

# U.S. Women's Open Championship 2018

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

## Karrie Webb

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 2018 U.S. Open Women's Championship. It is my pleasure to introduce two-time Women's Open champion, Karrie Webb. She won back-to-back in 2000 and 2001. She will be playing in her 23rd consecutive U.S. Women's Open and this year was granted a special exemption by the USGA into the field.

Karrie, you are a staple here at the U.S. Women's Open. What kind of distinguishes this championship and talk a little bit about the challenge that it presents.

KARRIE WEBB: I'm very happy to be here. I'm thankful for the USGA for granting me the special exemption this year to play here at Shoal Creek. I'm excited to be here.

The U.S. Open is a special golf tournament. I think it is the ultimate in our sport. Anyone would want a U.S. Open on their résumé. I feel pretty fortunate to have two of those on my résumé. I think it brings the best out in the champion each year. And obviously playing on some of the best courses in the country and different ones every year, obviously it teaches you to be a more flexible player and have patience in different areas.

I think this week it will test our patience in different areas, as well. Excited to be here.

#### **Q. Talk about your week so far. Have you been able to get much practice in?**

KARRIE WEBB: I was fortunate, I played 18 holes Monday morning knowing that -- well, I was in Florida Sunday, so I already knew what was coming. So I was fortunate to get 18 holes in Monday, knowing that there was every chance that we wouldn't get to see the course until we teed it up again.

The course was very wet on Monday before we got this rain, so interested to see how it is this afternoon.

#### **Q. You've played in a lot of these. Have you ever seen one this wet and what do you think ought to be done?**

KARRIE WEBB: Like I said, I haven't seen the course since Monday. I would say that it will be the softest



U.S. Open course I have played.

#### **Q. I wonder, first of all, you played a practice round, but I mean, how much different will the golf course -- how much will that help you other than seeing the golf course? Also, in your experience, maybe, that's happened, what impact does it have for the players who just tee it up in the championship without ever playing a practice round?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, like I said, I feel fortunate to have seen it on Monday. I think anyone who is unfortunate not to get to see it, you hope you've got a good caddie and they have been able to walk the course at least. Our yardage books and greens books and everything we have these days are so much better than 23 years ago, when I first played my first U.S. Open. Sometimes you can play courses without having seen them. The only saving grace for those players is that it's going to be soft. So you are not going to have to worry about landing it 30 feet left of the hole to get it to funnel and release into where the pin is as much as you normally would.

#### **Q. You are in very elite company having won back-to-back U.S. Opens. Sung Hyun Park comes in as a defender. Will these soft conditions play into her hands as one of very long hitters on the Tour?**

KARRIE WEBB: It all depends on how the course is set up. In our yardage books there's multiple tee boxes that can be used. It will be up to the USGA how they decide to set it up. It could setup for anyone that's hitting lots of fairways and greens.

The Bermuda rough on Monday wasn't that long. We've got sun out this afternoon with plenty of moisture in it. It's actually probably going to play harder because it's so wet. The ball is going to come out dead. With the approaches to the green being soft, you are not going to have that option of running it out. I think length is always advantage when you are playing a soft, wet golf course. I think with these green complexes coming in from the fairway is probably going to be just as advantageous as hitting it long.

#### **Q. Do you think for major championships playing the ball down is sacrosanct or are there times when there should be an exception made to that rule, depending on the situation?**

KARRIE WEBB: I know the history of the USGA and

the U.S. Open having never played it up.

Monday, when I was practicing, I was practicing out of some of the poorer areas on the golf course in anticipation that possibly we will be faced with that. Actually a lot of the players that I played with were asking me why I was doing that. I was like, the USGA has never played it up at a U.S. Open. I'm mentally preparing for the fact that we might play it down.

It is also a rule in the USGA rules book, so it can be used. Like I said, I haven't seen the course since Monday. So it's hard to make a comment on whether it should be up or not. At the end of the week there will still be someone who is a U.S. Open champion.

**Q. To follow that up, if it's played down, there will be a lot of relief from causal water and couldn't the round stretch on longer than normal?**

KARRIE WEBB: I guess so. If you play it up, it's going to take longer. The whole process of picking it up and cleaning it and replacing it adds time to the round as well. Whether you are dropping from causal water or playing it up, it will add length to how long it takes us to play.

With the causal water areas, you just hope that those areas, if you are on the fairway, that there are areas within the fairway that you can drop it and you are not forced to hit out of causal water or play out of the rough.

**Q. Was it raining when you had your practice round?**

KARRIE WEBB: I think I played maybe the first four holes and then the last couple of hole in the rain.

**Q. Curious, rain aside, wetness aside, if you had a thought about the type of golf course it is and how it sets up, what the challenges are this week and how it sets up for your game?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I'm really disappointed for Shoal Creek because it's a fantastic golf course, such a wonderful layout, very simplistic in many ways. Very challenging. The green complexes, if the USGA had been allowed to set up the way they would have wanted, firm and fast, there is a lot of straight tee shots. Even a dogleg tee shot, landing areas, if they were firm and fast, aren't very wide.

And the green complexes, if they had been firm and fast, would have posed quite a challenge getting to some of the pin locations and getting up-and-down if you miss the green.

I think now obviously some of that's taken away. Like I said, with the wet conditions, it will possibly play a lot

longer depending on the setup. And there's still going to be a challenge around the greens if you miss the green. Even on Monday morning a lot of those lower chipping areas were very wet. So there is still going to be wet, so you are either going to be forced to chip from there or your option could be dropping on a down slope or in the rough.

So those challenges are still going to exist, so that's why I think hitting fairways and greens just like any U.S. Open is going to be critical.

**Q. I know that you cut your schedule to savor more moments off the course. Are you finding that you are also savoring more moments on the course and is this especially one of those weeks?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, definitely. This is only my fourth tournament of the year. So I really -- I played in the Australia Open and took about I guess maybe two and a half months off before I played again.

I really enjoyed -- even though I played -- everyone is blaming me for the rain, by the way. I played Dallas and we only played 36 holes and we played Kingsmill and we only played 54 holes. So it's partially my fault, I guess.

I have enjoyed coming back and competing. My mind and body feels really fresh. When I look at just the block of tournaments that I have decided to play, I'm eager to play those. It did you not seem like that yearly long grinds that I have done for the past 22, 23 years.

**Q. For players who didn't get and won't get a practice round in this week, I don't know how many there will be, just how daunting would that be on this course and these conditions?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yeah, I think that with it playing softer, I think it will be as daunting. If they can get out there and walk it, I think maybe -- I'm sure there's going to be girls out there chipping and putting the greens, the ones that can't get on the course. I think they will get a look at it.

It's not your best preparation for an U.S. Open. I'm sure that adds to the anxiety of the week. We're all underdone, I guess, as far as our preparation for the U.S. Open. No one is probably feeling like they have seen the course as much as they usually would have liked.

**Q. Do you have a number of tournaments in mind that you plan to play this year?**

KARRIE WEBB: No, not really. I guess it would depend on how I play. I have a schedule through the British Open, and then I will assess after that.

**Q. Do you foresee the rest of your career being along those lines in terms of playing fewer events?**

KARRIE WEBB: Yes, I guess so. I don't know. This is a real experimental year as far as with where I am at with playing part-time. I never thought I could be a part-timer, to be honest. I have always been a grinder and practicer. I have had a relatively good schedule for many years. I'm always a practicer and I thought if I didn't put the time in and I didn't play well, I didn't deserve to because I didn't work hard enough. That's sort of been my motto. That change in mindset is something that is the experiment to see if I cannot have to do the grind and still enjoy the few tournaments that I play.

**Q. Off the course, you say you really enjoy the time away from the competition. Is there any particular experiences that have been particularly enjoyable? Any trips or activities, anything fun?**

KARRIE WEBB: Part of the reason for the change or the limiting my schedule is, you know, I wanted to start spending more time at home in Australia. I spent from the week before the Australia Open until the middle of April and that was longest consecutive amount of time I have spent in Australia for 22 years. Just being home felt good. Being around my family and going to gymnastics and soccer matches. And one of my nieces places golf, playing golf with her. Just normal stuff with my family was enjoyable.

THE MODERATOR: We really appreciate you being here. Best of luck this week.

KARRIE WEBB: Cheers. Thank you.