



2025 CPKC Women's Open Committee Post-Event Report

Committee: Broadcast Support

Submitted by: Dick Freeborough and Kathleen Homonko

Responsibilities:

The Broadcast Support Committee volunteers support the TV broadcasters - Golf Channel/NBC (GC) - during their broadcast. The volunteers provide basic information such as yardage, number of shots and who will play next, about golfers in the selected groups on course. Our committee consisted of one yardage person, two cart drivers and thirteen spotters for a total of sixteen volunteers. GC requests that the yardage person and cart drivers are the same for all four days. We had a mix of club members, standard volunteers, university students and juniors. Everyone was knowledgeable about golf and easily learned their role.

Roles

Yardage: Accompanies the on-course announcer following the feature group and provides yardage to the flag. GC provides a yardage book prepared specifically for the tournament.

Cart Drivers: Drive the on-course announcers and camera people following the featured groups around the course. Please refer to the end of this report for a detailed description of what could be expected that was provided by the volunteer who accompanied Karen Stupples during the tournament.

Spotters: Each spotter follows a player group that the GC wants to cover. The main role is to keep track of what shot each player is on and, where possible, identify who plays next. Spotters are supplied with radios, headsets, clipboards, pens and scoresheets. Everyone is on the same radio channel so can hear each other. Usually, a spotter will only speak if asked by the GC lead. For example, if you are following Brooke's group, GC could ask 'Is this Brooke's 2nd shot?' You would confirm yes or, if it isn't, 'it's her 3rd'. A spotter can offer information for developments such as when a player holes a shot from the fairway. The GC lead will provide direction on how much or little talking volunteers should do. This is because he/she is following multiple groups at once in the broadcast trailer and the shared radio channel means only one person can be heard at a time.

GC provides:

- hats – very helpful for being inside the ropes as marshals can see quickly you are not a spectator
- radios with headset – easy to use
- yardage book for the yardage volunteer
- clipboards, pens and scoresheets

Volunteers provide:

- comfortable walking shoes (very important for spotters!)
- weather appropriate clothing



What went well?

GC doesn't come on site until the week of the tournament. As a result, many Broadcast Support Committee volunteers start getting nervous about 'what will they be doing?' We were able to have a call with the GC contact who would be the committee's lead contact. He confirmed the expected broadcast schedule and number of volunteers so we could be comfortable we had the right number of people and volunteer sessions scheduled. He was friendly, helpful and looking forward to coming to Toronto for the tournament. We were also able to introduce ourselves to him on site on the day before the tournament began.

The report from the Broadcast Support Committee co-chairs from Calgary was very helpful. We were also able to have a call with one of the chairs before the tournament. This was also helpful and informative in that we felt we were on the right track.

A few evenings before the start of the tournament, we had a Microsoft Teams meeting with all our volunteers. Leanne from Golf Canada and Reid, one of the tournament volunteer co-chairs also joined. This gave us a chance to see each other, review key things (volunteer parking, where to sign in.) and answer questions. Dick and Kathleen communicated the information obtained from GC and the Calgary team which we think helped prepare volunteers for their roles.

The tournament volunteer co-chairs for Edmonton 2026 were on site so were invited to join the Broadcast Support training session on Thursday morning. This helped to provide some advance information as to what the Broadcast Support Committee can expect in Edmonton.

The GC lead for Broadcast Support was Brian Shrull. Brian was extremely capable, patient and fun. Our volunteers ranged in age from 14 years old to seniors. Everyone was able to quickly learn their role from the training Brian provided. For the first two rounds, Brian assigned each spotter to a group to follow. For the Saturday and Sunday rounds, Brian put numbers in a hat and each spotter chose their group in the order the number pulled dictated. This was a lot of fun and also led to some trades happening!

Brian started "coverage" before the broadcast was on air to test headsets and get us all into the flow of our assigned groups. This was particularly helpful on the first two days as volunteers got more familiar with their roles.

Yardage is probably the hardest role; we were fortunate to have a very experienced former PGA Tour professional to provide yardage information. However, an individual comfortable with calculating yardage will enjoy the role.

Volunteers were happy with the Broadcast Support Committee coordination and communication – if we didn't hear from someone, we followed up to make sure they were okay with their schedules. Many younger volunteers are best to reach via text message rather than email.

What could have gone better?

The GC site wasn't easy to identify on the site map and is also very busy with trailers and broadcast equipment. Some volunteers found it difficult to locate our meeting spot the first day.

A cart driver and their on-course broadcaster need to coordinate so the cart driver is positioned to meet the needs of the GC broadcast team. This becomes more challenging during the final two rounds as the galleries increase in size. Radios should be tested to ensure communication channels are functioning. Cell phones could be considered as a backup in case a radio is not functioning.

Suggestions/things to keep in mind for future events:



When setting up committees, ensure that the chairs have the competencies needed to be successful in their roles. Co-chairs need to work together in a complementary and collaborative manner. Diverse skill sets contribute to the smooth operation of the Broadcast Support Committee.

It is important that volunteers are flexible and adaptable. The broadcast schedule can change and requirements of broadcasters can change. For example, the Friday session scheduled to start at 7:30 am was changed around 6:00 pm on Thursday to start at 6:30 am Friday. We were able to reach all volunteers scheduled to alert them of the change and find out if they could arrive an hour earlier. Our volunteers were great – all of them came earlier than originally planned. The GC team also varied how many people they had in the TV booth vs on the ground. This meant that on two days, GC did not need a yardage person and one cart driver. Brian was very flexible and offered these volunteers the option to be spotters.

It is very important that spotters can walk 18 or more holes easily.

Because volunteers are only needed during the broadcast windows, only four shifts need to be scheduled. The time of the shifts will be determined by whether GC or NBC coverage is in the morning or afternoon.

Range finders are not needed.

What do you wish you would have known prior to tournament week?

- The radios are quite heavy; plan to wear a thicker belt to clip the radio onto.
- The headsets can be too loose; volunteers with smaller heads found it helped to put their NBC caps over their headsets.
- Familiarize yourself as much as possible with the course layout by walking around the course and noting shortcuts to get from, for example, the clubhouse to the furthest point on the course. For example, especially on the days before the cut when there are split tees and a lot of groups on the course, a spotter may need to catch up with a group on the 14th hole, follow them to 18 and then be assigned to another group on 7.

Unless you have performed this role at another tournament, it is likely different than anything you have done. Everyone wants to know more in advance about what they will be doing. The GC lead may be different year to year so may do things a little differently. However, the GC broadcast team are professionals and used to working with volunteers. The training will get volunteers up to speed so everyone is comfortable. Volunteers loved getting 'inside the ropes', seeing great golf close up and had a wonderful time.

What is your favorite memory from the CPKC Women's Open?

There are too many for just one:

- Brooke Winning!!
- Seeing the inside of the NBC trailer with all the TV screens covering different holes
- Seeing so many happy volunteers and spectators
- Broadcast Support Volunteers saying how they enjoyed the terrific access and had a great experience

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions. We are happy to pay forward the help we received.

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Lastly, helpful tips from Jim, one of our cart drivers:

Cart Driver priorities:

- 1. Stay ahead of on-course reporter at all times;*
- 2. Keep track of location of on-course reporter;*
- 3. Stay outside ropes when possible (your cart should not be seen 'on camera');*
- 4. Prepare on-course reporter's bag prior to round – water, pop, snacks etc.;*
- 5. Pick up reporter's cart from the cart compound;*
- 6. Pick up headset from headset trailer;*
- 7. Watch for/anticipate when the reporter may need water, snack, etc.;*
- 8. Do not travel into heavily congested areas;*
- 9. There should be limited, if any, talking to on-course reporter as he/she is connected to Producer and broadcast team who will be talking to him/her regularly;*
- 10. At end of each round have cart ready to transport on-course reporter back to TV compound.*

My on-course reporter was major winner Karen Stupples, a long-time reporter for LPGA events. She spent extended time, pre-round, preparing. She was thorough, well prepared, knowledgeable and all business during the round. A delight to watch, and listen to, handling her responsibilities.

Other comments:

Brian Shrull, Producer, was professional, friendly to the team and explained functions in an easy to learn manner. Tour of his studio was much appreciated.

First class person!

Enjoy your role, it is exciting and rewarding!