

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

Brooke Henderson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Brooke Henderson, who needs no introduction from me, kicking off our final press conference of the CP Women's Open. A lot of things to cover here today.

First of all, how excited are you just to be back here? It's been a long time since the tournament was last played, and coming off one of your big wins.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I'm so looking forward to this week. Every year it's circled on my calendar and I always get super pumped up for it, especially as the weeks grow closer to it.

Having the last one in 2019, it's just been so long since I was able to play in front of the home town crowd. Even in the practice rounds yesterday and today there has been so many people out watching. It's just amazing to have this much love and support from home.

I feel like I'm super excited to tee it up on Thursday and hopefully get off to a fast start.

THE MODERATOR: Yeah, you seem to always have a pretty good performance here. What goes into that? Is it having the big crowds and knowing you have the home field advantage I guess?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, in 2017 I had to make birdie on Friday afternoon to make the cut, but then went on to post a course record which still stands on Saturday. Just to have so many friends and family in the crowd, and those were the biggest crowds I had ever played in front of here that week in 2017, so it was huge learning experience for me.

And then following year I was able to go and win in Saskatchewan. To have this trophy be a part of my career victories is really incredible, and I would love to be able to do it again.

THE MODERATOR: I hear we're going to have another big crowd this year, so I'm sure you're excited for that. Open up to the room here.

Q. This is I think your home course; is that correct?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah.

Q. You've probably played often.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I am an honorary member here, so I love to get out when I can.

Q. So when you come back to Canada, whether it's the ManuLife Financial Classic what used to be in Cambridge or anywhere in Canada, I mean, you're one of the star attractions. You get more people tugging at your sleeve here I think close to Ottawa. How do you handle that all that kind of extra attention that people want from you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's definitely a balance, and I mentioned kind of 2017 was a really big learning experience when the tournament was held here in Ottawa. Just finding the correct amount of time to have practice and also rest and then also give to media and to fans and to CP, who I'm a proud ambassador for.

It's a bit of a balance, and making sure that you're ready to go come Thursday. So I feel like over the last few years I really learned a lot in how to manage my time. Like I said, I look forward to this week every single year, and so I try to give it my all in all those aspects during this week.

Hopefully I'll just be able to play well on Thursday and be in contention on the weekend.

Q. Brooke, congratulations first off on your latest win. Everybody in Smith Falls in the Ottawa area and Canada is cheering for you. What's next for you after you win this event?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, like I said, I would love to be able to hoist this trophy again. It's a career highlight that I was able to win in 2018, and just the

love that I had out there in Saskatchewan when I was in the lead and contending, and then finally being able to win there was so cool.

And then I guess three years ago at Magna in Toronto, being in the final group with Jin Young and giving it a run on the weekend is just so much fun. Having the crowds there it's a lot of adrenaline and a lot of energy, and I feel like when you're playing well you can really ride that.

So that's kind of the goal this week, is to try to make some birdies, be aggressive, and ride the energy of the crowd.

Q. Just wondering, so 2018 in Saskatchewan, you got the Sunday there and the crowd all there hoping to see you win the thing. Just wondering what you learned about yourself going through a moment like that that day and closing out a tournament at home?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, I think the biggest thing is just being in the moment and just trying to make the best decision and hit the best shot that you can at that exact moment. Just trying to make the best of every situation. Not trying to get too far ahead of yourself and looking in the past on a bad shot. Just really being in the moment.

That's all you can really ask for, is to be the best version of yourself. On that Sunday I was 7-under I guess and made a bunch of birdies on the back nine, and it was a lot of fun. You never really know how it's going to go in the final groups on a Sunday afternoon.

You're kind of just giving it your all, and that week it was just meant to be. I got some breaks and was able to kind of cruise to three-shot victory, four-shot maybe.

So it was nice to kind of be in that position, and that's all you can -- all you want. You want to be in contention, in the final groups on weekends, and hopefully things just fall your way.

Q. Yesterday in the qualifier a 12-year old Lucy Lin qualified, from Vancouver. What advice would you have to some of these younger players like Lucy as they prepare for this event?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's amazing to see all the young talent coming out and to Monday qualify. I was in a bunch of Monday qualifiers a few years ago and they're tough, a lot of competition. So it's pretty impressive that she was able to get in.

And then playing this week, I played in my first Canadian Open when I was 14 and it was just life changing. I'm sure

this week will be huge for her and she'll just really enjoy it and be a huge learning experience, which I think is great.

Like I said, the talent just keeps getting better and better and younger, and so it's pretty cool.

Q. This may be the other end of the spectrum, but Lorie Kane will play her last event tomorrow. What has she meant to this tournament and to you?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Lorie is incredible. You know, growing up she was women's golf in Canada. I looked up to her and she's been a great friend and mentor. I think all of Canada just loves her dearly, so it is sad that this is her last one.

Also I think it's amazing that the career she's had and all the lives she's changed, and especially working so closely with CP and being such a great ambassador for them, their charity CP Has Heart. She helped raise millions dollars of dollars, so we're really going to miss her out on the golf course.

But I think she'll just continue to impress us all in her endeavors off the course.

Q. The Brooke's Brigade was out in full force today. Lots of people from Smith Falls, family members, including your grade five? Teacher. What do those moments mean when you get to see people from Smith Falls, and how do you refocus and get back to concentrating on the game?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, the Brooke's Brigade is awesome. I love seeing especially all the young kids out there. They seem to be really enjoying themselves, which is great. Then also being so close to home I see lots of family and friends, and my grade five teacher. She was one of my favorite teachers, so really cool to see her out there today.

Haven't seen each other in a really long time. It's such an amazing opportunity to get to play in front of all these people, and I'm trying to embrace that as much as I can and thank them for coming, and then also try to stay focused and play the best that I can.

Q. Brooke, just a couple things: No. 1, how do you strike the balance of when you get inside the ropes and making sure you take care of what's happening outside the ropes?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you want to enjoy this as much as you can, because it's pretty cool to be playing against the best players in the world and see my posters

up everywhere and to have the crowds that I have had even in the practice rounds, and I'm sure will be even bigger come Thursday.

It's amazing to have this opportunity and to have a chance to be in contention and to hoist another trophy. So it's definitely a balance between enjoying it and also staying focused. Really, I have a job to do, so I'm going to try to do to the best I can.

At the same time, just try to smile a little bit and enjoy what a crazy and amazing opportunity it really is.

Q. Just one other thing: What will this course demand?

BROOKE HENDERSON: This course, it can be really tricky, and I think it depends on the weather the next few days as well. Normally it's pretty fast and firm, and with the rain we've had the past couple days it's softened up a little bit, but still fast, especially on the downhill putts and some of the slopes on the greens.

I think it's tricky and you can run into trouble. At the same time, if you're hitting lots of fairways and hitting it to the right portions of greens you can make a lot of birdies. The scores were pretty low here in 2017, and I would suspect they'll be low again. Just trying to be aggressive and hit good shots and see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: I have one question on the Zoom.

Q. On the Tourism Ottawa is reporting that the tourism industry in the Ottawa area still hasn't recovered from 2019 numbers and the pandemic. Curious, what are your hopes in terms of this tournament and bringing more people back to the national capital region?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, the last few years have been really tough on everybody, so I think it's amazing that the tour is back in Canada playing after such a long time, and to see all these people outside and relatively safely enjoying a great activity and great sport.

I think to have my friends here on tour from all around the world come in and be able to showcase our talent is great. I heard that ticket sales have been very impressive, so hopefully just lots and lots of people come out and we can really celebrate, not that COVID is over, but that things are moving forward and getting a little bit back to normal.

Q. What kind of atmosphere do you expect at the 17th hole when you get there? Do you have any plans to put a sweater of some kind?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I got my Sens jersey out. I'm ready. I think it's really cool. It's fun. Takes some of the unique things that the men have at the RBC Canadian Open and bring it over to the women's side is awesome. Excited for the rink hole.

I played a practice hole this morning and they were banging on the boards. It's going to be pretty loud, but it reminds me of the good old days when I used to play hockey.

I think it will be a lot of fun and just kind of a unique fan experience, which I think all the people coming out will really enjoy.

Q. What's has it meant to have your sister by your side through this journey of becoming the winningest Canadian of all time?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love having her on the bag and just being able to travel around the world together, it's been a super fun journey. She's my best friend and works really hard for me on and off the course, so just to have all these unique experiences, it's been fun, and hopefully she stays on my bag for a long time.

Q. On a scale of one to ten, how important is she to your successes in any round in any event?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Oh, yeah, I depend on her a ton, especially down the stretch when things get a little bit tense. She's always there for me, giving me what I need, whether it's a kick in the butt or just not saying anything at all and letting me handle it.

So, yeah, she's been integral to my success out here. Like I said, I hope she stays on the bag for a long time because I really love having her there.

Q. Just a weird question. When was the last time you skated and played a hockey game of any sort, pickup or whatever?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I skated in 2021 on a frozen lake in the winter. I haven't played hockey since I stopped playing back when I was 14. It's been a long time.

Q. A lot of big questions. This one is more specific. How does your game feel now coming into this week? You're traveling back and forth, won the major. How are you feeling?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, the last few months have been a lot fun. I feel like my game has been in a really good spot and I have been able to win twice, which is

awesome. Even in the weeks where I didn't win I was still top finishes. I think the last few months my worst finish is like T16 or something, so that's a lot of the fun.

I feel like hopefully I can just kind of keep that momentum and the confidence level at a high for a while. Playing this week obviously, and then I'm playing two weeks in Ohio and Portland, so it's a busy stretch, and hopefully this week I can kind of get off to a fast start and continue to ride the wave of playing well.

It's fun when you're hitting it well and you have a lot of birdie opportunities.

Q. Earlier this season the LPGA changed their length of clubs that you were allowed to have. Of course you played regular clubs. Has this been a big adjustment for you, or it was at the time?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I'm not a huge fan of that rule change, that's for sure. I've been able to find a driver that's 46 inches that I like a lot. You know, especially the last few months it's worked really well for me, so really happy that we're finally able to find one that's almost as good as my 48 inch.

Hopefully that rule will change again and I'll get back to my old driver.

Q. Win a few more tournaments you'll have more power. Last question from me anyway. The Evian Championship, 72nd hole, I think you had about a 10-footer for birdie. Did you ever as a kid growing up playing on a practice round or public golf course say, this putt here to win the Masters, U.S. Open, Women's Open? What were you thinking when you lined up that putt? A lot of pressure there.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I think every player out here growing up and even now, when we practice we think about possible scenarios, whether it's a to save par on the first hole or to make the putt to win a big championship.

So I definitely have done that a lot, and that opportunity to be on the 72nd hole and know that if I make this putt I can win, that's a great feeling. So it was nice. Brit and I had the exact same read on the putt, which that can ease a lot of the nerves and give you some confidence.

I was just trying to make sure I got it to the hole and gave it a chance to go in, and then to see to drop, it was amazing. To have my second major championship is pretty cool. Hopefully more to come.

Q. The shoes that you have on now, are those a one

off pair or what's up with the shoes?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, Sketchers is taking care of me this week. Some really cool shoes with Canadian leaves, bright red, which I'm usually white, black, navy, so the red is a little bit bright.

But I'm super excited and just proud to be Canadian and proud to be playing this week.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much, Brooke.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Thank you.

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