

Ko holds off Henderson, victorious at CP Women's Open



By Jake Courtepatte

Back-to-back titles just weren't in the cards for Canada's favourite golfer.

21-year old Brooke Henderson, the poster girl of the CP Women's Open held at Magna Golf Club in Aurora, fell seven shots back of winner Jin Young Ko by the end of the day on Sunday, following a masterful final round by the world's number one ranked golfer.

Ko entered Sunday's finale tied with Denmark's Nicole Broch Larsen atop the leaderboard, just two shots up on the Canadian. Yet it was a masterful round of 64 on Sunday, including six birdies on the back nine, that helped her pull away from the pack.

Remarkably, Ko went bogey-free throughout all 72 holes in the tournament.

In a post-tournament press conference, Ko said she knew she had locked up the title on the seventeenth hole, the final par three, when she drained her final birdie.

"I knew already by then," said Ko.
"That's the time for the win I felt."

In what was a fantastic moment in sportsmanship, Ko called on Henderson to walk with her up the eighteenth fairway, where a cheering crowd awaited their past champion and were ready to welcome a new one. The pair walked arm in arm.

"It was an incredible crowd out here,"
said Ko. "Lots of fans here, and Koreans, too."

Ko said she told Henderson, "This crowd
is for you."

"I thought that when I walked to the
eighteenth green, I thought that crowd was to Brooke, not me, so yeah, here it
is in Canada and she has a lot of fans."

"So, I had a great time playing with
Nicole and Brooke. Always happy to play with Brooke, especially here in Canada,
more than fun, yeah."

The fourth win of Ko's career on the
LPGA Tour, no part of her round foreshadowed her victory more than the par five
ninth hole, where she found herself in an unplayable lie after a three wood on
her second shot kicked into a hazard.

She managed to go up-and-down for par,
leaving herself just four feet to preserve the fifth stroke, to maintain her
insurmountable lead.

"When she made that up and down, I
guess that was kind of it," said Broch Larsen at the press conference.
"And then she made birdie, birdie, and then, I mean, that wasn't the end
because I was still in it but I was a couple behind with few to go."

"She's world number one for a
reason," said Henderson. "She's had an unreal season. I don't even
know, is it four wins now? Four wins on one of the toughest tours there is."

"There is so much talent out here.
To get one win is hard, to get four is really cool."

The 26-under score posted by Ko also
shatters the CP Women's Open tournament scoring record by three shots, a -23
posted in the 2016 Open by Yeon Ryu.

Amazingly, Ko decided to play Canada's
only LPGA event at the last second, initially deciding to stay in Korea for a
week's break. What was it that made her final decision? Tim Hortons, of course.

"I like ice cappuccino."

Henderson takes Sandra Post Award

The tournament may have well been called
the Brooke Henderson fan expo.

Canada's golden girl's name, the reigning CP Women's title holder after her win in 2018 in Saskatchewan, was on the lips of just about every spectator that showed up to the tournament, and she did not disappoint.

Despite finishing seven shots back of Ko's incredible 26-under final score, Henderson once again earned the Sandra Post Award, handed out to the low-round Canadian at the Open, where she took home third spot.

Anybody who had the opportunity to see her Saturday round was in for a treat: entering the day in a three-way tie for third, three shots back of leader Broch Larsen, Henderson seemed to play her way out of any chance for contention by way of bogeys on both the fourth and sixth holes.

The magic began after walking off of the green at seven.

"It was a little bit of a struggle there," said Henderson post-match. "I feel like I was playing decent golf, it just wasn't going my way. Then on the seventh green a little boy gave me a high five and then he continued that the rest of the round.

"I think starting at the time he kind of cheered me up a little bit. I think I tried to get back to even on the front nine. Going to the eighth tee I was trying to just make two birdies, get it back to even, and then see if I could go really low on the back, which I did."

Three straight birdies followed that high five, on her way to an incredible nine-under score over the final ten holes on the day.

She entered Sunday just two shots back of the co-leaders, Broch Larsen and Ko.

"Yeah, that was fun," Henderson said of her comeback. "It was nice to have my putter on my side. To be honest, my putter has been bailing me out a lot this week. I felt really confident with it. It was just a lot of fun out there.

"I can't really remember the last time I was in the 20s through nine holes? I think just taking into tomorrow, if I can try to keep this momentum and energy that I had on the last few holes, hopefully maybe hit it a little bit better off the tee, hit it a little closer, and hopefully my putter can bail me out."

Magna Golf Club was abuzz for Henderson's round on Sunday, with a chance for the first ever back-to-back

Canadian champions at the tournament on the line.

Despite coming up short in the end, her Sunday round was nothing to scoff about: she posted a solid score of 69, including birdies on fourteen and fifteen, though Ko was just one step ahead at all times.

And what better way to close out the tournament in Aurora more than Henderson and Ko walking arm-in-arm to the eighteenth green, the Canadian pride in the crowd almost tangible.

"We're both out there to do our job, but we respect each other a lot," said Henderson. "If I couldn't win, I'm happy she did.

"You can't ask for a better person or a better golfer to win this championship."