

LIV Golf Chicago

Tuesday, 17 June, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

Caleb Surratt

Legion XIII

Hon. Mary Alexander-Basta

Mayor of Bolingbrook, Illinois

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'm David Kaplan from ESPN 1000 here in Chicago. Welcome to this awesome day for the LIV Golf event that will be here again at Bolingbrook. As someone who's played this course probably 50 times, it is a spectacular place, and it will be a great challenge for some of the world's best golfers. Thank you for being here today and supporting this LIV Golf tournament.

We have a reel we'd like to play for you and then we're going to bring up an outstanding golfer, the mayor of Bolingbrook, as well, and we'll have some fun. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know.

[Video shown.]

LIV Golf is unlike anything you've ever seen. I've attended tournaments all around the United States, and when you come to a LIV event, you're coming to have fun. That's what it's about. You see personality. You see great golf, and you come to a place like Bolingbrook, which is a tremendous host, and you know you are in for an awesome, awesome time.

I would like to recognize some special guests that we have here. Natalie Manley, state representative. Thank you for being here today. So many great members of the Chicago media that are out here today.

LIV is a bold team-based format. That's not what you're used to, and that's what makes it so much fun. Sure, there's great golfers like Bryson DeChambeau and others, but when you have team competition, it makes it even more fun, and then the entertainment, Good Charlotte is going to be here, and your ticket to the event will also get you to the concert, so you will have fun on and off the golf course.

Let's bring up two special guests and learn more about what's coming here to Bolingbrook in August. First, the

LIV GOLF

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mayor of the great town of Bolingbrook, Mayor Mary Alexander-Basta. You hear her all over ESPN 1000. You're on the radio more than I am. You're right here. And professional golfer Caleb Surratt. Caleb, great to see you. Have a seat.

Mayor, let me ask you, when you heard of the interest to bring it here, it's the second year that it's going to be here, your first thoughts about bringing a pro golf tournament with such great players and personalities and fans to your town.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: I was absolutely ecstatic, not for me or for the Bolingbrook Golf Club so much, but for the whole entire community and the village of Bolingbrook. This is an amazing event to bring here. I'm so proud of the staff, the course and everything that we have to offer. So this is just something that hits home because we are amazing, and I think having it here year two is a testament to that.

THE MODERATOR: It also seems like your staff is all in on whatever they need to make this a successful event and fun for the fans. You guys are behind them 100 percent.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Oh, absolutely, especially for year two. Year one, be the staff was very nervous. They knew the bar was set very high, and they were working tirelessly to make sure that expectations -- that we exceeded those expectations, and we did. But I do have to tell you that this year they're trying to raise that bar even further and make the experience here that much greater.

THE MODERATOR: Caleb, what is it like being in a team-based event, even though golf it's you against the course? I watched the U.S. Open the other day, and guys are struggling but it's them against the course. You do that plus play in a team format.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's an interesting concept, something I've liked, especially going from college golf, there's a lot of similarities. Golf is one of those things that ultimately it's an individual scoring game, but then when you add in the team aspect, it makes it interesting because there's nothing that I can do to make Jon score lower or Tom can do to make me score lower. But then you've got to add them all up at the end of the day.

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I think all in all we're trying to play the best golf possible and add it up as a team at the end.

Being on the team allows a lot of -- having camaraderie is something that you don't really get in professional golf, it seems like, and to be able to come out and have great camaraderie with such great players to look up to all throughout junior and amateur golf, career, it's a great thing, an amazing thing.

THE MODERATOR: When you see a guy like Bryson DeChambeau and his 385-yard drives and just ridiculously gifted, what goes through your mind competing against guys like that?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's cool because you look up, and I think the same way a lot of kids and juniors here do, you look up to those guys for a lot of your -- as you grow up, and then in my shoes, to be able to compete with them -- I think when I first got out there, it was a little nerve-racking, but I've become acclimated to it now, and the long drives, it's just extra motivation to try and perform well and win tournaments.

It's cool seeing how guys are really good at a lot of different things, not just hitting the ball far, and it's a great way to model your game and get better.

Q. Mayor, in terms of having huge name players come to your town, I hear you on the radio all the time with Peggy Kusinski and you talk about all the great things Bolingbrook has to offer. This has got to be one of those things you can also say, you know who else comes here to play golf? LIV.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Absolutely. Again, we are elevating Bolingbrook; that's one of our tag lines. LIV is a testament to that. We're not the sleepy town we were back in the day. We are very proud to be Bolingbrook and everything that we have to offer in terms of diversity, accessibility, and so, yes, LIV is home in Bolingbrook.

Q. Tell us a little bit about your team, Legion XIII.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, we're very dynamic, I'd say. Diverse, if you will. We have Jon, who's 30 years old from Spain. We have Tyrrell who's 35 from the UK, Tom who's 22 from Northern Ireland, and then myself who's 21 from the States. I think when you put that on paper, you would be like, that doesn't work very well, but it has worked very well. It's been a great -- we've had great camaraderie. We've all become great friends. They're three other great guys that are great to be around, great to look up to and great to model yourself after.

Q. If you go to those guys, what are they like for advice? We'll take a guy like Jon; where he's been is where you aspire to be. How do they handle that in terms of guidance? It's them competing against the course but they're also your teammate.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I've always said Jon is a guy that has earned the right to do whatever he wants to do, if you wanted to put that in a quotation. He's earned the right to do his own deal and do what he needs to do.

But he's really invested in me. He's done a lot to help me get better. He's really tried to tell me the best way to go about stuff that I'm not doing the best at at times, and sometimes that's off the golf course stuff because on the golf course is only 50 percent of it. So it has been in those times, he's grown up and he's had a lot of success at a young age. He's been a great role model, great captain to our team. Nobody I'd rather play for.

Q. How much of the game is mental, because obviously if you're sitting up here, you've got a great golf swing, you can hit the ball a mile. You're talented. How much of it, 100 percent, is the swing, and how much of it is upstairs?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I'd say it's tough to quantify. It's almost like there's two different games because I think your mental game -- it's probably 60 percent of your success, but at the same time, if you don't have -- if you're not in the right frame of mind, it also literally does not matter how good anything else is, putting, chipping, driver, whatever it is. Skill will never overpower your mentality. That's something I've actually learned from Jon a lot.

It's tough because that should be priority one. It's like trying to drive a car with flat tires. It's just not going to work, no matter how nice the car is. That's something I've prioritized and had to learn.

Q. How about coming to a market like this? Chicago is - I'm biased - the best sports city in America --

CALEB SURRATT: It's got the best pizza. I had some today.

Yeah, it's amazing. I love it here. I used to play amateur golf here. Obviously got to play the event last year. It brings it every time. I like the wind. Bolingbrook brought an amazing challenge last year. Definitely probably top two or three hardest courses we play all year in my opinion. So it's a great test, great way to finish the year.

Q. What makes Bolingbrook that much more difficult

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than others? Is it the wind? Is it the greens? What is it?

CALEB SURRATT: It feels like -- it's just everything. It can be long. The greens played very firm last year, and I found something that was very hard was typically around greens, you have runoff areas and fairways surrounding them, so if you miss the green you're going to be chipping out of the fairway, which typically you're going to be able to give yourself a decent chance at par, but out here you can have a back pin, and when the greens get firm and let alone you add in wind and your ball lands next to the hole with a wedge and it just skips a little bit, which is pretty normal for a wedge on the first bounce and then you've got like 15 feet but you're buried in the rough, short-sided out of the rough -- I didn't play very well here last year so I can't speak too much on how to have a ton of success, but I'm going to try to play great this year.

Not going along in the rough is one thing that will make it a lot easier.

Q. How much do you enjoy coming out and being able to be on the course? Yes, you're the mayor but you get to walk as a fan, as well?

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: It was amazing. It was an amazing experience for me. It's quite different from the golf that I see throughout the year, which is that quiet, shh, be careful, don't get hit by a flying golf ball. This was full of energy, full of fun, dancing, partying on the holes. Completely different atmosphere than that which we were used to in regular golf.

Q. You could do jumping jacks in my backswing. I enjoy having fun on the golf course, playing music on the golf course. You as a professional golfer, this is a lot more -- it's looser, it's more fun. How do you handle that as a player?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I mean, as far as the noise goes on the course, I think the number one goal for every player is just to go play as good a golf as you can and everybody is so motivated and driven and works so hard on their off works that in my opinion nothing that really goes on fazes me. It's almost like you have such a tunnel vision that there's stuff that you don't notice, but I appreciate how interactive the fans are. I appreciate seeing a lot more younger kids. That's something that coming out of college I didn't know if I would get to perform in front of at first.

Yeah, it creates an awesome environment. It feels like everybody that is at the event really wants to be there, and it provide a great environment to play in.

Q. In terms of -- give a tip. There's a bunch of us hackers out here that love to play the game. How do you think the game better? I'll look and go, I think I can get that 3-wood 260 there and then you blow it left and you're in trouble. Give us a couple tips.

CALEB SURRATT: I mean, it sounds so cliché but just having fun. There's no reason to put pressure on yourself if you're not trying to play professionally. In my opinion, you should always challenge yourself, but if you're not having fun, nothing is going to be -- you're not going to perform well at all. So priority one is having fun. I've always told my coaches and we've always talked about, I've always wanted to play well because I'm happy, not be happy because I'm playing well. It's like, I think if you're in a great frame of mind, kind of back to the mentality thing you talked about, and you're having fun while you're playing regardless of what you're shooting, the odds of you playing better is going to skyrocket. Start by having fun, putting less pressure on yourself because that's going to make --

Q. Say that again --

CALEB SURRATT: You would much rather play well because you're happy than be happy because you're playing well because golf is such an up-and-down game that -- I think all the juniors and amateurs can take this, you can't ride the emotion. You're going to -- there's so many more events in professional golf, and if you don't bring it you're always going to get beat because players are better and you can't ride the emotional highs of the ups and downs regardless of the level of player you are.

Q. How do you leave a bad shot, let it go and move on because that shot is over?

CALEB SURRATT: It's tough. It is. I'm still having to learn that. I think you've just got to remind yourself it's literally going to happen to everybody. You saw what happened at the U.S. Open last week --

Q. Insanity.

CALEB SURRATT: Insane. There's so many instances where it can be like how does that just happen to me, and play the victim. But at the same time, since we're on TV and we're watching you can see what's happening to everybody else at the same time. It all averages out over time. I think that's how you've got to look at it.

Q. This is also a great stage for Bolingbrook where I'm sure there will be times you will travel somewhere, oh, what do you do? I'm the mayor of Bolingbrook, Illinois. You guys have that big golf tournament; that's



got to be a great thing for the community.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Oh, absolutely. It definitely is. It resonates not just nationally but internationally, as well, and while it's great to be in Bolingbrook, it's actually good for the state. That's a big thing, to have Illinois known for this tournament, but Bolingbrook, always Bolingbrook, number one Bolingbrook.

Q. That's your job.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Yes, it is, and I'm proud of it.

Q. In terms of this course, toughest part of it is what, the wind, the greens? What is it?

CALEB SURRATT: Greens, rough. It's so dependent on the wind. Last year it was very windy and it blew out of the east, which I hear is not normal, which maybe makes some holes easier, some harder. But this year I think we probably expect a bit of a different golf course.

I think it's tough because I don't even think double digits won under par last year. It's just a good challenge. The rough is thick, greens are firm, fast, wind tough.

Q. You're 21 years of age and here you are on this massive stage. How did you get here at this age? How old railroad you when you started playing?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, very fortunate. Started when I was probably eight or nine. My dad was a long driver --

Q. He competed at that?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, so he did all the RE/MAX World Long Drive stuff, and that's what got me into the game, and I'd be walking around our garage and I'd find his drivers that were 48 inches long that are taller than me at the time, and that was how I got into it.

I've been at it for what feels like a while, but very fortunate to be where I've gotten, to have a good relationship with Jon and have the opportunity to join after a year of college.

Q. You're looking forward to "Happy Gilmore II"?

CALEB SURRATT: I am, yeah. I've seen some little snippets of it and it looks amazing. The Will Zalatoris role is the best with the caddie --

Q. Did you like the first one?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it was amazing. It was great.

Q. Your favorite golf movie? There's a bunch out there.

CALEB SURRATT: I like "Tin Cup" for comedy golf movie, but the "Greatest Game Ever Played" I think is a pretty inspiring movie.

Q. Francis Ouimet?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, that's kind of two different types.

Q. Do you play at all?

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Why do you need to ask me that? I will be soon, very soon.

Q. It's a great bag.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Yeah, I pretend to play, but nowhere near what these guys are doing and what some of the students are doing.

Q. We go out and we try and hack it up and have a good time.

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: That I do. I absolutely have a good time. So do the people around me laughing.

Q. Do you ever play just for fun with buddies, let's just go out and play?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, absolutely. I'd say from every day, I'm probably -- I would almost categorize it as working from like 6:00 a.m. to 2:30, 3:00 p.m. and then I'm done for the day, and I would say once or twice a week I'm definitely playing my friends, playing a game for some push-ups or burpees, and it gets intense.

Q. I read a story when I knew I was coming out here that Dustin Johnson got done playing a U.S. Open years ago and then flew out to where his father-in-law Wayne Gretzky was and they didn't wake him up and they were on the course, and he was like, hey, just because I played the U.S. Open yesterday doesn't mean I can't hack around with you guys.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, you have to have that disconnect. From I think aspiring pros and then pros, it's your job, so when you're working it needs to be serious, you have to be disciplined and scheduled in what you're trying to do and what you're trying to get better at, but then you have to have those times where it's a game. It's in the name; it's supposed to be played, supposed to be meant to have fun. You can't enjoy it if you're just so alone and eyes to the wall the whole time.

Q. You're going to burn out.

CALEB SURRATT: Absolutely because it's such a tough game on you mentally. It's one of those games it's like nothing is ever going to be enough. You're always going to want to get better. You've got to have that disconnect with your friends or putting contests or stuff like that, because it matters.

Q. How many hole-in-ones?

CALEB SURRATT: I actually had my first hole-in-one ever three months ago. Ever. I've made a lot of shots from the fairway, but I've never had a hole-in-one until three months ago. It was the easiest hole, middle pin, 135 yards, 10:00 in the morning, home golf course.

Q. Did you hit like a sand wedge?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, gap wedge, no wind, easiest par-3 you could imagine. First one ever.

Q. Ever?

CALEB SURRATT: Ever.

Q. Ever driven a par-4?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I've done that a few times, never come close to holing one, never come close to an albatross. Off the tees I haven't come close.

Actually I've had a few close instances in tournaments, but I almost don't even know if I want to have a hole-in-one in a tournament because I feel like standing on the next tee box my heart would be like -- I would bogey the next hole anyways, so it's kind of like making a birdie anyways.

Q. If I told you it's the last hole and if you play well on that hole your team is going to win and the guy on the other side, same deal, who would you want to take down?

CALEB SURRATT: That's tough. I don't know. I mean, selfishly it would have to be Jon, but we're on the same team, so it can't be. I'd probably say Joaquín right now. I had an instance where I lost in a playoff to him at a big event at the end of last year, and I think with him being probably the best player out there this year so far, it's tough to not want to take down the big fish.

Q. Are there guys you go up to that might be competing against you, and can I ask you a couple questions about how you do this?

CALEB SURRATT: Absolutely, I've done that, for sure. Obviously not in competition, but yeah, I think the worst anyone can say is no, but nobody would. When you're around players like that -- even just anyone that's better than you, it doesn't even have to be players out here, like just anyone that's better than you, you've just got to -- it's very important to pick somebody's brain. I did it my whole life growing up. The people that I picked brains of, they picked somebody's brains --

Q. Passed it down?

CALEB SURRATT: Absolutely. It's important because clearly somebody that's better than you is doing stuff that works. It's tough because everybody has got their own ways, and sometimes you've got to respectfully throw something out the window if it doesn't work for you. But there's plenty of times where stuff will. You at least get to see what's going through other players' minds, and definitely worth asking.

Q. Mayor, what else can fans expect if they come to the tournament and they say, we're going to experience Bolingbrook a little bit? What else is there for them?

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Bolingbrook has a lot to offer. Whether you go to Promenade or the water parks for those coming from out of town, we have an aviation museum that's phenomenal and not very far from here. Just enjoying Bolingbrook after or relaxing or even coming to our own town center and taking a stroll around the pond. Lots of activities, whether you stay in Bolingbrook or go in the neighboring surrounding areas, but definitely a place to be, lots going on, and we enjoy the partnership.

Q. In terms of coming to a place like this, and we see professional team athletes, a guy on the Bears, the Cubs, whoever it is, their contracts are guaranteed. When you play, you're responsible for getting yourself to the next tournament and earning your way each and every week. There's a lot of pressure. Not everybody is Jon Rahm. What is that part of the game like?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's hard. There's a lot that people probably don't know in a professional athlete's life, and that's one of them. It's tough. You're fighting for your job every season.

It's tough, but that's why you have to have those disconnect days. You have to be doing the right things off the course that put you in the right frame of mind because there's too many things in life and in golf that they're going to try to beat you up and you've got to be your own best



friend. That's something I've had to learn.

You've also got to know everybody else is dealing with that same pressure, so if you can find something that works for you, it's almost to your advantage. I was fortunate to play well last year and this year so far to not have to worry about that, but it's a real thing in all of professional golf. It really separates the greats from the notes.

Q. I watched a lot of the "Full Swing" series. Do you sit back and watch -- I heard another golfer say I actually watched those and made notes, that guy does that, that's a good idea, and how much does conditioning, weightlifting and cardio and diet play into you being successful?

CALEB SURRATT: Massively. It's almost step two because that's another one of those things that it can't be -- you can't not have that and then expect to perform well regardless of how good your other physical factors are. One thing I would equate to that is stress resilience. You talked about having to deal with, per se, keeping your card or traveling or all of the other stuff, through workouts, through cold plunges, through recovery stuff, through the right foods. That's all stuff that --

Q. Sleep?

CALEB SURRATT: Absolutely. Sleep is the number one thing for recovery. That's all stuff that can help you have higher stress resilience. When stuff gets hard, you need to be able to dig a little deeper. Without focusing on your body, your recovery, your nutrition, that's impossible.

I say that, I just had one piece of deep dish pizza, and had slept four hours before I flew here this morning, but starting tomorrow is when I'll get back on that.

Q. That's what we all say. What is the most nerve-racking shot, normal round of golf? Is it if I blow this right, I'm in that bunker there, I blow this left, I'm in the deep rough there, or standing over a putt or an approach shot? For you, what is the toughest shot in your mind?

CALEB SURRATT: It's tough because I don't really want to say it because then I may start to believe it more and then the next time I have that shot I might think about how I just said it here.

I'd say definitely water right, trouble left, which perfect example, hole 8 out here, like imagine the left rough is more penalizing than it is -- because I said that it'll probably be fescue. But imagine that's very penalizing and then you've obviously got the water right and you put wind in out

of the left because I'm a cutter of the ball because it's a shot you can't aim right and draw it because if you misgroove it at all it's not going to draw so now you're in the water. For me, if I'm hitting a cut and I smoke it and it doesn't cut, then it's in the trouble. And if I hit a perfect cut, then the wind has got a chance to hit it a little bit more and also go in the water. I don't say that as a negative, but it's definitely probably the hardest shot for me right now. Hopefully by the time I get here, I hope it's one of my strengths.

Yeah, you've got to be able to say it, I guess.

Q. Do you enjoy this, where you get a chance to talk about you, LIV, coming to Bolingbrook? How much do you enjoy that, or I'd just rather be on the golf course hitting balls?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's great. I'm very fortunate to be here. A lot of people have done a lot for me to get to where I am. But like today it's not about me. I'm excited to do the clinic. I'm excited to help other people and give people insight that they may not have had. I'm just excited to be a vessel today.

Q. If you could teach somebody to hit the little chip shots --

CALEB SURRATT: Absolutely. You learn the most when you're teaching. I fully believe that. I try to pour into younger kids around town as much as I can, and it's good for everybody.

Q. The next, we'll call it, seven weeks, I think that's what it is, or close --

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Give or take.

Q. This is going to ramp up. What goes into that for you and your staff, along with everyone here?

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Well, the staff obviously is, one, very excited but very nervous at the same time, and mind you, we're still running a golf club. We're still running a banquet facility. So trying to juggle getting ready --

Q. Day-to-day --

MARY ALEXANDER-BASTA: Day-to-day operation of a restaurant, a course, a banquet facility where we're sold out, weddings, so forth, and at the same time make sure that LIV has a top-notch experience -- staff is amazing. Staff can do it. Does it stress us? Yes. It does. Do we enjoy the stress? Some days a little less than others.

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But we are very excited to host LIV for year two, and we know that it's a great opportunity for our community to come out and enjoy golf with family, with friends and just that different family-friendly environment.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both for being up here.
Thank you for being here.

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