

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2017

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

Brittany Lang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 2017 U.S. Open Women's Championship. I am really pleased to welcome today our defending champion Brittany Lang.

I have to apologize. I know Brittany is a little late today. That's actually my fault. Brittany was extremely gracious, came down to spend some time with 150 or so kids that we have on hand, some of whom you see here today, who are here as part of Junior Day at the U.S. Women's Open.

Can you talk about being with those kids and being a role model and what it means to spend some time with them?

BRITTANY LANG: That's the future of women's golf. I think it's so great how the USGA and the LPGA are taking control of it. That's our you future. Getting those girls excited about it and into it, I think golf is such a great sport to be around for young girls, learning great values and things like that.

But it's always great to meet the little girls. I don't think you realize what a role model you are until you go over there and the little girls know your name. So it's very special.

THE MODERATOR: It's hard to believe, but it's been a year since you claimed the U.S. Women's Open trophy at CordeValle. Can you talk about the last year, the impact that had and what it's like to spend the year as U.S. Women's Open champion?

BRITTANY LANG: It's been really special. This is the biggest event in women's golf. As an American, it's your nation's Open and it's very special. I had my whole family there which was an absolute dream come true to have everybody there. It probably took a half a year for it to sink in even though the trophy was there every time I went home.

I'm excited to be back. I love U.S. Opens. I've been hitting it really good. Excited to get out there tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions. I know that you spent a lot of time here. Talk about the golf course and the conditions, what to expect



throughout the week.

BRITTANY LANG: First off, it's a fantastic golf course. It's in great shape. It's tough. It's long. If you are hitting the ball well, I know it seems silly to say that, if you are hitting it well, it's not too difficult. The greens are soft. The greens are pure. They are not super undulating. It's a long golf course. It's in great shape.

I think the USGA will mess around with some of the lengths and it will be difficult on some days but you can attack because the greens aren't as firm as CordeValle.

Q. Based on the way you are playing now, are you confident going in or is it you are finding your game or what?

BRITTANY LANG: Yeah, you know, it has been a little bit of a disappointing year. I've been hitting the ball so, so well for the last few months and really haven't had any great finishes. So it's been a little frustrating. I'm going to try to stay patient.

I always seem to play well at U.S. Opens. If you are hitting the ball really well, and I'm hitting it long right now, you should have a good chance at the U.S. Open. I will be nervous and excited on the first tee tomorrow. I'm going in with a lot of confidence because I've been in control of my ball striking.

Q. Didn't last year you didn't have a top 10 going in and then --

BRITTANY LANG: I'm not sure on that. I know I had top 10 in Atlantic City before. You might be right. I don't know if I had many. Maybe just one or something like that.

Q. As you know, Brittany Lincicome actually admirably spoke her mind when asked a question about Donald Trump and said she hopes he stays away from the tournament so it's not a big debacle and it will be about us and not him. Do you agree with her?

BRITTANY LANG: I really don't want to answer any questions about politics. I'd love to answer stuff about golf. I will say Brittany's my best friend and I guarantee you she didn't mean it literally what she said. She's the nicest, sweetest girl you'll meet. She's not very political. I think everybody is taking it too literally.

Q. How is that politics? Didn't she just say that one person shouldn't be here. I'm curious why you-all are so afraid to talk about that.

BRITTANY LANG: I would love to answer a golf question for you if you have one.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how this Open as been different for you, if it is even, as a defending champion, any extra pressure or if you are not that worried about?

BRITTANY LANG: I think on the first tee I will be a little more nervous, but it's been cool. It's been special walking down the fairways and having people say, Let's do it again, Brittany. Another year. It's really special. The fans have made me feel that way.

I think it will be pretty similar. I definitely have a lot of confidence after winning it last year. It gives me some confidence, as well.

Q. How aware of are you of Solheim Cup points this week?

BRITTANY LANG: Yeah, it is. Solheim year it's always very stressful especially with double points and triple points for these majors. I haven't played super great this year. Like I said, I need to be patient. I've been hitting the ball really well. There's so many good things right now, I haven't put them together. I think I need to take my eye off that Solheim list and play some golf and be a little bit more relaxed. You tend to get really high strung on Solheim year. You are always checking how am I doing, how am I doing instead of being enthralled in your process which is what makes you play well anyway. So I think I need to get back to my process and take my eyes off that list.

Q. I'm interested in hearing about your focus and dealing with all the distractions not only of a major but everything surrounding this particular major. What is your mental process like? As a defending champion, how do you deal with focus this week?

BRITTANY LANG: Focus is always a hard thing. It's not like you go out every day and you're spot on, you see every shot. Every day is different. You are a human being.

You get back to playing golf, hitting good shots. Everybody playing here knows how to do that. They have their process, whether it's alignment or seeing your shot or working on what you said focus, it's hard. But especially think when it's a big event, I think you have to pay particular attention to whatever it is that makes you play well. Like for me it's my setup and seeing shots and being positive and talking to my caddie, and stuff like that.

It is a big event but you have to break it down into how you play good golf.

Q. Did winning last year change your perspective on that?

BRITTANY LANG: On what?

Q. On your focus, on improving your mental game?

BRITTANY LANG: I've won twice I always find it's -- golf is a funny game, you minute a major, you win tournaments, you play well you think you have it all figured out. Then you don't get the results you are looking for. It's a tough game. You have to stay patient and dwell on the positives.

I would say winning makes you a little bit more impatient sometimes. I would say yes to answer your question. You just have to have a lot of mental strength and discipline to work your process and take it each shot at a time which is way easier said than done.

Q. After the Men's and Women's Opens last year, there's been like a reevaluation of the rules of golf.

I want to get your thoughts on what you think about the way the rules are have been evolving.

BRITTANY LANG: To be honest with you, I can't help you much on that topic. I don't know a lot about what's been changing. I know a few things but I'm not super knowledgeable on all that. I'm sorry, I don't much about that.

Q. It seems like there's more of a push just for common sense. Do you get a sense of that, that they are trying to make the rules simpler?

BRITTANY LANG: Yes. For instance, making it all a red hazard. I think that is very smart. For instance, the ball moving on the putting green. I think personally the worst rule in golf is the spike mark rule. But then you get into so many different things. If you hit two perfect shots on the green and you have a humongous spike mark in your way and you can't tap it down, it causes you not to make the putt, I think that is absolutely ridiculous.

There are so many rules in golf, yes, I do think they are trying to make it simpler. I only know a few of the ones they've changed. I don't know a lot of them. It's definitely going to be better for the game for sure.

Q. You said half a year to have it sink in that you had won the U.S. Open. What have been the tangible ways that you have felt the impact of being the Open champion? Has it changed your mindset? Has it changed the way people approach you?

BRITTANY LANG: People take you more serious, you know, being a major champion. It's one thing to win an

LPGA tournament or professional tournament, but it's another thing to be called a major champion. People take you serious.

I've had really cool opportunities with sporting events, like dropping the puck at the Stars game or taking the trophy at the Mets game.

The one thing it does give you confidence even if you aren't having good finishes. You know when you get in a situation like that that you can get it done and handle the pressure. That's a positive thing as a professional. You know you can get it done when it matters.

Q. Do you get a sense that players are taking extra care marking their balls after what happened at Lexi at the ANA inspiration?

BRITTANY LANG: That was unfortunate. I was thinking, my gosh, I need to make sure you are really being aware of where you are putting it. A lot of times -- say you hit a bad shot and you are throwing it down, you do have to be careful of that because you never know who's watching or what's going to happen.

Q. Unrelated question, the \$5 million purse, that feels like progress, it feels like a deal. How big of a deal do you consider it?

BRITTANY LANG: It's a huge deal. I came out on tour in 2006. I played in 2005. It's amazing. These women are -- these are the best female athletes out here playing. They deserve every bit of a \$5 million purse, if not more. The USGA is showing a lot of respect for women's golf, which these women deserve.

Q. It's a lot of progress, do you ever get frustrated with the rate of progress?

BRITTANY LANG: Yes, it is. Yes and no. I have seen so much progress but then when you compare it to the men, it's a big gap. But I think it's kind of a constant struggle or battle that women face in their lives.

It is good to see it on the upswing.

THE MODERATOR: I would like to note Brittany mentions that she played a little bit in 2005, she actually almost won the 2005 Women's Open as an amateur. Then came back and did it as a professional last year.

Congratulations. Thanks again for being with us, both with the kids and the media today. Thank you for an amazing year representing the USGA and the U.S. Women's Open trophy. You have been a wonderful champion. Look forward to seeing you go after it again this week.