

THE ECONOMIC CLUB

O F W A S H I N G T O N, D. C.

Executive Conversation

Mollie Marcoux Samaan

Speaker

Mollie Marcoux Samaan
Commissioner
Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)

Moderator

Barbara Humpton
President and CEO, Siemens USA
Chair, Global Initiative, The Economic Club of Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C.
Monday, March 25, 2024

BARBARA HUMPTON: What a joy and a privilege today to host Mollie Marcoux Samaan right here in Washington, D.C., getting ready for the upcoming Solheim Cup. And I know we're going to get into all of that. And I know you're going to have questions at the end of our session.

But what I want to do is spend a little bit of time getting some context from Mollie about golf in general. Did you know that between 2020 and 2022, 800,000 women picked up the game of golf? [Applause.] This is incredibly popular. We're going to delve into a lot of things about how does this look from the inside and the LPGA? We're going to learn a little bit about Mollie as well. You heard from David about her stellar, stellar background. We'll have a chance to ask a few more questions. And then I do want to delve into the Solheim Cup, so all of us get a good picture of how we can get engaged.

But let's start – let's start with the big picture. The LPGA – and Mollie serves as commissioner. You have for the last two and a half years. The LPGA is a large and growing organization that's been in business for 75 years. Recently announced a major – recently, actually, built out your partnership with CME Group. We've been hearing on the men's side about LIV and other things. How important are partnerships to the sport overall? And tell us about where you're taking partnerships in the LPGA?

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAN: Yeah. I mean, I think partnerships – first of all, thank you guys for being here. This is an awesome crowd. I love how tight it is and how much fun you guys have. So really thrilled to be here today.

I think partnerships really are everything to the LPGA. I mean, the interesting part of the organization is that we are a mission-driven membership organization with a very clear mission. But we have to be really commercially viable in order to be able to hit that mission. So in my career, I've worked in sports on the very much for-profit side. And then as the athletic director of Princeton, in the very much mission-driven education through athletics with a clear focus. This is really a combination of that. We are very passionate about our mission. And our mission is to be the global leader in women's golf. And then to really intentionally use our platform to elevate, empower, and advance opportunities for girls and women on and off the golf course.

So we sort of start with all of our partnerships with that mission. And I think we look at a couple things. You know, how will any type of partnership allow us to reach that mission? You know, can we make sure that that sport remains very much unfractured? You know, in the men's game there's a little bit of a fracture right now. Our real goal is to keep the collaborative – global golf all working together and leading to have the best on best compete on the LPGA Tour. Which is really what we're doing. And, you know, we're very much focused on listening to opportunities for our membership.

So when we go out to talk to brands, and we have a number of amazing partners in this audience today, we sort of say: Can that partnership – can we help them elevate their brand? Can we help elevate our mission? And how do we come together to accomplish that? I think the beauty – and I think many of the people in this room and really our top partners right now – they're saying, like, we really see the commercial value of this investment. So we're getting

exposure. People are hearing about our brand. We're talking about our company with a – with a pretty big platform.

But probably equally importantly, we get to really talk about our values. We get to talk about our support of women's leadership, women's empowerment. We get to help inspire that next generation of young girls to see that if you can make it in sports, and we can get to some version of equity, you can kind of do anything in the world. So you mentioned the CME partnership. That's one of many. And I think this year, you know, the women at the end of the season will be playing for \$11 million, which is the second-highest purse on the LPGA Tour. But I think most importantly, first prize is \$4 million.

And we only can do that because it's the culmination of the whole season. So it's a little bit different. So one woman this year will walk away with \$4 million, which is the biggest prize in the history of women's sports. So that's exciting. But everything throughout the season builds towards that. We have some amazing events that happen throughout the course of the season. And only the top 60 players make it to the end. But that's just one example of a CEO and a corporation that said: I love the exposure I get, but I'm really – I really feel strongly that I got to push towards equity.

MS. HUMPTON: Yeah. So, all right, so partnership matters. And here we are, 75 years into the history of the LPGA, and here we – it's Women's History Month. And so it's a perfect time to talk about parity in sports. I mean, this has been a month when we've seen Caitlin Clark take Pete Maravich's record, right? We've seen Cole Brauer – [applause] – how many of you all watched the fact that there was a solo woman who sailed around the world competing against men, finished, you know, right at the top? And so, how – oh, and last year, we celebrated 50 years of pay equity in the Women's Tennis Association, right? Billie Jean King and, and Bobby Riggs, the battle of the sexes. And, you know, since then, the U.S. Open offering the same purse to men and women. Where are we on that journey? And what are you trying to do from the LPGA perspective?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAN: Yeah. I mean, we're still on that journey. I mean, we're not even close to – [laughter] – reaching where we need to get to. I mean, the LPGA, as you said before, Barbara, you know, was formed in 1950. So we're going to be celebrating our 75th anniversary. So if you really think about women playing sports in 1950, they traveled around the country in a caravan, you know, putting in the stakes at the tournaments, putting out flyers to get people to attend, you know, doing clinics, writing their own press releases. This was, you know, these women believing that in 1950 that they were, first of all, talented enough, entertaining enough to make money playing sports.

Which was really unheard of. I mean, even women traveling around the country alone at that time was a bit unheard of. And these women doing it in this caravan was quite an interesting spectacle. But in 1950, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who hopefully you've all heard of – she was the best athlete of that era in multiple sports – she made \$14,000 playing golf. Which is the equivalent of \$175,000 today. Which in a lot of women's sports we're not – most athletes are not – most female athletes are not making \$175,000 a year. So we're on that journey.

I think the LPGA, we've had a head start. And last year, which we're really proud of, our athletes played for \$108 million. We had three women make over \$3.5 million, which was the first time ever that three women had made over \$3 million. The year before, Lydia Ko had actually made \$4.5 million playing on the tour. That's just the prize money, not including their endorsements. But on the flip side, the 100th best player – so we have athletes from all over the world. These are the very best female golfers. The 100th best player last year made \$187,000. And she probably paid \$150,000 to be out there, because they have to pay for their own expenses, their flights, their hotels.

So that's not where we need to be. You know, the 100 best athletes in the world should be able to make a very good living. This is literally the 100 best. You know, I say in a player meeting sometimes I look out and I see 100 women sitting there. And very rarely do you get the 100 best of anything sitting in one room together. So we need to make sure that they can make a living that's commensurate with their talent.

We are years ahead of some of the other sports that are now seeing this amazing trajectory. Women's soccer valuations, I think you've probably all seen in the news. Teams that traded for \$2 million three years ago were just recently sold for over \$100 million – 50, 70, over \$100 million. So I think investors and people are seeing that if you have the right exposure that the talent is amazing of these athletes; if you market it properly, fans are interested; and the growth is just sort of endless at this point. So we're on that trajectory. Purses have grown 70 percent in the last two years at the LPGA.

MS. HUMPTON: Well done.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Thank you. We were playing for \$70 million in 2021. This year now we – actually, it may be out in the press – we just announced that another big purse increase at our tournament out in L.A. If it's not out yet, don't say anything. [Laughter.] It's coming in the next week.

MS. HUMPTON: We love to make news from the stage at The Economic Club of Washington!

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yeah, so that person is going from \$3 million to \$3.75 million. And that's the largest non-major purse on the tour. And so I think we had less than – I think we had about five tournaments that were playing for over \$3 million prior to – two years ago. And I think we now have 16 tournaments that play for over \$3 million, with all of the majors. So we have many KPMG partners here today. One of our very top partners who has the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, one of our five major championships. And they have elevated the sport in numerous ways as an official marketing partner and as the title partner of a major, but also recently served as our strategic advisor as we built our strategic plan. So we like to work with partners in that way. So way to go, KPMG. [Applause.]

MS. HUMPTON: Awesome, awesome. It's interesting because there's a lot about partnerships, there's a lot about the organization itself, there's a lot to do with groups, but individuals matter too. And this is very much an individual sport, at times. And you, cultivating some of the stars. Now, yesterday we saw Nelly Korda actually double bogey at the back nine coming into the

finish. Everyone was expecting her to be a winner, and double bogey to go into a tie. And everybody knows, you got to go to a playoff then. Which – I mean, this is high drama, right? Do you actually script those moments?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yes. [Laughter.]

MS. HUMPTON: Do you? [Laughs.] How are you encouraging the development of those personalities, if you will?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yeah, I mean, well Nelly has played three times so far this season and she's won twice, which is pretty remarkable. But golf is so unpredictable. In Bradenton, which was her hometown, it was the second tournament of the year, she was up – she was behind and she ended up eagling the 17th hole and birdieing the 18th hole to send Lydia Ko to a playoff, and then she won in the playoff. But yesterday, she bogeyed the 17th and bogeyed the 18th to go to a playoff, and then ended up winning in that playoff as well. So it's great drama out there. It's great golf. The best players in the world.

But I think for us, and you sort of mentioned it with the – with the USTA going to equal prize money 50 years ago – I think the other big difference in tennis has been that the men and the women play together in those four major championships. So they have the same exposure. They're on television at the same time. They're marketed in a similar way. So the endorsement deals and the familiarity of the public with those female tennis players is so much greater than any other sport, because they're given the resources and the platform to shine.

If you look at the Olympics every year, the female athletes that emerge from the Olympics are among the most popular. The social media following of the female athletes at the last Olympics was the top four – three of the top four were females. People follow their stories. They're engaged in the individuals and their stories off the court or the ice or the field. So our goal with more resources – I mean, women's sports has really been about a lack of resources and a lack of exposure, not about a lack of a great product or great athletes.

And so our mission right now, as part of our strategic plan that we've been building, is to really invest in the marketing and exposure of not only the tour but of our individual athletes. So we've just actually signed a deal with a production company called Hana Kuma, who's Naomi Osaka's production company, to actually build the individual brands of eight athletes. Which is pretty far afield from what a membership organization usually does. You know, some of the members when we first announced that we were doing that, they were like: So you're taking the membership organization and you're going to build the brand of just a few select athletes?

And we said, well, we can keep doing what we've been doing and get the same result, or we can really decide that the rising tide is going to lift all boats. So we're going to help those athletes and the rest of the tour with some training. But we're going to help them build their social media presence. We're going to help them build their brand. Which we think will elevate all of the athletes on the tour. So things like that. And we're digging in on marketing partnerships. We're hiring companies to help us sell tickets.

I really believe that it all starts and ends with when you turn on that television there has to be a lot of people there. It has to feel like it matters. The arms are up in the air. They're cheering for Nelly Korda as she makes a 20-foot putt to win. Like, those are the moments. So we're really investing in getting fans at our tournaments. We're investing in the quality of the broadcast, the exposure of our social media, and just marketing in general. And we think that's going to really –

MS. HUMPTON: And tracking the fist-pump index.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: The fist pumping. That's a big one. I mean, I think our women – it's such a cerebral sport. You know, sports are all about the energy, people with their arms up in the air. And sometimes our athletes, you know, they win – like Alison Corpuz won the U.S. Open, \$2 million first prize. And she was like, yay. [Laughter.] I was running around, you know, like with my arms up in the air. I was like, she just won \$2 million. So I think that we were going to do a contest to say, you know, who had the best fist pump on it? You know, to get down and get a little dirty with it.

MS. HUMPTON: Oh, we do this in business all the time, don't we? [Laughter.]

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, you have to fist pump in the – you have to set goals. But if we transition into Solheim, we have a Solheim fist pump count – you know, count going. There's more fist pumps in Solheim than the entire tour season because there's so much energy around the team competition.

MS. HUMPTON: We're going to talk about this.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah.

MS. HUMPTON: But, before we do, I just want this group to get to know you a little bit more. Mollie, imagine, two-sport athlete at Princeton. Soccer and field hockey –

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Oh, ice hockey.

MS. HUMPTON: Excuse me, ice hockey. Yeah, I've gotten field hockey on the brain. Ice hockey. And then going from there to Lawrenceville School and leading athletics. Then going to the Chelsea Piers – I mean, almost two decades with Chelsea Piers. How fun was that?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Really fun.

MS. HUMPTON: And then ultimately going back to Princeton to lead the women's athletics.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah. No, it's actually the – I was the athletic director of all the – not just women's.

MS. HUMPTON: Oh, OK. I'm sorry.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: The whole thing. Yeah, no, that's what he said. But I think that's – [laughter] – people would sometimes say you, so you were, like, a football coach?

MS. HUMPTON: So you – (inaudible). [Laughs.]

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: And I'd say, yeah, sure do. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. HUMPTON: [Laughs.] I love it. OK. I love it. Yes, yes. And, as David said, you were highly accomplished, you were highly accomplished, winning a lot. But actually, so this whole thread of athletics has gone through your life. And I heard another interview with you, where you picked up a golf club when you were a tyke. So, I mean, what is it about sports? How did soccer and ice hockey become that thing? And how did that translate into a career in sports?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah. I mean, I think, like a lot of people, sports were the thing that was just what I loved to do at every moment that I knew that you could do it. And I think my parents – you know, I wanted to play ice hockey because I got a little flyer in the mail – actually, they distributed it in first grade. And I came home and told my mother I was going to play ice hockey. And she was like, no, you're not. [Laughter.] She's, like, girls do not play ice hockey. And I said, I'm going to play ice hockey. And so I had to sort of beg her for a little while. And the whole drive down to pick up the used equipment she kept saying, how about swimming? You know, how about dance? And I'm, like, no, I'm going to play ice hockey. [Laughter.]

So I this is just what I wanted to do, is play sports. And that's where I got all my joy and passion. But I think it also – and that's why I'm so passionate about working in sports, particularly for young girls, is I think, that's where I gained any bit of confidence that I had, any sense of competence and ability to compete in hard settings. And to – you know, all the things we know, we learn through sports. But I think for women, it's really about that identity and that that confidence that you gain by playing sports, which I think is really important.

So I just – that's what my passion's always been. So I knew that I wanted to work in sports. I probably wasn't going to have a career after college. There wasn't a lot of great opportunities at that time either in soccer or in ice hockey to continue. So I knew – my roommates and I all sat around my senior year and said, what do you want to be doing in five years, in 10 years? And I just kept saying, you know, a really cool job in sports. And then in 10 years, a cooler job in sports. And then a cooler job in sports. [Laughter.] So, you know, that's kind of what I've always wanted.

MS. HUMPTON: This is the power of imaging, right?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yes, yes.

MS. HUMPTON: Have a vision.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Cool job in sports, yeah.

MS. HUMPTON: [Laughs.] And cool things happen. That's fantastic. And I think we'll come back and learn a little bit more from you about, you know, sort of, leadership in a situation like this. But now, I mean, let's do. Let's get into the Solheim Cup, because what is it that sets the Solheim Cup apart?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah. I mean, I think when you look at the big sporting events that we all wait for, we put on our calendar, you know, we sort of plan our life around the weekend, we want and we think it is the Solheim Cup to be something that's on everyone's schedule. Whether you play golf, whether you're interested in golf, because it has all of the components of the things we look for in sports.

So, first of all, you have the best in the world competing against each other. Which is really critical. They're playing for something that really matters. This cup is something that they talk about all year round. And Europe has had the cup for the last several go-rounds. Last year, Stacy will always tell you, we actually tied. We had the same number of points. But because they had the cup, they retained the cup. So that's a little nuance that you need to know. I'd like to change that, because I don't think you should tie and lose. But we're working towards that.

But so it has this – they're playing for something that really means something. We're playing at a fantastic golf course in a community that loves sports and is obviously very committed to it. We have really good television exposure. We're going to be on NBC on Saturday and Sunday. So it has all the ingredients. And then it's a team competition and you're playing for your country. Playing for the United States. Obviously, Europe's playing for all of the countries in Europe. But it really means something.

You'll talk to our athletes and they'll say they don't get paid to play in the Solheim Cup. This is their job. But it's the thing that they want to do most in life, is to make the Solheim Cup team. So the energy, the excitement from the fans, it is like nothing you've ever seen. My first tournament – I went to the KPMG Women's PGA before I started as the commissioner. But then I didn't start until August. And Solheim was in September of 2021. So I hadn't, you know, been to many of the tournaments. And I've been a fan my whole life.

But I showed up on the first tee of Solheim Cup in Toledo, Ohio. And it was during COVID, so it was just the U.S. fans. There were zero European fans, which was kind of nice. [Laughter.] But it was it was – I shouldn't say that –

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: [Laughs.] You're not picking sides. You are a global organization.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Not picking sides. No, but I am – you know, I'm an American. So, but we had this terrific build all the way around the first tee that had thousands of people. I think we had 10,000 people around the first tee. With this – all the athletes right and center. Everybody looking. Imagine when it gets really quiet and you're about to hit a golf ball and you have 10,000 people standing around you. I couldn't believe that the women could endure that and actually hit the ball.

Some of them want the crowd to keep clapping. You know, golf is always very quiet. But some of the U.S. players and the European players will say, no, keep screaming just keep it consistent, because I can't stand the silence. It's just way too –

MS. HUMPTON: It gets in my head.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah. So everyone's screaming and yelling. There's music playing. It's quite a scene for a golf event. So I was just blown away by – someone interviewed – Amanda Balionis interviewed me on the first tee. I had just started. And she said, what's the best sporting event that you've ever been to? And I'd been to most of them – the Super Bowl and the World Series. And I was, like, I'm pretty sure it's this. You know, there was just – the energy was incredible and the precision that was required of our athletes, and the pressure on them.

So it's an amazing event. It has everything that sports fans want. And I think we couldn't be more grateful to be in this market and to have the support of so many amazing companies that have come out to help get fans there, but also buy hospitality and really promote the event.

MS. HUMPTON: Well, so you've got the competition on – that happens at the event. But before that, there's the competition of who will host it. So the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course in Gainesville was the winner. I know you weren't part of selecting that, but you'll be part of selecting the future. What is it that, as you – as you look at folks who – as the communities who are raising their hands and say, we want to host, what's the play like?

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: What are we looking for?

MS. HUMPTON: Yeah.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, I mean, I think we're looking for this. I mean, we're looking for the community, both the fans, the economic community, to really embrace it, to value it, to see the economic impact it can have, but also to see the fun and the building – the community that it can build. Obviously, you need a great golf course. It has to be an unbelievable golf course. These are the best women in the world. They have to play at a place that's worthy of that talent. So we look very closely.

And then you look at the partners that you have. I mean, like Penny and team, and John, and others have been so incredibly supportive there. I think this is your full-time job at this point, isn't it Penny? I mean, it's – she's putting a ton of effort into it. And the committee that is helping organizing it is fully invested in it. So those are the things we look for – great golf course, great community, great economic community that sees the value of doing this.

And I think, you know, we hope that this Solheim Cup will have a Guinness World Record of the number of fans at a women's sports event over the course of the time. So that's what we're shooting for. We're trying to get in the Guinness book here. We're trying to just

drive the engagement. And we're trying to put this area on the map for women's sports to say we really did it.

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: Well, Mollie and I had a bit of conversation at the table about the fact that, if you think about it, there are very few things in this world where we as people everywhere have a shared experience. Once upon a time, we could all tune into national broadcasts or global broadcasts of all kinds of things. Now in our streaming, offline world, what do we actually tune in for together? And sports is the answer. And so I think what we'll be focused on is trying to raise the excitement around this, and really – and help make this a Guinness World Record-winning event.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah. Yeah. No, I mean, I love what you said there. I mean, I think that's what I always love about sports is that I think we – if we think about it, it builds leaders, the character and the skills that you learn by playing sports. But I think sports also build communities, and particularly when you're playing for something that means something to other people. You know, and I think when you're playing for team USA, there's really not anything better than that. So I think that's what this has. And it's going to be super exciting.

And we're – you know, for the LPGA it's so important, because we're really using this as a tentpole event to bring in a whole new audience of fans, that they put this on the calendar every year. I mean, there's no reason why they should put the Ryder Cup on their calendar and not put the Solheim Cup on the calendar. And I think part of it has been the investment that people have made in the Ryder Cup versus the Solheim Cup. And that's really the only difference.

I think they have a much bigger media rights deal for the for – but we need to work on that. You know, because if you put it on – we've found, that if you put on the LPGA on cable television versus putting it on network television, we get four times – four or five times more viewers when it's on network. So it has to be, you know, a place where people can find it quickly. It has to be invested in. You have to have the resources to market it. But then when you do it, the world's sort of our oyster and we can continue to grow. So we're looking forward to this event being that tentpole event for us.

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: That's beautiful. I'm watching the clock because we are going to go to comments from the audience, questions from the audience in a minute. But I do want to get very specific about where are there opportunities for this Washington Economic Club community to get involved and support you in the Solheim Cup?

MS. SAMAAN: Yeah. I mean, we have – and that's why I brought my iPad; I didn't want to miss anybody – but we have a number of our sponsors and partners in this room here today, which we couldn't be more grateful for your support. Just a list: AWS, Brown Advisory, Comcast, Danaher, Grant Thornton, KPMG, NextEra, PNC, Toyota, T-Mobile, Hilton. I mean, those are all people who have already dug in and bought hospitality or bought some type of sponsorship to the event. So we have more opportunity there. Not a ton left, but we definitely have more. Which is great.

Golf, there's nowhere better to entertain clients. You know, you have that opportunity to sit and actually have a conversation, to be a part of the action, to be really close to – the women are just walking around the grounds. You know, you see all of our stars right there. And you can really see and hear what they're doing. So there's also global sponsor opportunities. You know, we have three or four global partners right now. We still have one left that we're – that we're selling. And so that's a big way.

I think the other way is just promoting it. You know, getting it out. Getting your employees to come. Getting your neighbors to come. Coming yourself. Marketing it in every way possible to make this the biggest event that the D.C. area has ever seen. I think those are the big opportunities.

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: Mary, let's just get this out to the Economic Club community to make it a calendar item for the Econ Club to get everybody involved here. [Laughs.]

MS. SAMAN: I think that's what Tony said, right? He said you're – yeah.

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: We're all marking our calendars. We're all marking our calendars. [Laughter.]

You know, think about it, the parallels between golf and life. And here's this beautiful sport that, yes, it requires – well played – requires precision and grace. It's mathematical. I'm a math major – [laughs] – right? You got to read the angles. You got to understand the lines. You've got to understand the physics of what's going on in this game. So lots of technicalities to the game. It's a game where some would say you might be able to buy your way in, right? How many of us tried – went to the golf store to try to get the latest equipment so we could buy our game? [Laughter.] And then you discover it really isn't about the equipment. It's about you. It's about you.

So, Mollie, I'd love, as we wrap up this broad section – [laughter] – I'd just love to get your reflections on what golf brings to us in terms of leadership lessons. And close for us, if you would, with what advice you would have for the Washington Economic Club members and our own leadership.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAN: Yeah, I mean, golf is a really special sport. I grew up in upstate New York. I didn't – my family – they weren't golfers. My parents weren't golfers. And I, similar to the hockey conversation with my mom, my brother decided he was going to go play at the local public course. And I decided I needed to do that too. So I, you know, begged my parents to buy some clubs at a garage sale and went down and played. But as a young 12-year-old girl, I just – my dad would drop me off in the morning and pick me up in the afternoon. And I would just play this nine-hole municipal course.

But what happened during that time was I got to engage with the senior citizens who are playing, because they didn't have much else to do on a weekday in the middle of the summer. The young kids were there. The adults came in the afternoon. And just the relationships that were built and the behavior that I had to exhibit when I was playing with the older women or the

older men, the sportsmanship that you learn, it's a sport that you call penalties on yourself. Every other sport, you're obviously trying to get away with something. You know, you're pulling a shirt, you're – I may have done that a little bit along the way in soccer. You know, you're trying to get an advantage.

But in golf, it's all about –

MS. HUMPTON: There's no hip checking in golf.

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: There's no hip checking. There's none of that. It's just about your personal integrity. And it's about the – it's such a hard sport. I mean, we all know that. I was out this weekend in my backyard. I had a little tripod and I was working on my swing. And my daughter's like, what are you doing? Like, I just can't – I can't get it. You know, so it's a – it's a never-ending kind of quest for some form of perfection. So it's a great game. It builds communities in different ways. We can all play together, no matter what our skill level is.

So it's a – and it's a great business tool, as we know. For women, it's really important. I think what happens is a lot of women are afraid to play. They're intimidated by the game. They won't take a chance in going out and playing at outings. And so we're really working hard in other parts of our business to give the game to young girls who can't afford it, who don't feel comfortable playing. We don't think that's something that should be reserved only to people who have money. We feel very strongly that it's like education, that you have to give this gift to people who can't afford it or haven't felt comfortable there. That's a big part of what our mission is, using that platform to elevate and advance girls and women.

So that's why I love golf. Again, I played soccer and hockey in college. But golf was such an important part of my personal development. And I think for women it's a great business tool. It's a phenomenal opportunity to have fun in our later – we can play golf now and still love it every day. So I'm really passionate about what the LPGA can do to change young girls' lives, but also hopefully to inspire women more broadly around the world – girls and women. So that's what we're doing.

And I don't really have any advice. I mean, this – I can take advice from all of you guys in terms of leadership and how to run your businesses. I think it's just a lot like sport. You know, put the team first and be passionate about what you do, and hopefully get the right result.

MS. MARCOUX HUMPTON: And I heard you talking about building a network of partnerships. And we all recognize the importance of that. We are all in this together. Mollie Marcoux Samaan, thank you so much. [Applause.]

MS. MARCOUX SAMAAN: Thank you, Barbara. Thank you.



Mollie Marcoux Samaan
Commissioner
Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)

Mollie Marcoux Samaan is the ninth Commissioner of the LPGA since its formation in 1950. Her journey to the LPGA started at Princeton University, where she was a two-sport varsity athlete in soccer and ice hockey before graduating *cum laude* in 1991. In her senior year, she was awarded the Otto Von Kienbusch Sportswoman of the Year Award given to the University's top female athlete. Following graduation, Marcoux Samaan served as assistant athletic director, assistant dean of admissions and coach of girls' ice hockey and soccer at the Lawrenceville

School in New Jersey.

She then began a 19-year career with Chelsea Piers Management, the company that owns and operates two world-class amateur sports complexes, Chelsea Piers New York and Chelsea Piers Connecticut, becoming executive vice president of Chelsea Piers' 400,000- square-foot multi-venue complex in Connecticut, a facility with more than 300 employees, including professional athletes, Olympians, former collegiate coaches, former Division I athletes and sports industry leaders.

In 2014, Marcoux Samaan was recruited back to Princeton as the University's Ford Family Director of Athletics. In her seven years as Director of Athletics, Princeton teams won a league-leading 65 Ivy League Championships and finished as high as 30th in the prestigious Learfield IMG Cup standings, which measures overall success of all Division I Athletics programs. During her tenure, Marcoux Samaan developed and executed a 5-year strategic plan that included the development of Princeton Tiger Performance, a unique holistic athletic performance initiative, and the design/development of over \$200 million in facility renovations and new construction. In 2020-2021, Marcoux Samaan received the NACDA (National Association of College Directors of Athletics) Athletics Director of the Year Award.

A passionate golfer from a young age, Marcoux Samaan has taken that same long-term strategic thinking to the world's oldest independent professional women's sports league. In her tenure as LPGA Commissioner, she has defined the six strategic pillars and instituted a new Be Great performance model. She has worked closely with players, board members, partners, and independent advisors to crystalize the core purpose and values of the LPGA, which includes a firm commitment to being the global leader in women's golf and using that unique platform to inspire, empower and transform the lives of girls and women on and off the golf course.

With a fervent commitment to working collaboratively with like-minded corporate partners, purses continue to rise on the LPGA Tour under Marcoux Samaan's leadership with more than \$95 million in total purses and events in 11 countries. 2022 has seen the highest purses and winners' checks in women's golf history. She also spearheaded the reorganization of the tournament business and operational models, as well as hiring the organization's first chief marketing, brand and communications officer. She is committed to enhancing the LPGA player

experience with a focus on the physiological, psychological and environmental factors leading to peak performance in golf and in life. She was instrumental in the rollout of the new LPGA Hall of Fame criteria and has focused new and substantial resources to the LPGA Growth Brands & LPGA Professionals, with the goal of integrating the organization and providing the game of golf to more girls and women from all geographic, racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

Marcoux Samaan has become a leader for all of women's sports, assuming the spokeswoman mantle on issues related to equality and inclusion. She is a leading advocate for increasing investments and growing opportunities for women in girls in every field of sports and entertainment.

Marcoux Samaan and her husband, Andrew Samaan, are the parents of three children: Maddie (19), Catie (16) and Drew (13).