

# U.S. Women's Open Championship 2017

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

## Cristie Kerr

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to welcome the 2007 U.S. Women's Open Champion, Cristie Kerr.

Cristie is here playing in her 22nd U.S. Women's Open this week. She is tied with two time winner Karrie Webb for the most in this week's field in terms of most number of championships played.

She has 8 Top-10 finishes over those 22 years including 8th a year ago at CordeValle. But, you know, before we talk about recent, let's go back to your first --

CRISTIE KERR: That's a long time ago.

THE MODERATOR: We're not that old. 1995, the Broadmoor. Can you talk about memories that you have, what did it mean to you to play in your first Women's Open, some memories of that week just sort of the early days of being at the Women's Open.

CRISTIE KERR: I just remembered how hard it was. I was from Miami, sea level and the ball was going forever. I couldn't figure out how far to hit my clubs. I think my dad caddied for me. I remember Annika winning that week, so you know, it's a different kind of golf.

THE MODERATOR: To be playing in the Women's Open, what does that mean for you to play in the National Championship, you know, whether it's the first time in 1995 or to this day, can you talk a little bit about what that means for you?

CRISTIE KERR: It's my favorite tournament. It's our National Championship as an American. It's hard, you know, it's the hardest test in women's golf consistently year after year and it means the world and to want to -- still hopping for a second but, you know, having won one at least so far has been very special.

THE MODERATOR: You like it hard. You've said that many times. You like the golf course hard. You like to come and play the test that the Women's Open presents.

CRISTIE KERR: Yeah. I feel just like I focus better for some reason. Sometimes when you have a very wide



fairway it's kind of hard to focus on the target, and this tournament makes you focus on what you need to focus on to be up there to play well.

THE MODERATOR: Excellent. Thank you very much. We'll open it up to some questions.

#### **Q. Can you just talk about this golf course in particular and what makes this such a difficult test this week?**

CRISTIE KERR: It has everything. It's long. You know, it's not super tight off the tee but there's plenty of rough so you have to hit the fairways. This course has firmed up today. This course was a different golf course today. This course was like okay, yeah, I'm an Op course.

Played tough the last couple days but today the greens sped up considerably and things were firming up and it's got everything, you know.

It's going to be a mental grind out there, you're going to have to manage yourself in between shots because it's very demanding on every shot, especially the up and downs around the greens.

The greens are massive so you have to almost try to look at them as separate greens and get them in the different areas because they're just massive.

If you guys haven't seen it, I guess it's the 5th or 6th hole the island green with the water around. It's probably the biggest green I've ever seen. It's real easy to hit the green. That can be a little intimidating sometimes because like wow, it looks like you can hit it a mile away from the hole.

So, this course has everything. The greens are probably the best U.S. Open greens I've seen. They're really, really good.

#### **Q. Some of us have talked about this this week and maybe you would be helpful here. As you know, obviously we're at Trump National. As you know, there's conversation about the President and some of the things he said in the past.**

**When we bring that up to almost every golfer they say they don't want to talk about it, which is totally their right, of course, "I don't want to talk about politics. I don't want to talk about that."**

Brittany Lang just said, "I'm here to talk about golf." Again, totally her right.

But if I were to ask those questions, and I have, of -- or similar kind of social questions to Venus Williams or Serena Williams, to NBA players, Olympic figure skater, Ashley Wagner took after Putin and Trump and they feel very comfortable talking about it.

I'm curious why you think LPGA players, the ones we asked don't feel comfortable talking about those issues? Thank you.

CRISTIE KERR: Well, I don't know how much I'm going to help you out on this issue, either. I don't think it's that, what did you say, your last comment was why you don't think they want to contribute?

There's no benefit to us. There's only benefit to you writing the article so there's no benefit to us giving comments, you know, about this because whatever we can say can be taken out of context and we are here to just play golf, we are here to talk about a fabulous golf course.

Yes, Mr. President, Mr. Donald Trump owns this golf course. But that was said a long time ago. So, we are here to talk about golf. I'm not going to really help you out in that respect.

**Q. Have you ever thought why tennis players feel so comfortable talking about it or others and golfers, women golfers don't?**

CRISTIE KERR: Well, I can't speak to them. I'm not them. And I know we all just want to focus on golf this week and all the amazing Junior Golfers we want to inspire to play this game. It's not a load at all. It's the truth.

There's just really no benefit to getting wrapped up in politics. There just isn't. That's what I have to say about that. Maybe if I was in politics but not so soon. I don't think I'd be electable anyways.

THE MODERATOR: I'd vote for you?

CRISTIE KERR: That's awesome. Can I count on that?

THE MODERATOR: Yes. Did you have another question in the front?

**Q. Locally there's been a bit of --**

CRISTIE KERR: I can't hear you.

**Q. Locally there's been a bit of a rivalry between Trump National and Hamilton Farm Golf Club which hosted a couple of LPGA events a few years ago. Having placed both courses, any thoughts on how they're similar or different?**

CRISTIE KERR: This one is a lot more difficult. I think Hamilton Farms is amazing. I played the Match Play there, almost won the Match Play there.

This course plays firmer and faster than that one typically and, you know, there's just a lot more trouble on this course than Hamilton Farms.

So, I just think this one is a lot more difficult.

**Q. How have you managed to stay at the top of your game for so long, you know, with all your business interests, being a mom, you're longevity is quite impressive, what's your secret?**

CRISTIE KERR: Lots of the wine (laughter).

**Q. You do have a wine venture as well.**

CRISTIE KERR: Yes. Yeah. It's funny, you talk about politics this week and everything. I'm so not involved with that. But it's funny Mike Heady actually made a "Make Wine Great Again" hat so that was kind of funny. I saw him with it today. That's kind of funny. He will not be wearing it for the tournament.

**Q. What is the secret to the longevity, because when you think about with everything going on, the talent in the game now, the younger players, how do you stay in top form and continue to compete consistently for as long as you have?**

CRISTIE KERR: I honestly think it's desire. I mean you can ask Julie Inkster the same thing. I'm still a grinder with my practice. I literally came in here late because I was still putting. I love to practice, I love to compete and win and have a chance to be contending and it's a rush and it's -- I often say, you know, golf was the first thing I ever fell in love with and it's a relationship that you can have for a lifetime.

I feel like as long as I feel like working at it, feel like training and trying to keep my body fit -- and you know, it's walking. You can walk and hit. You can play for as long as you want.

I always had that mentality and Julie Inkster has always been an idol of mine in that respect and if you have the desire to do it -- I mean I've won many times in my 30s and when I was 39 now and I want to try to break some of the stereotypes out here, win in my 40s and 50s. Why not? I mean there's only upside.

**Q. How much are you thinking about the Solheim**

**Cup right now and the prospect of being joined by some newcomers on the tee like Danielle Kang, obviously?**

CRISTIE KERR: I'm so excited. Obviously having Julie Inkster as the Captain again, I've said more than once, she's kind of an idol of mine, somebody that I've always looked up to and emulated. We're thinking about it a lot. The chemistry of the team seems like it's going to be a bit different than last time. That's not a bad thing.

She'll really look to the veteran players on the team to help the team jell together. It's going to be a blast and it's going to be a great, great venue in Des Moines.

**Q. I think it's going to be your 9th Solheim Cup. Does it still excite you?**

CRISTIE KERR: It does. There's nothing like it, standing on that first tee, teeing it up with a partner, you know, maybe it's a rookie this time. You never know who is going to be on that team, right?

So, to be able to help them and make them feel comfortable, play as a partner with them or maybe it's somebody I played with in the past and you don't need to do anything.

It's a lot of fun. It's very serious competition but it is an exhibition and it is to grow the game and it's a blast.

**Q. In years passed, maybe you could go into a tournament and pick maybe 10, 15 players and say they've got a pretty good chance of doing well and they would.**

**I mean this year, how wide open is this event?**

CRISTIE KERR: I mean our Tour has so much talent now. It's really hard to answer that question. You feel like anybody could win on a given week. I just don't know how to answer that.

Anybody can win now everybody is so good whether you're 15, Lydia came out here when she was 14 winning LPGA events.

You never know who is going to be the super young one or super old like me. I'm not really that old but, you know, 14, it feels old.

**Q. Lexi Thompson has experienced a lot of difficult situations this year, she's a friend of yours. I'm wondering in the aftermath of ANA winning a title and then finding out her mom has cancer and finishing runner up twice, can you speak to how well she's handled some tough situations and maybe how she's grown up?**

CRISTIE KERR: Yeah. I mean she really has grown up a lot. What happened at ANA was unfortunate. She

did move the ball incorrectly and had to get a penalty, et cetera. That was a tough break for sure.

I mean I think a lot of these things, you know, have given her perspective you know, in life especially her mom getting cancer and, you know, she's playing I think with a little bit more of a freedom because she's a little bit more perspective on life now.

That's what happens when you get older, you go through things or family members go through things or you become a parent. You don't want to have bad things happen but all those things are little pebbles that you collect and you put into your pocket and they give you different perspective on life and you know, sometimes when you're so focused on golf you can make golf such a big deal but golf is still a game and you should still be enjoying it when you play it and that's one of the reasons why I've had such a long career I really enjoy what I do.

But, you know, she's getting to that point now where she's starting to collect those rocks and putting them in her pocket and those memories and those life perspective changing events that make golf not seem such a big deal.

So, I think that's why she's starting to, starting to play better consistently.

**Q. You've defended a lot titles on the LPGA Tour and here at the Women's Open. Is there something or what is different about trying to defend the Women's Open title compared to other tournaments?**

CRISTIE KERR: I mean I think it's similar but obviously it seems like a much bigger deal to defend the U.S. Women's Open. I've had the opportunity to defend it one time before and it's -- I mean it's the biggest stage that we have.

So, everything else is heightened.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions today? Cristie, thanks so much for joining us today. 2007 U.S. Women's Open Champion. Look forward to watching you tackle the course this week. Wish you a lot of luck.

CRISTIE KERR: Thanks you, guys. Thanks everyone.