

# The Amundi Evian Championship

Wednesday, 26 July 2023

Evian-les-Bains, France

Evian Resort Golf Club

## Brooke Henderson

## Jacques Bungert

## Franck Riboud

## Natacha Andermahr

### Press Conference

(Video shown.)

**THE MODERATOR:** Welcome back everyone to the Amundi Evian Championship. As you can see I'm joined by three esteemed guests. The defending champion, Brooke Henderson, as well as Franck and Jacques.

I would love to start with you, Brooke. As defending champion coming to this event, what does it mean to you to be defending here at a major like this?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** I'm so happy to be back. Looking forward to it all year. See all the posters is so amazing. So many great memories stepping back here, and it's just been so much great energy and an amazing atmosphere to come back to.

I love this place. After winning last year, it's just super exciting and I'm looking forward to teeing it up tomorrow morning.

**THE MODERATOR:** We just watched a recap of your victory last year. What's the vibe around this entire community for you going into the first round?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** This is an amazing event for a major championship. It's a beautiful golf course, and when you're feeling really stressed you can look out over the lake and it calms you down and relaxes you a little bit, which is pretty cool.

I feel like the community supports it, and it's a lot of fun to see the fans out on the weekend. And especially around the 18th green last year, when I was coming down the stretch and needed a birdie to win it was amazing to see that many people out there supporting.

It's just I think growing the game and it's an exciting spot

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to be this week.

**THE MODERATOR:** Absolutely. You told us in the past that you like to win twice a year. You got one win under your belt. How much would it mean to be able to successfully defend this title?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yes, it's been a goal of mine since I've been on tour to win twice a year. I've done it most years, but not all years. It was really great to start out off the year with a win the first tournament out.

It's been up and down since, but looking forward to a lot of events coming up. Especially this week.

I love the opportunity to try to defend my title. Holding the trophy yesterday when I had to give it back was very sad. At the same time, it was very emotional and really cool for me to see my name engraved on the trophy and join a long list of past champions with an incredible history.

It's really cool for me to be a part of that. I look forward to trying to get in contention to win my second title this year.

**THE MODERATOR:** Still a lot of golf left in the season, including this special week. Also the AIG Women's Open coming up and your national Open as well.

With the work you have been putting in lately, do you feel the good results coming?

**BROOKE HENDERSON:** Yeah, I feel like my game is definitely trending in the right direction. I'm seeing better results and I feel like I'm hitting it a little bit better.

Around this golf course you need really great ball striking. You need to hit it to the right spots on the fairways and greens. I think if I can get my ball striking in a good spot over the next four days I could put myself back in contention.

Like any major championship it really comes down to the back nine on Sunday, so hopefully get in the final groups and make a few putts on Sunday.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions? English questions for Brooke.

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**Q. What would it mean to be the first winner of this tournament back to back?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's really exciting to have the opportunity to be the first to win back to back. I think that's definitely the dream and the goal this week coming in.

There are so many talented players here this week, the best in the world, and just to have the opportunity to go out and compete against them every week is really cool.

Hopefully just start out Thursday, Friday with some solid rounds, and see if I can put myself in contention to try to do it again.

**Q. As a winner could you give us some skills to win this tournament? What do you need to win?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: It is a very challenging golf course. The scores are definitely lower here than most majors though so you need to make birdies.

I think as I mentioned earlier, the biggest key is ball striking, hitting a lot of fairways, and hitting not only a lot of greens, but hitting it to the right parts of the greens is really key to give yourself uphill putts and not too long of putts with all the undulations.

So ball striking I think, and you know, patience is a big thing with any major championship, especially here this week. You're going to try to give yourself as many opportunities, but also know that mistakes can happen and pretty easily out here. So you just have to rebound and be patient to try to make up for it.

**Q. If you have to go through a list of your favorite things about this tournament, you can do it in French if you want, what would it be?**

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love the view. I love the setting. And these two. (Smiling.)

I love just the atmosphere. It's really amazing. There is a little crepe restaurant downtown Evian which I visit almost every day, so I love that place.

Just the history and tradition that continues to grow here is really important for the women's tour, and it's fun to be a part of it now.

THE MODERATOR: As the defending champion you talked a little bit about it, but you're seeing your face everywhere. You've become an ambassador for this amazing major. What does that mean to be an ambassador of a special event such as this?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's been unreal to see

my face everywhere. It's really, really cool. As I mentioned there are so many incredible champions, so to add my name to this list has meant a lot to me.

Finding my name on the trophy was so cool amongst all the other great names and champions. Yeah, I'm just really excited for the week and happy to be back. Hopefully it'll be a great week for all of us and I'll be able to get myself back in contention on the weekend.

THE MODERATOR: We hope you play fantastic this week, Brooke. Thank you for joining us. (Applause.)

All right, and I believe we will have Natacha joining us up here. She's running behind.

With that, Franck, I would love to ask, if you don't mind, we had Rose in here earlier talking about when she was 14 years old playing in the Evian Junior Cup.

How much has supporting the next generation of golfers meant to you, and can you explain some of the ways that you and your team have supported the next generation of golfers?

FRANCK RIBOUD: I have to say in the beginning we decide to support the next generation perhaps because I becoming old, I don't know. But it's what we call the galaxy, the Amundi Championship galaxy. It's a way to some way give the money back. We give the money back through the prize money to the players, but I think our role is to do much more than just the prize money.

Everybody is talking about prize money, prize money, prize money. I think that we have also to share what we can with the next generation, boys and girls. So here in Evian we start with under-12 years old, so eight to nine; they have a tournament at the academy, and the other are playing the Evian golf course.

We did with Jacques here long time ago, we start a soccer tournament called Danone Nations Cup, very well-known for those who know about soccer.

In golf we are just trying to replicate the same thing with godfather, which is Jon Rahm and Sandrine, my wife is taking care of this tournament, and Basque too, so they can talk together. Even if one is Spanish, the other is French.

We do also the Junior Cup. The funny thing with Jacques is when we travel, when we go to the Masters or whatever, a lot of people are showing this incredible picture of Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas eating a burger.

When we say, yeah, we know very well the picture. That was in Evian behind the 18th hole. They are like, yeah, it was in Evian? Because they were part of the junior team

under-14, and all these kid from all over the world who play the under-14 tournament are member of the club, of the Evian Championship.

I'm not even sure they know that. To Jordan and Justin I said that to their mother.

JACQUES BUNGERT: They're members.

FRANCK RIBOUD: After that we are very lucky to have the Palmer Cup. First time that was boys and girls tournament and the first time they went outside of the U.S.

So they went to Evian and last year to Geneva, a club which is very close to us. And we have also something for the French (audio cut out) we sent to Las Vegas for the last AJGA tournament. I think something like 15 boys, girls, because coaches from the university out there, they have a meeting there, and that the place that they chose -- they give the last spot to students.

So somewhere we are there to expose not the best French player or girl player, but we expose perhaps the most clever. They are very good at school. We ask them to speak English much better than me and so on and so on.

On top of that, we have also some academy. We start by France, because to enter in a golf academy it's very -- in some ways it's very expensive. I don't know in the other country, but in France for the food and the studies and the training it's around 20, 25,000 Euros per year, and you don't have a lot people that can afford to pay this amount of money.

So we don't sponsor the academy, but we give a kind of scholarship to help the parents who don't have the money to pay that. So we have a huge program like this. That's where we take care of the next generation.

And the funny thing is that you can start to see ladies or boys, girls and boys, who already participate through this program. If you look at the poster behind the tee No. 1, you look at the name, oh, you are lucky. No, no, we are not lucky. We have a vision. We focus on that. We build this.

We did in soccer, and that will work in golf, too. So for the Kids Cup, which is in September for example, we start to invite 12 years old girl and boy from Morocco. We are very pleased to have Ines here because she's a Moroccan player.

We try also to open the geography. I know golf is very Anglo-Saxon sport and we respect that, but I think our job is to open the door to millions of countries just to bring something to the game of golf.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely.

FRANCK RIBOUD: That's the vision.

THE MODERATOR: A very nice vision.

JACQUES BUNGERT: And a key vision that allows us also to build an ecosystem that's wider. To Franck's? Point and Brooke's point about women's golf, I think -- and I can relate to that, because I have seen Franck and his father starting this tournament nearly 30 years ago, and I think it's important sometimes to just reassess that.

Yes, it's been 30 years that Franck had the vision of sustaining women's golf and making sure that women's sports develops. Of course you need money, partnerships, a strong basis to do so. Today the galaxy is the result of that because it's the end game in a way. Of course you got the prize money, of course you've the tournament, but it is...

FRANCK RIBOUD: The good thing for us, as you know, we have sponsor when we are the Evian Championship, we have sponsor like Rolex, Amundi, Evian. The good news is our sponsor are following this vision.

And just look at Amundi --

JACQUES BUNGERT: Natacha, welcome. Come here. (Applause.)

FRANCK RIBOUD: We have the Amundi team with young ladies playing golf and they help them. On our side we have also, nobody knows, but we have something like 15 or 10 player, girl and boys, and we offer to them not the scholarship, but 10,000 euros per year during two years when they just turn pro.

We have a selection and Amundi has a selection, and some of them are both sides, so 20 or something like this.

When you start on the pro tour, adults tour, it's no more a game. You say, in the past, wow, you must have 25 years. No, it's 16, 17 they turn pro. If you get 10,000 euros on the budget for participating to the pro golf tour, adults tour, it's somewhere three quarter of your budget.

NATACHA ANDERMAHR: Yeah.

FRANCK RIBOUD: I'm not talking about Rolex because Rolex is doing everything and helping everywhere. They are really helping the game.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Speaking of which, Natacha, you want to talk about what the team is and what you do? I think just a word on this.

For us and for Franck, from the beginning it's been



always very important to have partners that are resonating, not only partners so to speak with a logo on a poster, but getting committed, involved, engaged with our value, with our galaxy, but also with theirs, helping the game.

I think it's to your point.

NATACHA ANDERMAHR: Yes. Good afternoon everyone. Sorry for being late. I had some issue with my plane. I'm happy to be there.

Yes, when we decided to partner with Evian and become sponsor, I thought of this tournament.

The idea was not just to have our brand on the tournament name, but we wanted to do more. We wanted to be a? Fully committed partner, and alongside Evian galaxy we decided to create a new program, the Amundi Women Talent Program.

For this program, we sponsor several young promising women golfers for two or three years to enable them to enter the international golf scene by offering them new sporting opportunities, but also better visibility, in addition of our financial support.

So we have selected now 15 players who three are on the original team, five for the European Amundi teams, who is represented the new (indiscernible) in January.

Three players in the U.S. team, and seven players in the Asian teams. We are very proud to have four of them would be taking part to this year's tournament.

We have Chiara Noja who won the Aramco Team Series in 2022. We have also Morgane Metraux, who were second at the Andalucia Costa de Sol Open in Spain.

And we have also Tiffany Huang, who won in 2022 the Women's Amateur Asia Championship.

And also, we have Ruoning Yin. She's fifth in the Rolex Ranking and she has already won two tournaments this year.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Good pick.

NATACHA ANDERMAHR: Yes. She won the DIO LA Open, and she won also the KPMG Women's Championship in June.

JACQUES BUNGERT: She's number one in the race, the CME race. She's an amazing player.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions. We'll start in English.

**Q. Couple of things. So first, curious about Jon**

**Rahm for sure. Besides the Basque connection, what do you see in Jon Rahm in golf that you saw in (indiscernible) in football?**

JACQUES BUNGERT: They play the same game. No, I'm kidding.

FRANCK RIBOUD: I think we can't compare. It's totally different. The idea for us is to replicate what we succeed with the soccer with the young kids. The kids around 12 years old, and the good thing in soccer at this age, it's girl and boy, they play together, which is not the case in golf. The power is not the same.

Having said that, the connection was not only the Basque connection, but as Jacques said, perhaps you don't know, but the Amundi Evian Championship is a kind of marketing platform because Rolex is not so far. Callaway is now very close to us. Jon Rahm is Callaway, and Jon Rahm is Basque, so it's helpful.

JACQUES BUNGERT: If I may, we have a motto at the Danone Nations Cup that is totally the motto of the Amundi Kids Cup as well, which is believe in your dreams. What is important in sports in general and Franck very often say that, you need champions to bring the attraction to the sports in general for kids. It's obvious. We all know that.

FRANCK RIBOUD: The thing you have to understand, because it's very tricky when you start to help kids to develop their dream, there is big difference by helping them to dream and make them champion where they are not champion because they are very young.

So we really look at seriously that we are not just pushing in front of the scene a very young guy, 12 -- I will tell a story. There is a French, non-French, I forgot the name, we don't care, who's playing very, very well. I think she's 13 or 14.

I have a lot of friends on Facebook and I don't know them. We call them friends. But I use that to understand what happened around us. Suddenly there was a comment from somebody saying perhaps we will see her in Evian.

I just answer, well, perhaps we can wait a little, no? Because with this new media we push very quickly some girl or boy shooting, I don't know, 62. Oh, there is a new champion.

No. Please, we wait. When you know golf and you know golf, so we are really building things for kids but we are very careful not to make them champion -- I call that in French a championette. It's a very difficult disease, especially in my country.

**Q. That connects with something that you were**



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**talking about, which is the things that people don't know about your galaxy. I understand that when we talk about your projects and your galaxy, it's not just France or this area, it's United States, Europe in general. Can you talk more about what you do outside of the Europe and the United States?**

JACQUES BUNGERT: The Amundi showcase is a good example. We bring some kids from France to the U.S.

That's one of the bridges. There are many ways. Through Amundi we are definitely connected with Asia and America as well. The team is obviously in Europe.

Again, the connections are numerous, and when you look at --

FRANCK RIBOUD: There is a very important -- we are sponsor of the AJGA at the start. We sponsor the AJGA. Why do we sponsor the AJGA? Because my personal life makes that I met these people because of my son who was playing the AJGA tournaments and we discuss, okay, fine.

The next project I have, it's very French one, but I'm sorry, we are French, is how could we help the parents to take decision how to send their kids at the university in the United States.

That's the best place to learn, even if they are dreaming to become Tiger Woods or Rose Zhang, I don't know. Best place to learn that is to play college golf.

But it's not so easy, because in France for example nobody knows exactly what does it mean, when do you have to take care of your children if you plan to send them in the university. Everybody think it's they're 18. No, it's after what we call the (in French.)

JACQUES BUNGERT: Eighth grade.

FRANCK RIBOUD: Let's say 14 years old, because the organization will ask for the last three years, so we plan to have a similar for the parents to explain to them. As you can see, our responsibility is much more important than just organize kids' tournament.

**Q. I do think you talked about vision. In these times of growth and confusion at times, what is your vision for the future of golf?**

FRANCK RIBOUD: For the future of golf?

JACQUES BUNGERT: Women's golf or golf in general?

FRANCK RIBOUD: No, I think you have to answer golf. You know, it seems than the man golf organizations are -- first of all, golf is very difficult organization to understand. Thanks to Rolex because they explain to us

the LPGA, the PGA, the Asian tour, and now the LIV Tour.

I don't have a vision because the only thing -- I think we have to protect that game. For example, with ladies golf in Evian, perhaps I will die on that, but I will always protect the sport itself, the golf sport. I will never organize something (indiscernible) for the two first round.

Never. For me, a golf tournament is four round. It's stroke play. That's it.

Because I think we have to respect the ladies golf player. People have to be attract by the game, not by how they are dress or special music at the tee number one. In French I can be even more brutal when I answer that.

JACQUES BUNGERT: So it's good in English.

FRANCK RIBOUD: I think you understand what I mean. We have to protect this game at the top level. We can't have different formula, bah, bah, bah, but we don't to have adapt the game to the media. The media has to adapt themself to the game. This is my vision, especially for ladies golf.

Having said that, I was really sad to see this wall between, because when you look at the last British men Open, it's beautiful, suspense is there, game is there, you expect a lot of wind. Not here, but there.

So the thing is by the time being, I was -- as you know I have a job beside the golf. When I look at all the decoration, it looks like (indiscernible.) You understand I think. So I have no comment until I see something.

**Q. (In French.)**

FRANCK RIBOUD: Okay, you just have a small prize money at 6.5 million euros. The other are around ten million, especially the men. So when does somebody put pressure on you to increase your prize money?

I used to drive a 25 billion company doing road shows everywhere, and I can tell you nobody will put pressure on me. I do exactly what I want. If it is not enough, we stop. But they will explain that to us.

That's the reason why with Jacques we are not focusing on the prize money. We are focusing on the balance of the players, what we can bring to them, how could we improve the quality of the tournament, how do we explain how we redistribute the money for kid and this and that.

If you the media, you continue to try to push everybody against everybody with on one criteria tier yaw, prize money, you are going to kill this sport. You are going to kill this sport. This is my point of view.

Nobody put pressure on us to -- don't forget that we start with one million French Franc.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Which is \$300,000 roughly.

FRANCK RIBOUD: Because of Amundi and Rolex and Danone and Evian, okay, and we are totally transparent with them when we need money. I think one day this tournament will be prize money around 8 million.

Don't ask me when. When I discuss with the sponsor of the tournament, I present to them with a huge transparency the equation we have to deal with.

But nobody will put pressure on us. We start as being nothing in the middle of nowhere in Evian. Now we are a major. We are not going to run after this stupid race on the prize money.

I just played the pro-am. Brooke is no more there to say yes or no, but I think this year we have the best golf course we never had. The best one. This is very important. So not only the prize money, we have to invest. We need to capital to improve.

As I said to everybody, and when I was playing with Minjee Lee I explained to her because we were talking about chemical and this and that, yeah, in French in 2025 we don't have the question anymore. It's forbidden.

We try to find a solution. So Evian is not only prize money. It's something totally different. I will add something, too, because we have very good relationship with the LPGA and this and that, but we have two majors which are, let's say, private.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Chevron...

FRANCK RIBOUD: Exactly. The British men, and they decide how much money they put to the lady. Same with the major in the U.S.

Us? No, we are what we are. Nothing else. We don't decide we will put that money on men. We don't have an organization behind. That's the reason why perhaps you feel through my English that I don't like your question, and the answer a yes, I don't like your question.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Another good question.

FRANCK RIBOUD: Because you will kill this sport. Tomorrow that will be like football.

#### **Q. (Through translation.)**

JACQUES BUNGERT: The question was what about the impact a win of a French golfer or a French lady would have on the tournament or in golf in general, since you're such an important major.

We said it wouldn't change anything from us. Of course we would be happy for it and that's great. I think what is important to understand is that we have two major Grand Slams in France, Roland Garros and the Evian Championship. It's the same impact.

If a French tennis woman would won Roland Garros it's fantastic, just like Yannick Noah 30 years ago. It change a little bit the sports here and the crowd and the audience in France behind it, and we have the same issue.

We're a major and we are an international major. That being said, we have another French lady that we gave a wildcard to, which is Pauline, and Pauline, we have given her a wildcard even though we don't have to justify any wildcard, but we give it because she is coming from the galaxy we're talking about and it makes a lot of sense.

When someone is more in difficulty in sports, that I would say is 75% in gratitude, this the moment you have to stand up and be there and support.

FRANCK RIBOUD: And the last one was Morgane Metraux, who's part the galaxy of Amundi. We don't select her because she is part of the galaxy of Amundi. We select her because I think it's good for us to have a Swiss player on top with Albane, obviously, who's also part of the galaxy.

Just image the real question for me is one day if we have a player from Morocco, Tunisia winning the Evian Championship, what will be the impact? It's much more open because you open a new country for the game of golf.

That's the reason why we try to have the balance the way we chose. Few years ago we invite the number one in India, Russia, and the number one in China, if I remember.

JACQUES BUNGERT: Absolutely.

FRANCK RIBOUD: Now the level of the game is so high.

JACQUES BUNGERT: That's part of our mission.

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