. So the idea of having city-based teams that reach built-in communities of fans who can become fans of the team and fans of the players who are playing on that team is still part of the general thesis of how we make this work.

You'll see a product that is very similar to what TGL is, yes.

Q. For Craig, I'm someone that covers the men and women of professional golf, so I'm curious to learn about schedules. How do you envision this new league schedule coming together with your current LPGA schedule?

CRAIG KESSLER: It's something we are talking a lot

about. We're also talking about it with our players.

I think as soon as we have something concrete to announce in terms of specific dates, we will.

The important principle to recognize is WTGL will be played during what is traditionally the LPGA off-season.

Q. Craig, you mentioned you had a watch party when TGL debuted. How long did it take before you started fielding requests from LPGA Tour members that they might want to be involved in something like this themselves?

CRAIG KESSLER: Before I had actually started at the LPGA. In between the announcement and start date, the questions came in.

I'll say one of the other things that excites me so much about this, I was very lucky earlier in my career and had a chance to have a front-row seat at TopGolf. I spent six or so years working with the TopGolf team to scale that business, and what I learned when I was there is when innovation meets golf, some amazing things can happen, particularly in terms of growing the game.

I've watched personally and also in the professional role kids pick up golf clubs for the first time at a TopGolf and go on to become avid fans and players of the traditional game. In my opinion, TGL and WTGL is yet one more wildly powerful example of what can happen when innovation and golf meet.

Q. How excited are you to showcase some of your stars and their personalities in a different format?

CRAIG KESSLER: I have goosebumps. I'm so pumped to be here. Liz Moore -- for those of you who don't know Liz, incredible person. She was our deputy commissioner, and none of this happens without Liz and all the hard work she put in to make this come to life.

As Liz and I landed and drove in today, there are a couple of moments in one's career where you pinch yourself because you're so excited about what's to come. This is one of those moments.

I think the chance to showcase our athletes' personalities -- I'll tell you one of my favorite parts of my job is getting to know our athletes both inside and outside of the ropes. They're incredible people, and TGL and WTGL will be a platform to help the rest of the world get to see some of the things I've gotten to see over the last six months.

Q. Is there still recruiting going on, or are some of the



big names already secured?

CRAIG KESSLER: Both. More to come on that.

Q. I was just curious if you know of any stars who have already committed to building teams yet?

MIKE McCARLEY: Yeah, we've got very good conversations going with a lot of the top players, frankly from all over the world, and I think over the next weeks and months we'll be able to start bringing some of that to life and you'll start to see first players and then teams come together. You're going to see them playing on the LPGA Tour starting next month, as well, so I think we'll start to see this come together pretty soon.

Q. For Mike, what does success look like for WTGL in the first year?

MIKE McCARLEY: That's a great question. I think the success of TGL last year was really when you started to see the players come together as a competitive unit and really those competitive juices start to take hold.

The first few weeks they didn't necessarily know what to fully expect, and I think after everyone had one or two of their first matches inside here, they really started to understand it, and I think we'll see the same thing with the best female players in the world.

Lexi Thompson was in earlier today just trying to get a sense -- she came to a couple of matches last year. She tried to get a pretty good sense for what it's like actually playing in here, and I think we'll see that quite a bit over the next year as they get ready for play come this winter.

Q. With the LPGA, obviously, the leaderboard a lot of weekends is superstars from around the world. Does this open the opportunity or potential to grow TGL across overseas in other ways? What are we looking at here? Because this is obviously a very international group of superstars.

MIKE McCARLEY: Yeah, I think that golf is a global game, and that's a positive thing. I think you can see that. The parity, any leaderboard, men or women, any given week, any tour around the world, is pretty amazing.

I think this version of the game, while it may not be one of those things that immediately people who have followed the game for a long time kind of gravitate to, but I think very quickly they get it.

Yeah, there's been interest from, I would say, all corners of the globe. What that looks like over time, we'll see. We're

fortunate to have built here in really this place in the world where most of the top players, both men and women, live. South Florida is great for that, so it does make it fairly convenient for most of those players to make it work.

But will we expand? Will we grow? Will we go other places? Time will tell. But the indication right now is yes.

Q. There's been a ton of reaction on social media to TGL and just viral moments. Is there a moment or maybe a player you look at and you're like, we're going to have exactly that with WTGL?

CRAIG KESSLER: Well, I think that's the point of the show. You've got to come out and watch to see it for yourself. I hope it's more than one player. I think you're going to see the fire in the ladies' bellies show up. I think their competitive spirits will come out.

I think if anybody saw Lexi earlier today on SportsCenter talking about the trash talking that she sees when the men compete, she can't wait for the women to bring that same level of intensity to their matches.

Without giving names, the answer is yes, you will see fire in their bellies.

I think fans will walk away with their favorites, and that's exactly what we want from the WTGL competition.

MIKE McCARLEY: Yeah, I think you'll see the stars coming in may not be the biggest stars coming out at the end of the first season because of the stage that this provides for people to kind of let the fans know about who they are and what their personalities are.

The great thing is those fans may be introduced to a player here, and then they can follow that player when they're on an LPGA leaderboard on the weekend during the season, which that creates this cycle of creating new fans and finding new fans for the sport, which is ultimately what we're aiming to do.

REGINA O'BRIEN: Thank you, everyone, for your time this afternoon. Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Craig. Hopefully you'll enjoy tonight's match.

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