

# U.S. Women's Open Championship 2016

Tuesday, July 5, 2016

## Paula Creamer

### Press Conference

**MODERATOR:** It's my pleasure to welcome the 2010 U.S. Women's Open champion, Paula Creamer, into the media center. Paula is playing in her 14th U.S. Women's Open this year. She earned her first major championship victory, winning by four strokes, at Oakmont Country Club six years ago. It's hard to believe that it's been six years since you won at Oakmont. Maybe it's more poignant this year, because the men were just there for the men's Open. What are some of the things you remember from that week at Oakmont?

**PAULA CREAMER:** I still can't believe I played in 14 of these, that's even more crazy. But watching -- I didn't get to watch much of it, I was playing that week, as well. But what I did see obviously brought back lots of memories, and I did lots of interviews and things going into that week about the course. It was by far one of the my favorites, obviously holding the trophy at the end helped a bit.

But it was the first time I actually kind of figured out having a game plan on a golf course. In years prior to that, I really didn't have that. It was more of okay, everything is green light, green light, green light. And that was the first year that I had yellow flags and red flags. And that was a different way of golf for me.

So it was interesting to see how the men played it. Some of those holes were way different than how we approached them, but it's always nice to have your name with those past winners there.

**MODERATOR:** You've had a lot of success in general, but especially here at the Women's Open. In addition to the victory, 11 consecutive years you've finished in the top-20. What is it about this championship that seems to bring out the best in your game?

**PAULA CREAMER:** Well, I think the main thing is the fact that it's our national championship, and I know that I'm going to grind no matter what happens out there. And I enjoy a challenge. I think that the USGA picks great golf courses. They suit women very well wherever we go. They showed we can play where the men played a couple of years ago. And then last year's U.S. Open golf course, which I thought was great, kind of narrow, tight fairways.



This golf course is right up the alley and they're going to make it firmer and it's going to get faster on the greens. I love having to think out on the golf course, where you just can't hit it everywhere, and that type of golf. I like to be able to shape the shots, and work a little bit harder out there. I think that's why I think I've done decent in U.S. Opens.

**MODERATOR:** Speaking of great courses, you said you've been out to CordeValle a little bit. What are your thoughts on the course and are there a few holes that will be pivotal down the stretch on Sunday?

**PAULA CREAMER:** I think the par-3s are great. There are some long ones, there are some shorter ones with tight little pins that they're going to tuck in. I think 12, 13, those are two -- 12 is a great par 13. 13, up that hill is an awesome par-4. I know this isn't really the prevailing wind right now, it will switch, of course, when we tee it up on Thursday and it will be a different golf course. I think if those holes, you can go around and play even par on the par-3s, you're going to do pretty well. I think the par-5s will be a little reachable in the case of some of the tee boxes. But the pin placements are going to be the key this week.

**MODERATOR:** For you this year, a couple of top-5s early in the season, a few missed cuts in the past month. How are you feeling about your state of your game going into this week?

**PAULA CREAMER:** I'm obviously not satisfied with the way I've been playing, but I feel very confident. I know that it's right around the corner. And my scores and my results look way worse than really what's going on. It's just right now my misses are pretty drastic, they're pretty bad. Where I've never played golf like that. Having to hit under trees and things like that has kind of been a different style of golf for me and I'm learning.

But I definitely figuring out a good key thought with my coach Gary. It's a big change. I had a massive change happen in my career. I believe in what we're doing, but sometimes you've got to go backwards to go forwards. I'm going to be patient with it. I'm going to continue to keep working on those swing changes that we're doing. And I think it's more of a mental approach out on the golf course than really just being able to do it. It's more

being mentally able to trust it.

MODERATOR: You've had a couple of cool experiences in the past month. You were with the Solheim Cup team at the White House, and you were just with Feherty.

PAULA CREAMER: It was awesome to be able to meet Mr. President. It's fun when you get all the girls back together and be a team again. We had a great day just being able to spend time, have lunch and the Solheim family was with us and being able to spend time with them, as well.

Feherty was on last night. And it was awesome being able to be on the show and to film it. And it was kind of neat to see just a different side of me, rather than someone that plays golf all the time. And I kind of showed my personality a little bit more.

Anytime you get an opportunity to do that, you definitely take it. And I feel like they did a good job. I never watch myself on anything, but I did watch that last night. I was a little nervous, I kind of sat in the corner like that the whole time. But I'm very pleased and it was fun.

**Q. You talked about the swing changes. What sort of inspired that? You talk about being patient. Has that patience been tested, given how uncommon the year has been?**

PAULA CREAMER: Definitely my patience has been tested with this. It's something I think about every day. I've always been very good to be able to when I leave the golf course to leave what's happening at the golf course there. And right now I'm just thinking so much about my golf swing. The main thing for me is being able to keep the club in front of me on my takeaway. I tend to get very on the inside. And basically right now I'm kind of coming over the top, so my misses are pretty drastic.

My tempo is very important with what I do right now, and that affects -- that's the way I walk into the ball, that's my practice swing. So it's not just physically hitting it, it's more about the mental approach going into the ball. If I'm hyped and energetic, my swing is going to get quick. And that's something we've really tried to work on.

In the past we changed my golf swing to hit it farther, and I don't need to do it. It's more of getting it back on plane. I hit it far enough now. I actually just switched golf balls to Bridgestone B230-RS, where I've been playing the RX for the last four years almost. So I went to a softer ball, and that's going to be a big change for me, but I know it's going to benefit around the greens a hundred percent. This will be the first week I've played

it.

**Q. It sounds like this design, with the more generous fairways, the rough isn't too deep, but yet what I'm hearing from some players is it doesn't necessarily favor long hitters. Why not and what's the equalizer? Or do you feel it does favor long hitters?**

PAULA CREAMER: I played with May in the practice rounds, and she's one of the longest ones out here -- Ariya, sorry. She hits the 2-iron like 400 yards. So it's fun to play with her to watch. She can hit driver out here a couple of times, but she doesn't hit it that much. I don't think there's really an advantage of hitting it super long. There's a couple of holes where if you can cut the corner a little bit more, you'll be able to have wedges in, you can spin it more with the greens and where the pins will be.

I think the crucial part is when you do miss the greens, miss them in the right spots. Some of that rough around the greens is pretty nasty. The bunkers aren't really the easiest bunkers. It's almost better is to be short in the first cut, in the fringe, than it really is into a bunker. They're really hard, so it's difficult to put a lot of spin on them.

I don't feel like this is a golf course that fits one person. I think that it's pretty well rounded. You've got to be able to do everything.

**Q. The U.S. Open could be a place to break out of a little slump, but could it, in fact, be that, if you sort of get in the mindset that you've had? You've had a lot of success obviously at this championship?**

PAULA CREAMER: Well, I did it at Oakmont. I was literally shanking the ball on the range that week, and off of a tee even, and I won by a couple of shots there.

But I found a good swing thought and actually today hit the ball really well. I played great. I feel really good. For me it's just a mindset of being patient. I tee off late on Thursday, so I'll get to see how the golf course plays in the morning, go out and kind of take care of business.

But the thing about a major is you take it one day at a time, one hole at a time. And it's such a cliché to say, especially in golf, but you have to with the USGA because she just switch it up all the time. If you're not a hundred percent present, it's going to get you.

I feel like to me I'm so close. Like I said, it looks like I'm miles and miles away, but I know I'm right around the corner.

**Q. Does this still feel like a home game? You're**

**farther and farther removed from your time living here, and this is obviously not Blackhawk right around the corner from home?**

PAULA CREAMER: This is a home game. This is a home game for sure. This is great. All the volunteers, everybody -- every hole I walk on, they go, go Pleasanton, or go Castle Wood. For me that's so exciting. It's neat to be able to come back, especially with the Feherty show on last night and the 4th of July, I couldn't ask for a better week to be here in my own backyard with a national championship. It's exciting. And I have a lot of family and friends coming out. We've been down the road of knowing not to put too much pressure on myself when I'm at home. And it's hard to do, but if I can't do it now, it will be a little difficult to ever do it again. That's for sure. Just being able to know it's worked in the past. It's exciting, and I can't wait to hear from Pleasanton, California, on the tee, because it's just right around the corner.

MODERATOR: 2:09 off the first tee on Thursday. Good luck.

PAULA CREAMER: Thank you.