

# RBC Canadian Open

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Ancaster, Ontario, Canada

Hamilton Golf and Country Club

**Garrett Ball**

**Bryan Crawford**

**Hon. Neil Lumsden**

Press Conference



CANADIAN  
OPEN

year. The industry has as a whole contributed 23.2 billion GDP to the Canadian economy. 8 billion in Ontario. 237,000-person years of employment, with 80,000 of those being in the Province of Ontario. 382 million dollars in charitable giving was contributed through golf tournaments and charitable events in this country.

Finally, 4.7 billion dollars of taxes were generated from the Canadian golf industry, with 1.7 billion of that in Ontario.

Tourism in golf in Canada is also flourishing, and you're seeing that through some of the iconic resorts and facilities in this country, Cabot, PEI as a whole, the East Coast, the West Coast, and the newly announced TPC Toronto, which is a flourishing 54-hole course in Toronto where the 2025 RBC Canadian Open will be conducted.

Bringing it home a little bit, the RBC Canadian Open is a major driver of that economic impact. In 2023 we had 84 million dollars economic impact contributing to Canada as a whole, with 66 million of that in Ontario, and we expect to beat that number this year. Bryan, steal a little bit of your thunder, but we're expecting 137,000 fans through the gates this week, with over 60,000 of them outside of the 40-kilometer radius that we would call a tourist, so we're quite excited. To that point, I'm going to introduce Minister Neil Lumsden to make a special announcement and then we'll hand it over to Bryan to talk about the week ahead.

HON. NEIL LUMSDEN: My turn. The numbers you talked about, the rounds of golf and the number of people that play, I only counted for three rounds last year, and one person, so I'm, I was very disappointed in my numbers. But your numbers are spectacular.

Hey, everybody, it's great to be here with Golf Canada, RBC, at the RBC Canadian Open here at Hamilton Golf and Country Club. This is a special place for a lot of reasons. A special place because I've lost a few balls over the years here when I've been invited to play, but more importantly the impact that Garrett talked about, and what this event brings with it when it shows up.

It is a -- look, clearly the RBC Canadian Open is a world class premier event and it's right here in Hamilton. I can't tell you how proud I am of some old friends that date way

THE MODERATOR: We have a very special announcement here. Pleased to be joined by Minister Neil Lumsden, Minister of the Tourism, Culture and Sport with the Ontario government. Thank you very much for joining us.

Also pleased to have Golf Canada Chief Operating Officer Garrett Ball, as well as our Tournament Director Bryan Crawford. I'm going to turn it over to Garrett to get us started for a special announcement.

GARRETT BALL: Thank you, Dan. Before we start, Bob, I see you in the crowd, you did an excellent job yesterday. Bob is so humble. He introduced 14 honored members of the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame during our induction ceremony. You went through their accolades, you never did your self, so this is your moment. Thank you, Bob, for your support yesterday. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

I thought I had the greatest job in golf or in sport and I have watched the Honorable Neil Lumsden over the last three weeks open a soccer facility, introduce the new WNBA team, and get to play golf today, so I'm officially relinquishing that title to you, and it's fantastic to see you.

Before we introduce this special announcement, last week a collection of associations in Canada called the National Allied Golf Association Associations were on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to introduce the 2024 Canadian Economic Impact Study, which is really a component of today's announcement, and I'm going to take a moment to introduce some of the highlights of that economic impact study.

Golf is booming in this country. There's six million Canadians playing the sport. That's up from 5.7 million in 2019. 74 million rounds of golf were played in Canada last

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back and the impact that they make, and that's Golf Canada makes, to our community, to our economy, and in general across the province. And the reach is very significant, and I'll tell you how I know. Because a number of years ago I was involved in World Cycling. Our volunteer base was huge. Some of those volunteers, as they have told me and sent me texts, are volunteering here they're coming from in Peterborough, they're coming from Barrie, they are tied to and understand how important an event like this and the impact it makes in the community. That's why I'm thrilled to be able to announce that our Ministry is supporting this event to the tune of one million dollars. And the impact won't just be for three or four days, it will be significant and it will be long lasting.

We talked, Garrett talked about sport tourism and tourism in general. This touches all bases on what we are trying to do across Ontario. So far, when we partner up, the expectations have been met and exceeded, and this will be no different at the RBC Canadian Open.

I would like to thank the local sponsors, the volunteers, obviously Golf Canada, all the people that have dedicated time to, when you walk in here to this site, when you even start to drive in, you can see the amount of work and care that's been taken in the staging this event, and it resonates throughout Hamilton and again across the province. I couldn't be prouder to be partnered and alongside with a better group. It's, we're thrilled about it and I'm excited to be here. So, thanks for everybody showing up. And to all the golfers, and I know they're not here, but play well and play hard.

THE MODERATOR: Minister, thank you very much. I'll turn it over to Bryan Crawford who obviously puts the circus and the festival together. Maybe just with a comment on how the funding plays into the operational impact of the event.

BRYAN CRAWFORD: Thank you, Dan, and thank you Minister Lumsden, and Garrett. You know, a few years ago in 2019 we sought to kind of re-envision what the tournament was and what our value proposition was, and sought to find ways to make it more than just about golf. Golf certainly is what brings us all together and what will continue to be the focal point of the tournament, but adding music back in 2019, festivalizing the event as a whole, adding food and beverage components that we hadn't done before, it was all aimed at making it about more than just golf and really about our communities and introducing more and more people to the sport.

That's ultimately our job at Golf Canada is to grow the game of golf in this country and make more and more people participants in what is a fantastic activity for your

personal health and wellbeing, your physical, mental social benefits as well. So we sought to do that and have started to see some incredible success from that.

The support from the Ministry, just allows us to continue to amplify in so many ways. As you know, we've added a third night to our concert series this year, from that we have had previously two nights, inviting people that probably never would have thought that they were going to ever be on a golf course come to a golf course. We have seen from the success we've had previously that they come early in the day, they take, they participate in all aspects of the event, not just music. And, likewise, with those that are core golf fans that probably never thought they were going to see an EDM show on a fairway of a golf hole. Well, they will have the chance to do that tomorrow night. This year, for us to have the opportunity to support so many Canadian artists, all of our artists this year are Canadian, the majority of which are also from Ontario as well, supporting Canadian music industry, not just the artists, but all of their teams and support, all the production staff, through our partnership with Live Nation and Sirius XM Canada.

So, some of these sorts of components you'll see when you leave the tent here a little bit later, 2,000 school kids on-site today, we would have had 2,000 yesterday if not for the rain, but introducing more and more people to the game through projects like that. At the end of the day, this tournament, this event will drive over two million dollars to our community and charitable partners, starting with First Tee Canada, but right here in Hamilton Ancaster community, from the Ancaster Agricultural Society, some of the churches, sports clubs, other teams, Knights of Columbus, and all sorts of other groups that partner with us to deliver this tournament and receive charitable benefit as a result.

So, golf ultimately, as Garrett mentioned, the impact of charity across the country of golf, the reason why the PGA TOUR exists is really about driving more impact to our communities, and the RBC Canadian Open has sought to do more and more of that each year, and we've been successful in doing so and our ability to grow and expand and bring more fans on-site and bring more hospitality guests on-site and bring more partners on-site just helps us achieve that mission of growing golf in the country and supporting more and more of our community partners.

So, we thank the Ministry, we thank Minister Lumsden for their support, and we look forward to driving more and more tourism impact here in the province of Ontario.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bryan. If there are any questions, raise your hand and we'll bring you a

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microphone and we'll -- I know we have a couple players coming in through here as well, so if there's not any questions, all of our guests will be available for any one-on-one follow-ups.

All right. Minister, I know that you're on your way to the First Tee pavilion to see some of those 2,000 kids, so if you think this is a tough room, just wait for that. So thank you very much for joining us for the funding and we very much appreciate it.

HON. NEIL LUMSDEN: Pleasure to be here. I'm thrilled.

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