

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Springfield, New Jersey, USA

Baltusrol Golf Club

Brooke Henderson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Brooke Henderson, another KPMG Women's PGA Champion. What are your thoughts on Baltusrol so far?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Amazing. It's so cool that we have the opportunity to play here this week. The course is in immaculate shape. I've never seen a golf course in such great shape I don't think. The greens are running really firm and fast, but with the weather conditions over the next few days, that could change a little bit. But you have to think your way around and play really smart out here.

Q. We've heard from a couple players that the first four holes, and Stacy Lewis said she would say the first six are going to be super challenging, that you're not going to get a look at birdie until 7. What will be some keys to navigating those holes?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, that's a really interesting mindset. They can definitely play really tough. There's a lot of holes out here that par is good and a lot of holes that, like I said, you really have to think and play smart and give yourself the best look at maybe birdie but also par. I start on the back nine tomorrow so hopefully I can get out there and make a few birdies so when I come around to No. 1 it's not as tough.

Q. Since 2020 you've had the most rounds in the 60s in majors. Do you take a different approach when you're coming into a major, or what do you think is the reason for that?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love major championships. They're very challenging, and you have to play smart, and when the opportunity is there, then you can play a little bit aggressive. I feel like that suits my game really well.

It's nice when my coach, my dad, is here this week, and Brit, my sister, who also caddies for me is always with me, but it's nice to have the team together where we can make



smart decisions together and try to come up with a strategy and kind of try to make it fun, even though it's a really tough week.

It's definitely going to be tough mentally and physically, but hopefully at the end of four rounds we're in a solid position.

Q. I feel like you've described your year as up and down on multiple occasions. How do you give yourself grace when you are on the downs, especially on a week like this where you've got to find an up pretty quickly?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, for sure. I feel like this is one of the most important stretches of the year right now starting this week. We have four majors left, Canadian Open for me, and not too far away. This is definitely a time to start peaking and start to be on the up, so hopefully that happens.

I feel like, yeah, starting off the year on such a high has been a little bit down the last few months, but I feel like the game is right around the corner, and just staying patient to see the results.

Q. How important is it to you, you obviously played last week at a place you've won at a couple times, but how important is it for you to play the week before a major? Obviously you do that quite a bit.

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, this is actually my fifth week in a row, so I've been playing a lot of golf, just trying to get the game in good shape and get it rolling coming into this week and then Pebble in two weeks.

It's just been trying to put in the work and find it again and try to get a couple early birdies hopefully tomorrow and climb the leaderboard quick and hopefully just stay there for the next couple months.

Q. What are your thoughts on this golf course finishing with two par-5s, 17 and 18? Kind of tricky holes. 17 got that blind second shot then 18 the water on the left. What are the strategies you'll take to those two holes?



BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it's really cool finishing with back-to-back par-5s. You don't see that too often, and come the weekend it's going to make a huge difference, and there could be a lot of movement around the leaderboard, so that's kind of exciting.

17 plays a lot different than 18. 17 is a three-shot hole I would say pretty much for everybody, where 18 you can get there in two and possibly have an eagle look. Two different holes, but it's going to be a lot of fun, I think, when it counts.

Q. Anytime your dad has been around mostly in majors, you've been able to work on some adjustments that have been able to take your game to another level. What are you working on this week?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, my dad has been my coach since I was young, so it's always great when he's out here and we can work on strategy and work on different parts of the game. This week is no different. This week is a huge week, and it's circled on our calendars. We always want to start peaking for the major championships. He's just trying to make sure that my game is in a good spot, both mentally and physically, and we've been working to try to get a strategy together.

Q. Any key aspects for this week that you're thinking of?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Patience. It's a challenging golf course. You're going to have to stay patient through the good and the bad, and hopefully there's more good than bad. It's going to be a challenge. It's going to be a test. That's exactly what you want from a major championship.

Q. I think one of the big changes was the putting the last time. There's a possibility that they can control the moisture on the greens this week. Even if you have rain and you have wet fairways, the greens are still going to be firm and fast. How important is that going to be?

BROOKE HENDERSON: It's playing extremely firm and fast right now. Maybe if it pours rain the next four days, that might change a little bit. But right now, calculating release and the different slopes on the greens, it's all going to take -- you need to get some breaks, but you also need to play smart, and hopefully between my caddie, my coach, myself, we can play as smart as we can and then just be aggressive when we need to.

Q. How different is Baltusrol from the courses you typically play on the LPGA Tour, especially in the

South?

BROOKE HENDERSON: This is an amazing venue, and it's amazing that we have the opportunity to play here this week. I'm super excited about it. With all the history and tradition that comes with this place and walking by Jack's plaque on No. 18, it's all really cool.

I'm happy that the women are back here playing. This course is in immaculate condition, very firm and fast greens, which is a little different than most weeks out on Tour. It'll be fun and a challenging test.

Q. What is more challenging for you to kind of overcome, is it having an up-and-down year like you are or would you rather just be playing bad and try and work up from there?

BROOKE HENDERSON: No, I definitely never take away the win or never take away the ups. I feel like golf, just like life, it's like a roller coaster. There's lots of up-and-downs, and hopefully there's more ups.

When you're not playing your best, it kind of reminds you of how good it is and how exciting it is to win. When you have those top finishes, sometimes when you have them all in a row, you kind of take them for granted I would say, but when you have a little bit of trouble here and there, it kind of refreshes you and says, like oh, yeah, it's a lot of hard work to be at the top, and when you're up there, you should celebrate your wins and your good finishes a little bit more because it is such a tough grind.

Q. Does the win earlier this year make some of the bad play less frustrating?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I'm still making a lot of cuts and stuff, so I'm still making a living out here, which is good. Just not maybe up to my standards or my goals. I wouldn't say it's been a terrible year so far. Starting out with a win was great. I've had some top 20s and top 30s. It's been all right. It's just I would prefer to be in contention a little bit more on the weekends.

But it's not far away. I think over the next few weeks, it'll start to get back to where it should be.

Q. What's it like to be back in New Jersey?

BROOKE HENDERSON: I love New Jersey. It's great. It's really close to home, which is pretty cool. The courses remind me a lot of the courses I grew up playing on back in Canada, similar grasses and tree-lined. That always makes it a little bit extra special for me.



Q. Do you have any thoughts with everything going on with the PGA and LIV if that were to join LPGA?

BROOKE HENDERSON: You know, there's a lot of unknowns right now. I don't think we know a lot out here on Tour. But I hope if anything further is to happen that the LPGA would be part of the conversation.

Q. Mental stamina this time of year is super important for everybody. You're in a five-week stretch. How do you maintain not only your physical body but your mental game, as well?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, playing a lot of golf, it does weigh on you a little bit, both physically and mentally. But I feel like I've been just trying to build energy and trying to get stronger every single week leading up into this week here.

I feel like I've been pretty successful at that, just trying to get a little bit better all the time and trying to get the game rolling.

Q. As far as mental stuff goes, I think it's interesting to try to prepare on a course that's firm, fast, hard as all get-out and I know the rain probably won't affect it too much, but when you're preparing on one thing and playing it in totally different conditions, how tough is that to adjust your game and your mental side?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, it is tough when you show up here on Monday and it's different conditions than Thursday or Sunday. After all the traffic out on the course it usually tends to get a lot firmer come the weekend.

We'll have to just it and adjust a lot just day-to-day, shot to shot even, and just play as smart as you can. Not everything is going to go great, but hopefully we make smart decisions and I can execute those shots and then just be the best you can be in the moment.

Q. I followed you for the first hole yesterday in the pro-am, and I noticed you and Brit were really involved with your pro-am partners. Can you talk about is that -- does that help you kind of take a little pressure off yourself? How can you use the pro-am to your advantage, I guess?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, pro-ams are great because you get to see the golf course another time. You get to see it in a little bit different way than just practicing. There's not a lot of pressure but a little bit of pressure to perform and to hit fairways and hit greens, and I kind of like that leading into a championship. You get to play with some really cool people, and you get to learn what they do

on a daily basis, what they do for work, and I find that pretty interesting.

I always like to try to be involved with my pro-am partners as much as I can and try to learn the golf course at the same time.

Q. What went into the decision to play five weeks in a row, because that is quite demanding, and obviously you ended last season with some back issues. What was your thought process?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, I was planning on a four-week stretch, but after I had to withdraw from the New Jersey event in May due to illness, I decided that I would play Vegas, which made it a five-week stretch. The goal was just to start playing again, try to get the game in a good rhythm, and try to start getting some top finishes again.

Q. How important is it to you to win majors in terms of building your career and sort of your legacy as a golfer?

BROOKE HENDERSON: Yeah, you know, your career is kind of defined by how many majors you win or if you're a major champion. I was really fortunate that I was able to get my first major victory when I was really young, so I kind of avoided a lot of those questions of when I was going to win my first one. Then for a while I had when are you going to win your second one, which took a while. Six years, which is a long time.

But I'm looking forward to the next opportunity I have to be in contention and in those final groups because it's such an amazing feeling, especially in a major where there's more pressure and more eyes on you. It's exciting to have that opportunity.

Hopefully just go out, play two solid rounds Thursday and Friday and be in those positions on the weekend.

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