

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

Wayne Rath

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Today we're joined by Wayne Rath, superintendent here at Magna Golf Club, as well as John McClendon, the Ontario director for the CGSA, Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association, who is also the superintendent at the Ladies' Golf Club in Toronto.

Turn it over to John to do a quick presentation to Wayne.

JOHN MCCLENDON: Thank you. Good morning, everybody. First of all, I would like to send a big thank you to Golf Canada and Canadian Pacific for giving us this opportunity to present this award to Wayne today.

As Terry said, I'm the Ontario director for the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, and I am representing one of 1200 members across the country. One of our mandates is to support and promote the profession the golf course superintendent, and to provide education and research resources for golf course superintendents.

As part of the ongoing effort to recognize the role the superintendent 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 that the golf course provides fair and consistent conditions for competition.

My friend over here to my left is Wayne Rath. I think everybody knows him. He's been superintendent of Magna here since 1997, and I believe that's right from the inception of the...

WAYNE RATH: The horse farm.

JOHN MCCLENDON: He's also been in industry for 34 years, and been a member of the CGSA since 1988. It's my pleasure to present this award to Wayne Rath for all the hard work he's done preparing this golf course.

Congratulations Wayne, as well as your staff. Job well done. Thank you.



WAYNE RATH: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe you can just open up with a couple comments so far in getting this course ready to host this week's tournament.

WAYNE RATH: Well, obviously the year when we found out kind of a little bit before this last year that the tournament was coming here this year, all of a sudden our focus changed to have everything, all the stars, as you may say, line up this week.

This spring obviously was wet and we had some challenges. You know, one of the big challenges we have here at Magna is bunker management. We have 96 bunkers that encompass 28,000 square feet. We've spent an extraordinary amount of time working in the bunkers this year to get the golf course ready.

On the short grass, I think from the tees to fairways, the conditions the girls are getting this week are probably consistent with what our members see each and every day on those playing surfaces. We have been careful with the greens this year obviously with how wet it was.

We definitely timed our fertility programs and our plant protection programs around making sure everything was lined up for this week. And with our staff, making sure that they were going to be really, really good at what they were doing when it became tournament time, and not trying to train them on multiple, multiple jobs that they just became good at. We want them to be great at it.

I think, as I said, the stars seem to be lining up for us this week. The staff has performed extraordinary. We did a trial run couple weeks ago in the dark and they killed it. It was two hours and 40 minutes and we were done. Today we moved up our closing meeting from 10:00 to 9:00 today because we were done. They were back in the barn. What do we do now? I said, I don't know. I think we're done.

So I think they killed it. The staff are so excited about the tournament. They're ramped up. They want to do a good job. I think the product they're showing right now, the golf course looks fantastic, if I say so myself. If we get the stars lined up and it doesn't rain again, it will firm up a little bit and probably play a little firmer.

We got an inch of rain in the last three days. It's obviously made it very green but not very firm yet. I think if we can get a little bit of wind and some 22 degree and sunny weather the golf course will be where it is. Everybody is doing a really nice job with their cuts, the rakes. It's clean from their perspective.

I give our crew full credit. It's gone perfectly for them so far.

THE MODERATOR: Now, once the tournament is over and you get some time to reflect on the week, how would you define success or this week being a success for you?

WAYNE RATH: I think success will be pride in the golf course and the community that it's going well. You know, I just see success that the golf course presents itself well, it went well, everybody leaves with a good feeling of how it went. Success for me is if the bunkers don't wash out, to be honest with you, could be part of it.

Because when they said they were bringing the tournament here, I said, Our biggest liability is a big biggest storm with the size of the bunkers here. They are an extraordinary amount of work. It doesn't look like it's going to happen, knock on wood. Get through maybe a little bit of rain tomorrow.

When the skies opened up couple days ago we got nervous in a hurry. It can take hundreds and hundreds of hours to put these bunkers back together. They look really, really good right now. Success is that the golf course is proud of the experience they had, the community is successful, and people come out and enjoy it.

I'm not looking at success as score. These girls are good. They're going to make a lot of birdies out here. The greens are big. You can see every shot. There is no tricked-up blind shot, which is what makes it a great members golf course.

We'll see what they shoot, but I expect them to make a lot of birdies.

THE MODERATOR: Any questions?

Q. Wayne, what kind of golfer is going to have success on this course this week?

WAYNE RATH: I think somebody that has a good wedge to 7-iron game. They're going to get close. I think probably somebody with decent distance. I see a lot of balls. What I'm watching so far is straight down the middle.

If you're hitting it sideways at all into the rough, the rough is pretty thick. I think that'll play as a half shot penalty, maybe more. I'm going to say the majority of them probably aren't going to be in the rough.

So I think that wedge to 7-, 8-iron, if that's your deadly game, you're going to make a lot of birdies out here.

Q. Couple questions for you. You were just talking about the length of the rough. Do you have any plans to cut it down or do any work on it?

WAYNE RATH: I hope not. At this point I think hopefully that ship has sailed. If we do cut it, it's going to be more work than just a little cut. I think we're going to -- from what I've heard, the contrast between the fairway, the intermediate, and the long grass is spectacular right now. That would give us a fourth height.

I haven't been told, given any indication. If we do cut the rough it's going to be one lap around inside the ropes of the primary. Might even be like a three-deck sidewinder cut. I am hoping we don't do it. If we do do it, it needs to be dry. If it's wet it's going to be a mess. In some areas going to be hard to get rid of the clippings.

At this point I would say if it doesn't rain again and we won't have to water, if it stays dry and doesn't get too out of control, I think they'll leave it.

Q. That's good. I heard the word "healthy" used by a few players. I have a question on kind of your personal opinions about the course, favorite holes on the property, hole or holes from an architecture standpoint, and also specifically from the best fan viewing experience.

WAYNE RATH: Best fan viewing experience I think is 15. They've got options there. They can play it as a full yardage hole or as a drivable par-4 maybe if the caught is not too big.

My two favorite holes are the two shortest on the golf course, 5 and 15. Prettiest hole on the course is 14 obviously up on the top of the ridge. The most memorable hole on the course is 16 because of the tree. I'm a big fan of 9, but 5 and 15, year in and year out, per stroke average, our most highest over-par stroke average on the course is 5.

Q. That's a good answer, like picking your favorite kid, right?

WAYNE RATH: Yeah, first born.

Q. Exactly. I got one more here for you. So give us your thoughts a bit on the low number for the week, and second part is whether you think that a bomb-and-gouge player or a positional player will

be more successful. I've seen a little bit of both in the practice rounds so far.

WAYNE RATH: As I said, I think somebody that leaves it inside 140 yards all the time. I haven't watched enough golf to really see how far they hit it, but I saw Brittany scoping No. 11. She looked like they was about 130 yards from 11, so I'm saying that's probably 260 that maybe she hit it.

Fairways going to be the key. If you're keeping it on these fairways, which I'm assuming most of them can, if you can hit it straight and long, that's going to be a big advantage. Hopefully get rid of a bit of moisture in the greens and they're not just totally playing darts. If we get a heavy thunderstorm tomorrow afternoon could be some low scores on Thursday, but I think straight down the middle all day long is going to be the key, the one that's going to win.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions? All right. Thanks, guys.