

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Tuesday, August 21, 2018

Chad Fawcett Bruce Klaassen Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Thanks everyone for joining us here today in the media center at the 2018 CP Women's Open. We're joined today by Bruce Klaassen, superintendent at Royal Regina Golf Club, who is representing the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association. He'll be making a special presentation on behalf of the CGSA to Chad Fawcett, superintendent of Wascana.

So, Bruce I'll turn it over to you.

BRUCE KLAASSEN: Good morning. The Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association would like to thank Golf Canada and Canadian Pacific Railway for the opportunity to honor one of our members.

The Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association represents a thousand individuals nationally across Canada. Our mandate is to support and promote the profession and to provide education and research resources for golf course superintendents.

As part of the ongoing effort to recognize the role of superintendents at golf facilities, the CGSA sponsors a national tournament program for members that host these prestigious events.

Our members are an essential part of the team that ensures the golf course provides fair and consistent conditions for the tournament.

Today we recognize Chad Fawcett, who has been a member of the CGSA since 2013, and superintendent here at Wascana Golf and Country Club for the past four seasons.

It is my pleasure to call upon Chad to accept this CGSA national tournament award for his efforts in hosting the most prestigious women's golf course tournament, the LPGA CP Women's Open.

(Applause.)

CHAD FAWCETT: Thanks, Bruce.



(Presentation.)

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys. We're going to turn it over to some media questions now. If you do have any questions, please just wait for the microphones so we can get it transcribed.

Q. Congratulations. Maybe you can tell me how old you are first.

CHAD FAWCETT: Got to think about that; 33 years old, yeah.

Q. Tell me what it means to you as a 33-year-old guy to be in charge of a tournament like this?

CHAD FAWCETT: It's pretty special. Definitely a lot of work has gone into it. This year in particular has been a very tough season we've had. I know Bruce could probably vouch for that as well. It hasn't been the easiest year in Regina or Southern Saskatchewan to grow grass.

To host an event like this makes you feel pretty proud. I think all my staff feel the same way.

Q. Can you compare the golf course now to what it was this time last year? Maybe somebody who played it last year would've found the differences here.

CHAD FAWCETT: Yeah, this time last year, I mean, last summer we had a season that was probably a record dry year. I think we went into the tournament with only -- we only probably had about three inches of rain and I think it all came in May that season, so most of the summer was a fight just to sort of keep things wet and keep them green.

I guess if you were to compare the golf course from last year to this year this time of year, I think they're very similar. We tried to keep the conditions pretty similar from last year's event to this year's event.

The rough got a little longer this year mainly just because we did have a little bit more precipitation. A little bit more fertilizer went on golf course just to juice some areas up and make it a little more difficult.

As far as playing conditions, it's going to play very similar. The rough might just be a little longer than last year. The greens should be the same firmness and

same speed as last season, so...

Q. Ralph Watkins was a long-time golf superintendent. He once told me, he says, They don't make the course special for any special events. It's like this all the time. Is that a challenge for you to do that, to pump it up for a big event like this and keep it pristine for the members?

CHAD FAWCETT: Yeah, I think if you talk to any superintendent around these areas, you start off in spring and it's not -- the snow melts, and it's not like courses around the world where they're green all of a sudden.

Growing grass here takes time. It really took us until about August to start feeling a little bit better about course conditions here.

I don't know if that really answered your question or not, but...

Q. How does preparing for this tournament compare to other tournaments you've had to compare for?

CHAD FAWCETT: You know, this is a big event. This is definitely Canada's biggest event as far as golf on the ladies side goes. The preparation kind of you work all year towards that, and then when you get to this point, you're there. You have your schedule set out, so you're basically -- I like to tell the guys you kind of rinse and repeat.

So we come in the mornings and do our sort of daily tasks, and then we'll come back in in the evening and basically repeat the exact same things to really kind of clean the golf course up and really produce exceptional conditions for these ladies the next day.

Q. You probably remember it rained in January.

CHAD FAWCETT: Yeah. Very well.

Q. Which day was that?

CHAD FAWCETT: I don't have it written down, but it was mid-January and it rained a lot.

Q. What was your reaction knowing...

CHAD FAWCETT: We basically knew what we were going to be in for. There was ice covering the golf course, and usually when we get ice damage out here it really just affects our short grasses. This year we had so much ice in areas it really affected all our areas. So we had rough grass four inches long that was killed off by ice. We had several greens, six of them in particular that got rocked by winterkill.

And overall the golf course on just, you know, an extent I've never really seen, the damage was really

horrendous. Just really kind of went wall to wall. Yeah, there was a lot of work, a lot of sod bought, and a lot of sod laid this year.

But we got it -- I feel like we got it to where we want it to play.

Q. I wonder, on that day did your stomach just sink when you saw the forecast? We all were wondering. It affected a lot of things.

CHAD FAWCETT: Yeah, because I think the last three years we've gone through similar things. We've gone through these freeze-thaw cycles through the winter, which we're not used to seeing in the past here. We usually get a little bit more snow than we've been seeing and the winters stay much colder. Which is what we want. We want a nice snow cover with cool temperatures. Not freezing cold, but as soon as you get a freeze-thaw, that ice can wreak havoc on a golf course.

Q. What's it going to be like to see your baby on the Golf Channel on the weekend?

CHAD FAWCETT: My baby?

Q. Not your baby, but it's...

CHAD FAWCETT: It's pretty close. I like to say there are about 23 babies out here and those are all the greens. Every time I see them in spring and they're brown it kills you.

But it's going to be pretty amazing I think. I'm looking forward to it. I think everyone is. We don't really know what to expect when you see it on television. The golf course itself is very I think different, different compared to what you usually see on TV on a weekly basis.

The views, kind of the setting it's in along the creek, I don't think there are very many golf courses just like this one. I know that. This is very kind of a unique place, so...

We're looking forward to it. It's going to be exciting.

Q. You mentioned sodding, but maybe if you can just touch on some of the other things that were done to prep the course.

CHAD FAWCETT: Yeah, well, we started our bunkers last year. Actually was a couple years ago. Then we did a good push on them last year and finished them off this spring. So we had all our bunkers redone on the golf course; had that knocked off by middle of June.

We had projects planned as far as reshaping our 10th fairway, a little bit on our 9th fairway, and our 17th hole we did some shaping and resodding.

So, I mean, the projects we had laid out, we had a goal in mind to be done by June 15th; we didn't them until about the end of June. But also, that project list got a little longer as we went on.

So they turned out really well though. I think those were the major things we had to cross off our list this year to make sure this was ready for them.

Q. How many staff do you have?

CHAD FAWCETT: I had 17 seasonal, part-time, or I guess hourly staff, and then I have five full-time staff throughout the full year here with me.

We expect to have about eight to ten volunteers as well, so we're looking at about 30 to 35 people for our staff here this week.

THE MODERATOR: On behalf of Golf Canada, thanks to you and your team for some great work.

CHAD FAWCETT: You bet. Thanks. (Applause).