

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Saturday, August 27, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

Ryan Paul Laurence Applebaum Press Conference



1,300 volunteers that were fully subscribed by April. A lot of those being Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club members just shows the impact of this tournament and how this community rallies around that event, especially at the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us here in the press room at the CP Women's Open. Saturday, cut day. We got through our 36 hole cut.

Just to bring a tournament update, pleased to be joined by tournament director, Ryan Paul, as well as Golf Canada CEO, Laurence Applebaum. No formal announcement, I just know that some have requested.

If there is any questions we can offer about the tournament, golf in Canada, anything that's on your mind. Tourism. John, I know you're a big fan.

I'll start with Ryan Paul for comment.

PAUL RYAN: I think if my side, really just a big thanks to the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club. Really from top to bottom they have just been an exceptional partner for us. First of all sticking with us through the pandemic and as we were changing our years and working with Shaughnessy and the Hunt and finally making 2022 work was awesome.

Eric Ruhs was on in Tuesday talking about the tree damage that the club suffered, and really when you think about the magnitude of this event and what a maintenance crew would need to do in a normal year to prepare for a national open, and then add 1,100 trees going down and needing to clean that up and maintain your golf course for member play and then need to prepare for a national Open is incredible.

And then that whole team has just been remarkable to work with, especially Bobby, his assistant as a well. Inside, Guy Prevost has been amazing and an amazing partner for us, and Laurie White and Gino Picciano as our tournaments chairs. We couldn't ask for a better pairing there. Really to help drive the success we've had, it starts with them.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: Good afternoon almost, everybody. Just want to acknowledge a few folks who joined us in the room. We have the president of Golf Canada, Liz Hoffman, here with us, as well our good friend and local, almost local resident president of PGA Canada, Gord Percy, who's not only the head pro but also the GM at Smith Falls Golf Club. It's a home game for Gordy, so it was great to see you today and having Liz with me all week has been amazing.

Just a few things I just wanted to share. As Ryan mentioned, just being in this marketplace, this is a golf market. It's incredible what the city has done. The city of Ottawa, Ottawa Tourism. The welcome we get from the region is spectacular and that filters down to, as Ryan talked about, the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club.

This club has done their reps with professional golf, and in particular professional women's golf. They're pros for what they do inside the ropes and working with the LPGA Tour, but what the membership does and what the community does is just spectacular.

So I just want to acknowledge those friends here in Ottawa.

Also at the business end of the week, at the front side of the week we have a lot of time with our LPGA Tour friends, and having the commissioner here, Mollie Marcoux Samaan and her whole executive team were here and working with all of us, but also the people who really get it done, Christina Lance and the entire marketing and comms team. So big shout out to all you guys for all the work you do.

Golf is in a rich, rich moment for every part of the game. From participation to performance, from play to the general growth of the game, along with all these programs and things that have been in the works for many years. We



had time, especially during this last two years, to really put our foot on the gas.

I will just tell you that these two championships that we've hosted this summer, CP Women's Open and the RBC Canadian Open, have been joyous moments for all of us to be together. There has been a bottled up demand to see the best in the world do what they do, and to have the field we have here in Ottawa and to have Brooke playing as well as she has done, I think she's -- I think she felt like she didn't get her score where her state of her play was on Thursday and Friday, and I'm hoping that that will transmit to today and tomorrow for the weekend.

Really looking forward to all the activity this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open up for questions.

Q. First question is for Laurence. Laurence, Golf Canada set the ambitious goal of having 30 professionals on the top tours by the year 2030. How helpful is it to have young golfers like Maddie Szeryk and Lauren Zaretsky make the cut today?

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: I appreciate you moving the date up by two years, John, because it's 2032. We'll work towards that.

Q. I like to put the pressure on.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: I think like a snapshot of today is really cool, the five players who made the cut. So you look at an up-and-coming professional like Maddie Szeryk who had been part of Team Canada, for her to have a day like she did the last two days, be our top Canadian, she's like one of the most decorated NCAA athletes. It's been amazing to see Maddie have a moment.

Then obviously we have Brooke will be in the mix. Alena playing well and confidently. And then two other players in Rebecca Lee-Bentham who we know very well, and also the friends at the PGA of Canada know very well. But then a young amateur like Lauren Zaretsky who won a Women's Am in 2020 under tougher conditions I would say, to see a young woman like that performing, rise to the strength and momentum in the program, it's really kudos to our chief sport officer, Kevin Blue, who has put a different pace on our program.

He has been inclusive with not only assembling an amazing team national team coaches, but support coaches across the country. What we're doing in amazing places like Bromont, Bear Mountain, TPC Toronto, in doing training camps and being inclusive in finding the best there is.

We have so much good stuff going on at all levels, so the performance is definitely a highlight of what's been happening lately, John.

Q. For Ryan, do you have an update on ticket sales and how many spectators there are? Did the weather yesterday affect the number of spectators at all?

PAUL RYAN: Yeah, so for our ticket numbers, we're looking around 75,000 that would be coming through the gate. That's an estimate at this time.

Obviously the rain didn't help us in the morning and certainly with Brooke's round, but did have a lot of people come out in the afternoon. I think too with the flexibility of tickets that you have that anyday ticket, so if the gate numbers are a little lower on Friday, they'll come Saturday or Sunday because they have that flexibility, so I wouldn't worry that rain knocked us out or put us back.

On top of that, being an estimate of 55% larger than we were in 2017, which was our highest at that time. We are just thrilled with where we are expecting this attendance to be and the support for this tournament from the community.

Q. Nice week so far. Just wondering about the future of that tournament. Obviously coming out of COVID we're going out to Vancouver next year. We know CP likes to do an east-west rotation. Just wondering the status of the conversations for any future venues for this tournament?

RYAN PAUL: So we're thrilled to be going back to Shaughnessy for 2023 and making that one finally happen for a third time. Third time is a charm. Brian Mossop and the team were out this week and looking at the growth that they've had since when they came to Magna in 2019. Really excited to really get down and get that one up and running following this event.

Following into 2024, we just need to -- we'll sit down with CP and really start to look at markets and where we want to go and bring the tournament. That's done with Golf Canada and CP obviously. Picking a market is important for them from a business side and the charitable side and the Childrens Hospital. That's a major component for this event.

So we don't have anything firm yet with 2024 and beyond, but that will be some conversations we'll have this fall.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: I'll add to that, Adam, that it is great to be here. And as is our pattern, we like to dual

hostings to give a board and a management team at the club level a chance to host on multiple occasions.

Obviously with the strength of all the things we talked about in Ottawa with the club and the golf course, I know we're going to be back here in short stead.

It would be exciting to be back here.

Smith Falls would be a wonderful place to also host a major championship. Unfortunately that golf course Gordy told me this morning is not available. So Gordy...

Q. It's Gordon's fault.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: Yeah, it's Gordon's home course.

Q. A quick follow-up as it relates to the performance of this week. Pick whatever metric you want, but do you think this week is trending towards outperforming any recent men's Canadian Opens?

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: That's a really great question. I will tell you that this will be -- and kudos to my colleague on the left -- this will be our most successful CP Women's Open in our history, in every metric except if we can get a winner. That would probably be the only other metric that we can't control.

From fans, from commercials, from amateurs, from our field, has just been a dream scenario being here for the 2022 CP Women's Open. I would say I'm pretty on top of the attendance that we've had since 2017 when I started this role, and I had been on the job two months when I got here in 2017 and got a chance to work with Ryan for the first time.

It's on the cusp of surpassing some of those men's attendance numbers. It's just right on the cusp of it. I think if you look back to '16 and '15 we had some challenging years. I will just tell you it feels like a major in every sense of the word out here. We're just so pleased.

PAUL RYAN: I can jump on there, too. Certainly from a build perspective it's quite comparable. A lot of that has to do with our partners and the fact CP is doing their fan zones on 15 and 18 and the family zone in between 16 and 18 is certainly a massive build.

Also the 14 new partners that we had brought on since the pandemic are activating their brands in a big way, and having public viewing spaces sponsored by those partners really from the 14th hole through to the last really just elevates our brand and our tournament and makes that

build better and more spectator friendly, which we're thrilled about.

Q. Having said all of that, the purse for this tournament is \$2.35 million. The purse for the next RBC men's Open is I believe \$9 million. Can you justify having a purse for the men's event that's nearly four times as much as the women's event, and what can you do about it and when will you do it?

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: I can tell you this is a priority for the management group, this association, this management group, to make progress in that area. We will continue to do work with our partners at CP, with the LPGA Tour, to make some real progress in the area of the purse and the purse development.

Obviously to make comparisons between what we're doing at our PGA Tour events and what we're doing at the RBC Canadian Open, these are two comparisons -- it's obviously two events that we have host organization positions, but it's also something that we have to work very closely with these two tours.

It's different models, different opportunities for us both commercially and from a play side.

But I can tell you that we are very focused on this issue and we'll continue to make progress.

Q. For both of you, this is such a unique event. This tournament being in Ottawa with by far the biggest superstar in the Canadian game and one of the biggest stars in the game in general being so close to home, playing at a did he affect toe home club. Laurence, in your time in the sports world, can you think of another example where a singular player of Brooke's status has played so close to home or at home and had all the pressure on her shoulders like this? As a follow up, can you just weigh in on how she handles that, being around her and seeing how she handles the fans?

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: So I try really hard not to exaggerate or sound -- to overplay it, but in my professional career, I have seen a handful of athletes who perform at this level, have this level of competition, and then also have this level of love and personability that Brooke does.

I've been fortunate to spend a lot of time with her and it's so genuine and real, and I think it's why she connects with Canadians and sports fans in general. I talk a little bit to her family when I see them, and there is nothing better than to walk the golf course with her coach and her dad,

because you know where to stand and you know where to be to watch.

I've asked him often, like, wow, it can be suffocating. If you saw her on the first tee today or on Thursday, I didn't see her tee off on Friday, but on Thursday and just now it is -- she's got it. Like she's got this. It's really, really quite a phenomenon to see that part.

When it comes to comparables, Serena Williams is about to retire at the U.S. Open in ten days. I think a couple people in this room might be doing some coverage for that. I'm not sure.

But the buzz around Serena in New York is kind of what I remember the buzz around Brooke here in Ottawa, if that sounds a little bit odd.

She just has it, Brooke. It is so hard to find and define, but you know when you see it, and she has it.

Q. As a follow up to Adam's question, this is for both of you, are there benefits to having CP Women's Open in a city like Ottawa that sort of straddles two provincial borders and therefore can draw on a larger provincial base, with Quebec different language group?

PAUL RYAN: It does. Anywhere we can host and bring in from multiple markets is big for us. Bringing this event across the country and bringing it to new markets, whether they be Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, even Montréal, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, everywhere we've been has their benefits, and certainly is great for us to make those impacts in the charities at the hospitals with CP.

Yeah, being able to work closely with Golf Ontario, Golf Quebec, helps us drive the attendance numbers you're seeing this week.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: Maybe an interesting sort of point is that our play numbers for golf in Canada, so since we ran the championship last in 2019, 22% more golf has been played in our country year to date since 2019, which is sort of our pre-COVID play numbers.

And the two provinces that index the highest are Quebec and Ontario, which is really kind of an interesting thing. Funny story on the range. Our qualifier from the Augusta National Women's Amateur, Anna Davis, on the range hitting balls. Obviously she's a lefty and she's like, can you explain this whole lefty golfer here.

I've had so many people comment to me about left-handed

golfers, and we talked a little bit about the hockey side and Canada and being here at this spot.

Anna qualified by winning the Augusta National Women's Amateur, and we provide an exemption to that winner since Jennifer Kupcho back in 2019. It was great to see Anna not only play so well, but to make the cut as well today. Kind of a funny hockey, sort of golf story.

Q. Couple questions for you guys. With the RBC Canadian Open being in Toronto for the next foreseeable few years, does that negate you bringing this tournament to Toronto? Would you do two tournaments in the same location, same year?

PAUL RYAN: Yeah, we would certainly consider it. Being at Magna in 2019, I think CP saw a lot benefit to hosting early in the GTA, and quite frankly had us scratching our heads as to why did it take so long to go back to the GTA, because it was Angus Glen before that in 2001.

I think for us it's going back to sitting down with CP and what the future looks like. We wouldn't rule out the GTA based on the RBC Canadian Open being played there.

THE MODERATOR: Correction, GTAHA, Bob.

Q. This isn't specific about Toronto or GTAHA, but have you had a lot of enquiries from courses reaching out asking to be potential hosts?

PAUL RYAN: Quite a few actually and especially during COVID in 2020 and 2021. We ended up doing a lot of visits and giving courses full evaluations of their properties, and either if they were a viable host or not, and if not, what would need to happen to become considered for a CP Women's Open, whether it's length or size or range. Compounds are certainly a big one in that, and TV and catering and our operations.

So there has been a lot, and in my time working with the tournament and even since the 2007, you're really starting to see the shift of courses that are approaching us wanting to host The Open and coming out and seeing what this build is and saying, how do we get this on our golf course, rather than us asking, would you like to host a CP Women's Open, which is just special to be a part of that.

Q. Can you tell us about any future television plans for this tournament?

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: So we're extremely thrilled with our partnership with our broadcast partners at both TSN and Golf Channel and what the LPGA Tour is doing. We have an amazing window this afternoon, today,



tomorrow, and as many of you may know, our partners at CBS are broadcasting the CP Women's Open in the U.S. on CBS. In North America I should say.

So we're very excited about that evolution.

That being said, we see how important it is to have the flexibility that was shown yesterday in being able to extend coverage and being able to cover Brooke, cover Lorie, and I would also say that that's going to be a number one priority leaving 2022, and the future is making sure that we can have a broader base of exposure and coverage.

That's a priority for Mollie Marcoux. We talked about it earlier this week. It's a priority for us and I know it's a priority also for our partners at TSN.

RYAN PAUL: We have entered an agreement, a partnership with TSN that TSN will be the Canadian broadcaster of the CP Women's Open through 2025, which we were very thrilled to get into that partnership this year, too.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you everybody for joining us. Laurence, I know you had a Jocelyne Bourassa moment. Just a quick recollection.

LAURENCE APPLEBAUM: Many of you will have seen the ribbons being worn in honor of Jocelyne Bourassa, who passed away a year ago in August. Many of you know her amazing story, but she won in '73 and then she was the executive director of the tournament from 19 -- if I have my years right, Dan -- 1980 through 2000.

So it's an amazing legacy, and I was fortunate to see Jocelyne at our Hall of Fame days that we had in 2017, '18, '19. Was really amazing to see her.

Lorie spoke about her often this week, but I think it's really just a nice moment to think about Jocelyne when we're here and how special she was and what she meant to this event. Thanks, Dan.

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