

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

Thursday, June 5, 2025
Galloway, New Jersey, USA
Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Joanna Coe

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center here 2025 ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. I'm joined by Joanna Coe; Monday qualified this week to be back on the LPGA here. Just talk about Monday and what that was like for you from start to finish.

JOANNA COE: So it was a normal start to my Monday morning. Got my baby up and ready. We have a shared nanny, so brought her in to see her. Then I was like, all right, let me drive down to Atlantic City. Met Bruce, who has been my long time coach. He works at Blue Heron Pines under the New Jersey Academy of Golf. We met and started warming up.

I was kind of trending last two weeks. Started playing pretty well. Found something with the swing that worked.

When I was warming up he was like, that looks good. I was like, okay. So then started playing and first hole, not the hardest hole on the golf course, and made par.

No. 2 is a hard hole. Once I make par on 2, okay, maybe we got something today. Then I hit it great. Only missed three greens, and that was my stretch from No. 4, 5, and 6.

I make two bogeys and a par and hit every green coming in. It was pretty windy, so I really kind of easily shot 3-under. It was a little gusty, but if you hit it well here, you can have a lot of good birdie chances.

Q. And talk about the emotions of finding out you were going to be able to play this week.

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I didn't plan for it. I didn't expect it at all. I'm a PGA professional. Director of instruction at Merion, and had a complete full lesson book for the rest of the week. Had no plans.

But I am playing in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship in a couple weeks, so I thought I should probably play against some women. Because in the Philadelphia PGA section we play -- I play mostly men so

we play a little different tee. It's a very different game.

I thought, you know what? Let me get used to women's golf again. Signed up on a whim. This course is special to me. I grew up here, so I know it extremely well. Yeah, it's really special to get in the field.

I ended and three putted 18 for par. I'm like, hmm, I wonder if that was meaningful. I hope I didn't need to make birdie there to get in. I'm looking at the app and I have a three-shot lead, so that was pretty cool. Headed to McGettigan's to wait it out.

Q. What are you just hoping to take from this week? You said you're going play in the KPMG, but not just this week for yourself, but take back to your students that you can pick up to help them?

JOANNA COE: Every time I show up either to play in a golf tournament or major championship, or even on the men's side, I'm always taking things from other players and seeing how they hit shots and approach it.

So that's the teacher/coach in me.

The player side, I can do it. I mean, there are women in this field on Monday trying to play. I'm not actually trying to play for a living anymore, so it's pretty cool that I still have the physical attributes to hang and compete with some of those women.

Really I just want to bring a similar mindset that I did on Monday and see what I can do. I always find it a really fun challenge. I love competitive golf. It's a high to show up in these things. To hit a couple good shots and make a little bit of noise would be fun.

Q. For about a year now you've literally had your hands full. Talk about being a mom, how that changed your life and kind of forced you to balance a few things a little bit differently. That's kind of taking you off the golf course so to speak.

JOANNA COE: Yes, just about a year ago, I was very

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large one year ago today. She was born June 14th so coming up on the one year birthday. It's been a very special year. Last summer was a very different summer for me. First of all, for a golf pro to have a baby in June it was a different summer and wasn't ideal for Merion, but they were very supportive, the team and the members.

But Jenny and the ride with my husband has been incredible. It's the ultimate sacrifice, but it's so, so satisfying to see how she's developed and she just loves me so much. It's adorable. Every morning, big smile on her face. She doesn't know if anything difficult happened. It's just amazing joy.

It's been so much fun, and I know that we have a lot more to experience with her and milestones to achieve. Yeah, it's been the best year.

Q. Have ya'll talked about when you're going to start putting those first plastic clubs in the hands?

JOANNA COE: I have a couple clubs already. U.S. Kids putter, and Titleist sent me this engraved beautiful putter with her name and the date and all these beautiful things.

Of course I just give it to her and make sure she doesn't smack herself. It is literally metal. It's not one of those plastic clubs. And a couple golf balls and play on the ground. We're already getting club in her hand. She's not walking yet, but...

Q. Talk me through how this came about, how you were determined to be someone who loves the game and how much -- what was involved with that?

JOANNA COE: Sure, so the PGA of America, we have a great relationship I think luckily, because of some of the majors I've qualified for but also some of the content I help them create. They're just an amazing organization. I've been a go-to person for them.

Then they know I have this competitive spirit and mindset and kind of just we went through a rollercoaster having a baby in the middle of all of it. I think they felt that was a unique story that we wanted to share.

It was really great, the PGA and the LPGA, because that's a collaborative effort with KPMG to bump my next exemption to this year. I was supposed to be in last June for KPMG. So that was pretty nice, because I'm not a Tour player. They said I fell under the maternity policy, so that was pretty incredible. Nice for the PGA to want to highlight those things.

Q. Going back a little bit, you said at the top that this

tournament means a lot to you. Got a lot of history here. This tournament has -- there are several players who have made their pro debuts here, you included. Walk us back to getting that sponsor invite back in 2011, playing here, played here a few times, and now 14 years later coming back and playing as a Monday qualifier.

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I've had -- I've shot 68 and 86 here. Like this place has brought some amazing memories and some of the most difficult golf course moments of my life. I wish I had the experience and the maturity that I have now back when I made my pro debut here.

And also I think it's a very different landscape now. When you graduate college now there is so much exposure and television coverage and media at collegiate events. I don't think I was even ready for the amount of press and the -- it just felt so big back then.

I think now juniors and college players are ready for these moments. Walking into this room I wasn't nervous whatsoever. When I was 20, 21 years old I would've been freaking out. I wish I had a little bit of that maturity and experience back then.

This course has brought a lot of memories to me. Played in high school state championship here; I lost to Marina Alex by one shot. She always beat me by one in a million things. She's a two-time winner on Tour and a friend mine.

But it's funny, because this course I've played great and I've played terrible at the same time. That's golf.

Q. What would the 2025 Joanna Coe say to the 2011 Joanna Coe?

JOANNA COE: I would say just care less. Kind of you don't have to escalate everything and make it a big deal. I'm approach thing week, I just taught golf the last two days. I just came in this morning. Just care less, because when I care less and have fun I just play better.

Back then it was like, all right, this is my livelihood and I'm going to play professional golf and I'm going to make this a big deal. Then I didn't swing freely for the entire weekend. If you don't swing freely you can't play golf.

Yeah, I wish I knew that. It is what it is.

Q. You saw Meaghan Francella right before you walked in. You're old friends. She's coming back and playing here as well. She talked about how being a teaching pro has giving her more clarity and just limit the expectations a bit. Do you feel that same way

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going into this week?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, I would say clarity, it brings clarity with me with all aspects of game. Understanding how to hit golf shots and how to execute and how to create different ball flights and trajectories and short game strategies.

For me, when I'm out there I'm going to try to compete as hard as I can. I think the true Joanna Coe can get it done.

For me, again, it's just deescalation. Just have fun and hit shots. But the teaching side for me has brought stability and happiness to my life that I -- when I was 20, 21 years old playing in this I was happy, but your score was connected to your name. That was your identity.

Now that's not my identity. I'm so happy with everything I'm doing at Merion and at home with golf so it's just bonus for me.

Q. This is truly your hometown event. You grew up here. Now being the director of instructor of Merion, they've hosted some of golf biggest championships. PGA TOUR was just at Philly Cricket Club for Truist. You've seen this one as a fan growing up here and playing here, how big this tournament is and how the fan base. What is it about the fan base in this Atlantic City/Philadelphia/Jersey region that just loves golf?

JOANNA COE: We just show up. We love sports. Even the U.S. Open at Lancaster. The crowds were crazy. And the Curtis Cup at Merion my first year there, unbelievable crowds. Just good sports fans. No matter what sport.

Yeah, we support hometown folks. We love the game of golf. Love the Philadelphia Eagles. Just we love sports. So everyone just shows up and there is a lot of pride in that.

Q. Go, Birds.

JOANNA COE: That's right.

Q. In your experience playing this course, is there any one hole, whether at the end of the three rounds or four when they had them, that you would be happy with par every day on that hole?

JOANNA COE: No. 2; No. 2 for sure. And then I would say 11. 2, 11, and 14.

Q. Which hole would you be upset if you didn't birdie every day?

JOANNA COE: 3. 3, 18 is -- you can get home in two. I feel like with the wind direction though it gets a little into off the left. A little longer to get home than back in the day.

But, yeah, No. 3 is an easier hole than No. 2.

Q. Should they just switch the par designations?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, so everyone, right, maybe just switch it? I know. Feels that way. Didn't Ben Hogan say that No. 2 was one of the hardest holes in golf back then?

Q. How important has the support of the membership been at Merion as you have been teaching obviously at one of the most prestigious clubs in the country where they take golf pretty seriously? They're fine with you taking time to play and representing the club and the PGA. That support has to mean a lot to you.

JOANNA COE: It's amazing, and I've just been in this amazing partnership with them. The members have a high golf IQ and we just love competitive golf. Merion has hosted the most majors in championship history. Any time a member or a staff member, golf professional, anyone is playing in a significant event, members are following and supporting because we just understand what it takes.

It's very, very significant. It's an unbelievable golf community like we said with Philadelphia in this area, but Merion in particular, the history of it and the appreciation for high-level championship golf is just incredible.

So I've absolutely loved being there and the members understand. I had to cancel some lessons today and tomorrow and they're completely okay with that. When I'm at Merion I'm there and teaching full board and they're getting full Joanna Coe. Sometimes I'm away and I appreciate their understanding.

Q. The role of the PGA professional, there is a lot of talk in the industry about growing the game. How significant is the role with the PGA professional, whether it's teaching as you do or just encouraging people that want to be involved in the game, whether they're a scratch player or their handicap is more like mine, which is best left unreported?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, we are the connection to the people that are paying the daily fee here at Seaview to play next week after the LPGA, right? We are the folks that help people have fun with it so they show up to Top Golf or 5-Iron. So it's all connected in the big space of golf.

We have a significant role in that. I take that very, very seriously. I had a lesson yesterday. A woman that she



had never touched a golf club. She's like, oh, you probably don't want to teach people like me. No, this is my favorite lesson. Let's go. She had a blast.

I take that role very seriously. So at the end of the day that's what it's about, inspiring players, whether it's the next generation or your 65 year old that has never touched a golf club before are.

That's why golf is so special. It's here for everyone of all ages, abilities, gender. It doesn't matter. The golf ball doesn't no who is hitting it and where you are. I'm all about that. That's why I'm here and that's why I'm a PGA professional.

Q. Last question: How important is it for people to understand you can have a great experience in the game and can have fun with it even if you don't play particularly well?

JOANNA COE: Yeah, that's why golf has so many different avenues now. You know, it's been so much -- it is more fun than ever, more accessible than ever. The fashion is better than ever. It's cool. It's trending.

Doesn't matter whether you're showing up to go play nine holes and have a Bloody Mary and hang out with your girls after, or you're there to compete and try to make a U.S. Amateur for the first time.

That's what amazing about the game of golf. You can play the same sites as pros. You would never be able to do that in a basketball arena or hockey arena. You can play unbelievable places but also just play recreationally and have a blast with your friends at the same time. It's a recreational sport and professional sport and really there for everyone.

My job is -- it is a little bit more fun when you hit a couple good shots around, too. They tend to come back a little bit more.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks so much. Appreciate it. Good luck this week.

JOANNA COE: Thank you.

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