

TIMELINE: BROOKE HENDERSON'S HISTORIC 12 VICTORIES ON THE LPGA TOUR

In the history of golf in Canada, no one has done what Brooke Henderson has already accomplished.

At just 24 years of age, the Smiths Falls native has 12 victories on the LPGA Tour, the most professional wins of any Canadian — male or female. And in claiming last month's Amundi Evian Championship in France, she's also the first from this country to feature 2 Major championship titles on her resume.

So how did Brooke, sister of Brittany (her caddy) and daughter of Dave (her coach) and Darlene Henderson, get to this point? Here's a rundown of her dozen LPGA victories, starting with the Cambia Portland Classic in August, 2015, when she was just 17 years old.

2015
 • Brooke captures her first LPGA title, the Cambia Portland Classic, in impressive fashion, pulling away from the field for an eight-stroke victory.

2016
 • A 6-under-par final round,



Melissa Novacaska/Metroland
 Brooke Henderson is ready to compete at the CP Women's Open in Ottawa, taking place at the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club from Aug. 22-28, 2022. Here she is pictured in Ottawa during the Open's promotional event on June 29.

capped by a brilliant playoff hole to unseat Lydia Ko, gave Henderson the win at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, her first major.

• The Cambia Portland Classic becomes Brooke's first successful title defence, a month after win-

ning the KPMG.

2017
 • The Meijer LPGA Classic is win number one of the 2017 season.

• The schedule doesn't let up in the fall and Brooke captures her second title of the year down un-

der at the LPGA New Zealand Women's Open.

2018
 • In Canada, the year is marred by the tragic bus collision that killed so many members of the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team in Saskatchewan. Brooke dedicates her victory at the LOTTE Championship in Hawaii to the team only days following the tragedy.

• For the first time in 45 years, a Canadian captures the CP Women's Open. Henderson does it in style, pulling away from the field on the back 9 on Sunday in Regina, her 7th win of her young career.

2019
 • Brooke gets 2019 off on the right foot by successfully defending her LOTTE Championship. Her 8th LPGA win ties her for the most victories by a Canadian professional golfer.

• Just two months later, the Canadian record is Brooke's alone when she captures the Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give. Her 9th win puts her one ahead of

Sandra Post, Mike Weir and George Knudson.

2021
 After a year of disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Brooke returns to the winner's circle with a comeback victory at the Hugel-Air Premia LA Open, her 10th win on the LPGA Tour.

2022
 This has been a banner year already, starting with her 11th career victory at the ShopRite LPGA Classic in New Jersey back in June.

Brooke follows that up with her 2nd career Major championship win, the 2022 Amundi Evian Championship at Evian-les-Bains, France. A birdie on the 72nd hole secures this impressive victory and places her truly in a class by herself in Canadian golf.



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A LOOK AT THE BEGINNING OF HENDERSON'S START

A SEASON TO REMEMBER

Golf is such a simple game when cradled in the fearless arms of a talented 11-year-old. Tee up the ball, address the ball, swing through the ball ... and land it safely in the centre of the fairway 220 yards away. Repeat.

Simple. Of course for most of us mere mortals, the grand ol' game is nothing more than a hair-pulling exercise in utter futility. But for the diminutive Brooke Henderson, golf has been a walk in the park during a breakthrough season that's seen her rocket up the rankings not just in Canada but the world.

Competing primarily in junior events for those 18 and under, with some amateur events tossed in for good measure, the youngest daughter of Dave and Darlene Henderson has been nothing

short of stunning all summer long, winning titles and fans everywhere she goes during what has become a real season to remember.

Just a year ago, at age 10 years, the blond cutie with the monster game — a mirror image of her talented older sister Brittany — was already dominating the Ottawa junior scene, accumulating more than double the number of points from her local CPGA tour victories than her nearest rival. She's done so again in 2009, despite lining up against far more seasoned competition. She captured all four events this season, at Dragonfly Golf Links, Manderly, Prescott and Mountain Creek, by between seven and 18 strokes each, and followed that up last Friday with the overall championship at The Meadows Golf & Country Club in Gloucester. She's qualified for the Ontario Team Championships at month's end.



Ryland Coyne photo

Brooke Henderson, 11, watches her putt intently as the ball makes its way toward the cup on the eighth hole at the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club. The talented youngster still has a few events left in this memorable summer, including a Tournament of Champions next month.

She's captured both the Junior Girls and Ladies Club Championships at the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club — the latter being what Brooke herself considers one of the highlights of her season — but even this only begins to scratch the surface. The little dynamo took her game to a new level, qualifying for provincial, na-

tional and even international tournaments. Dave knew his daughter would be competitive, but he admits even he could not have envisioned what she's accomplished.

"She's gone far beyond anyone's expectations. Every day she continues to amaze everyone but herself. In her mind, she should be even better," Dave says while watching Brooke make her way around the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club course in the junior girls championship Thursday, Aug. 13.

One of the highlights of the summer so far has been the three-day Optimist International Junior Golf Championships last month, an event won several times by Tiger Woods back in his youth. Playing in the 10-11 age category in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, Brooke followed back-to-back rounds of 75 with a remarkable four-under-par 68 on the final day to finish a close second, a single shot back of a Philippines golfer.

Brooke says there was no secret to her success on that final day.

"I just made a few more putts and hit my shots closer," she ex-

plains. Her resume has been filled with eye-popping results. At the Quebec junior championships (golf boundary lines include Smiths Falls as part of La Belle Province), playing against the best U18 golfers that province has to offer, Brooke finished fourth. While she didn't win the overall title, she was the runaway pee-wee division champion and became the youngest ever member of the provincial junior team, allowing her to advance to the RCGA (Royal Canadian Golf Association) Royale Cup Canadian Junior Girls Golf Championships in New Brunswick. She also attracted large crowds of curious spectators wanting to catch a glimpse at this quickly emerging shining star.

"I was looking around and it was like a zoo," Dave recalls of the scenes at the Drummondville Golf Club. "They just came out to see this amazing 11-year-old."

At the nationals on Aug. 4, she fired an opening round 76 (+3) on the challenging 6,071-yard Hampton Golf Club course in Hampton, N.B. She'd shared the lead at -1 af-

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BROOKE HENDERSON: A PRO IN THE MAKING

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ter five holes and was in a tie for second one shot back after shooting even par through 11. She finished the day in a tie for 9th. But she and her sister chose to withdraw following the passing of their uncle Ken Moir, returning home to be with family during a difficult time.

"I could see it repeating the rest of the week," Dave says. "That's the wow factor. She has the size of an 11 year-old but she plays much more maturely."

And at the Canadian Optimist National Golf Championships at Ingersoll, Ont., she placed second.

What's all the more remarkable is that these are Brooke's first attempts at what should be pressure-cooker tournaments — national and international events that attract the very best and require her to place well in qualifiers.

"She has no fear," her father says. "She just goes out ... and hammers it."

"They both (Brooke and Brittany) have a special talent. When things get tough, they play better ... they can go up to another level when other people can't."

Consistent
Dave says he remembers his girls as toddlers going out into the yard of the family's cottage near Westport and using mini clubs to whack the heads off hundreds of dandelions because he told them he'd pay five cents for each one they removed.

"What I meant was for them to grab them by the root," he says with a chuckle.

The weeds would reappear and the girls repeated the endeavor.

Consistency appears to be the secret to Brooke's game. A solid stroke off the tee that sees her drive the ball more than 200 yards, straight down the middle, almost every time, backed by a wonderful short game and deft touch around the greens makes her tough to beat.

Asked what it is about her game that sets Brooke apart, her

father says it's likely her "swing plane" that's nearly perfect, allowing her to strike the ball cleanly to set the correct trajectory. She also has mental toughness far beyond her years, an ability to block out any pressures around her and bounce back from the few poor shots or holes during a round.

"Everybody's looking at her and studying and trying to figure it out. It's like I say, she just keeps it simple. It's an easy game when you're sitting out on the fairway every hole," Dave says.

Brooke says the goal to her short game is keeping the ball out of trouble, and giving her the best opportunity to get it close.

Paul Vaillancourt, the CPGA pro at the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club, has been teaching Brooke since she was six. He continues to offer instruction at his winter golf school. He says she's a good athlete who works hard and follows instructions well. Like her sister, she also has a great work ethic, "not something you usually see in someone that age."



Ryland Coyne photo

On the lengthy par-5 seventh hole, Brooke Henderson chips onto the green during last Thursday's junior club championship at the Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club.

Like Brittany, Brooke is simply determined to do the best she can.

"She's got a 'Go get 'em' type attitude," he says.

While the sisters have their own personalities, Vaillancourt says one can't underestimate the role Brittany has had on her little sister's development.

"That's very important," he says. "Brittany always had her by her side (at tournaments).

They're best of buddies."

Their father concurs, saying from a very early age, Brooke was able to watch her sister develop and benefit from the same level of instruction.

Editor's note: This story first appeared in print Aug. 20, 2009 in the Record News EMC. It was written by then-editor Ryland Coyne, who is now the Editor-in-Chief. It has been edited for reprint.

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BROOKE and BRITTANY
Best of luck at the open!



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