

Toledo is Home to the Marathon LPGA Classic and the 2021 Sol...

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SPEAKERS

Judd Silverman, Halie Morris

- H** Halie Morris 00:16
My name is Halie, I'm your podcast coordinator and host and we have an exciting episode today, in particular about a couple big events coming to the Toledo area. So if you're a business around here, or even one that wants to branch out and do something new, we've got a lot of stuff going on. And I brought Judd Silverman on to talk about it. So Judd, if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, please.
- J** Judd Silverman 00:42
Well, thank you, Halie. My name is Judd Silverman. I'm the executive director of the marathon LPGA classic. Here in Toledo, that is an annual event out at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania. And this will be our 37th year, I believe, for the tournament. And yeah, we're looking forward to it. And we're really excited to have fans back, able to attend the event, because last year, unfortunately, due to COVID, we weren't allowed to have spectators attend. So we're just really, really excited to have a normal tournament again.
- H** Halie Morris 01:27
Now, I used to live right over by where this is hosted and I know every year the people that

come in to see it, you see people parked in yards, and then they always shuttle them over from a larger parking area down the street. And last year, everything was quiet, quiet and miserable. So it's exciting to be hitting summer with so much opportunity to get back out through stuff that we love, especially traditions, like the Marathon Classic, and really kind of bringing back the same commodity and energy that was there before.



Judd Silverman 02:05

Oh, no doubt about it. I mean, I think one of the great things about the marathon classic is it's really almost more of a social event than it is a sporting event. It's just fun to be out there with family and friends and seeing people and that's what we're going to return to this year. And, you know, though last year did have its benefits. We were still able to hold the tournament, which was really important for the women that make a living at playing professional golf. They had not played a tournament since February. So they had about, you know, about 12 tournaments canceled due to COVID. And luckily, we were able to still manage our way to be able to have the tournament, thanks to generous sponsors like marathon and Dana and a host of other companies that make this event possible. And, you know, as you know, Halie, we're a 501c3 (a nonprofit organization). So the mission of the Marathon LPGA Classic is to raise money for Toledo area children's charities, and we were not only able to provide the women with the opportunity to get back out on the golf course, to make a living by putting up the \$1.7 million they played for last year. But we were also able to raise \$600,000 for 26 different Northwest Ohio children's charities. So there were there were a lot of benefits by having the tournament last year, even though we weren't allowed to have spectators so but looking ahead This year, we're really excited that people and families will be able to come back out and watch the Greatest Women golfers in the world do their thing. And help us raise money for 30 Northwest Ohio children's charities this year. So yeah, we've got a wonderful field of players. Danielle Kang is our defending champion. She's an American from Southern California. And last year, the LPGA put together started the last minute, a tournament that was played the week before the marathon classic at Inverness, called the drive on championship. And I know Promedica really helped make that event happen. So it was great for the Toledo economy because we had you know about 150 professional golfers and their caddies and media because both events were live on the Golf Channel. So they were nationally televised. And it was really good for Toledo. And we Those were the first two tournaments that the women got to play after having such a long layoff from February, so yeah, it was amazing what happened last year, in spite of COVID.



Halie Morris 05:13

It is crazy to think about where we were like this time last year, and truly, like, even March

and April before it because everything, it, it's hard to wrap my head around now because even with things still kind of closed off and not fully opened until, you know, beginning of June or not quite there. It truly was like nothing was happening. We were so dry. And so hey, you know, thinking about like how powerful those events were. And I remember seeing the one for endlessness, too, because I think I was still in school at that point. And we hadn't been we were online, but I'd still drive over to campus or drive somewhere just to get out of the house. And I remember seeing the stuff for it. But it how important that was for for the golfers or these charities because I know charity work probably slowed. Humans like crazy because people have even more need than before, but less ability to get together to come together and do things like that. So yeah, that's powerful, too.



Judd Silverman 06:26

No, you're absolutely right. We were just absolutely thrilled to be able to hold the tournament. And the icing on the cake was raising, you know, \$600,000 for charity, even though we weren't allowed to have spectators. And really that that is through the generosity of all of our sponsors. I wish I could name every one of them during this podcast, because they all deserve credit. Because a lot of the sponsors, we couldn't fulfill their sponsorship because we weren't allowed to have people out there. So if you bought, you know, a ticket package from us, if you bought a hospitality package from us, if you bought advertising on the course from us, well, we had to return all the money because we couldn't fulfill your sponsorship. But we went to those sponsors and said, "Hey, well, we'll offer you a full refund, but would you consider making a donation to the children's charities and maybe rolling over the rest of your sponsorship to next year's tournament?" and many of them said, we want to donate all of the money that we earmarked for this tournament even though you can't fulfill our sponsorship, we will donate all the money to the children's charities. And you talk about heartwarming. And to the to last year's event. It was incredible because our pre COVID goal for charity was 600,000. And we ended up in the end giving \$600,000 to these 26 Northwest Ohio charities. So it was just amazing, really amazing. And you know, now we can have a tournament where everybody can attend and have a good time and feel safe. And it's just amazing what the vaccine has been able to how it's allowed us to open this world back up. And you know, we're excited about it, we got a great field, like I mentioned, and many of the players that are trying to make the US or European Solheim Cup teams will be in Toledo playing in the marathon classic because the way to earn your way onto those teams is to accumulate points throughout the year based on your play, how well you do week in and week out. That's how you earn your way onto those teams. So we're actually coming down the stretch here. And because the last tournament to earn points will be in in early August, late July, early August, it'll be the women's British Open Championship will be the last time they can earn points. And the Marathon Classic is three to four weeks ahead of that. So you've got all

these players that are trying to make their respective teams, because I don't think there's a greater honor for those players. They even talk about it, then representing your country to play in the Solheim cup. And we're just lucky that that event is in Toledo in September over Labor Day weekend. And like we were talking before we went on the air here. Toledo was fortunate to win the bid to host the Solheim cup in 2021. We were up against five other cities and it took us close to a year put our bid together and knock on wood. We were fortunate enough to win the bid and host this prestigious international event.

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Halie Morris 10:10

I'm curious, when did you find out for sure that you were the one who wanted one of it? You know, you put all that work in. And we've seen it on the news a lot lately. But I'm curious when you actually got the good news that you would be able to host.

J

Judd Silverman 10:27

It was in late 2017 that we found out. So, yeah, like I said, and the first thing that if you were going to be a city, which put together a bid, the first thing you had to do was find a lead sponsor for \$1.25 million. And thanks to Marathon Petroleum, they were they agreed to be the lead sponsor for Northwest Ohio's Solheim Cup bid. And if they wouldn't have done that, I don't know if we would have been able to bid or not, I really don't know. But that was a huge piece, because you knew all the five other cities that were building bidding, they all were going to be able to find that lead sponsor, so we had to find one. And here marathon is the title sponsor of the marathon classic. And they agreed to be the lead sponsor of the Solheim Cup. So I can't say enough about Marathon Petroleum and just what a community minded company they are headquartered in Findlay, Ohio. And, you know, just so grateful for that. And that really got the ball rolling downhill for us. And then we probably put together another 40 letters of support in our bid from area CEOs who wrote letters saying if Toledo and Inverness are fortunate enough to win the bid, we will support this event and those letters helped a lot in winning the bid, I'm sure. Obviously, having Inverness as the host site was a huge advantage, I think, over the other cities, though, they had great golf courses as well. And then I really think that thing that pushed us over the goal line was the Toledo community has supported the LPGA for, you know, like I said, 37 years, and none of the other cities that were bidding could say that. So we had a great plan and a great bid. And thankfully, the LPGA selected Toledo and Inverness to host it. And it is going to be a fabulous event for this community. With a lot of things to do, you know, it's not only the competition at Inverness, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of September. But on the 3rd of September we're having the opening ceremonies down in Promenade Park and Promedica is sponsoring the concert that night, Gwen Stefani, and the concert. The next night, Chris Young, they're selling tickets to it, but they are

coordinating the whole thing. It is going to be unbelievable that opening ceremonies, I mean, we expect 30,000 people down there. And if anyone is interested in buying tickets, either night, just go to Ticketmaster and just probably type in 2021 Solheim Cup opening ceremonies, and you'll be able to choose between the two nights of concerts. But the opening ceremonies have a lot of pomp and circumstance as well. Both teams will be there, both teams will get introduced. And there'll be all sorts of festivities going on, probably some nice flyovers and marching bands and speeches by dignitaries and that type of thing. But it'll be great for Toledo and that will be nationally televised on the Golf Channel as well. So, you know, the economic impact of winning that Solheim Cup bid. It should be in the area of \$30 million to the local economy with all the people that will come in for the Solheim Cup. We're hoping lots of Europeans will travel to Toledo for the event, as well as people from all over the country and Canada will come in to watch the event. And it'll just be a very festive week for sure. I know there's an event called Solheim After Sundown. On Tuesday, that'll sort of kick the week off. That'll be on Tuesday, August 31. That's going to be held hanceville and that's sort of a fundraiser for Danberry Realtors reasure chest. They are sponsoring that event. And you can you can go to solheimcupusa.com to buy tickets for that event as well as the tournament. And for there's four days of practice rounds Tuesday through Friday, and then the actual matches, like I said, are Saturday, Sunday and will finish on Labor Day Monday. And you can purchase grounds tickets, and then there's an upgraded ticket that gets you into a big huge pavilion called the Meyer pavilion, which will be air conditioned and you'll be able to buy food and beverage as you go. So you've got grounds tickets, tickets to the Meijer Pavilion. Again, you can buy these tickets online at solheimcupusa.com/event-tickets.

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Halie Morris 16:04

This is the because we really are starting to move into a more I feel like really filled period with this whole year that we feel like we're finally starting to open up people are getting vaccine, it's becoming safe. And this feels like the icing on a cake like the way to especially for our community, you know where there's been so many things happening all over the world. But especially like when it hits your own community, it's always a little hard like seeing businesses struggle or seeing things change. And we are like a tight community that people haven't got to see each other. So this is one of like the best ways, first with the marathon classic and then with the Solheim Cup to really come back together.

J

Judd Silverman 16:50

No question. You know, there really no pun intended. But there are two great shots in the arm, that's for sure. And especially the Solheim Cup, because it is truly an international event. And people are going to travel to Toledo, to watch, watch the tournament, as well

as volunteer. We've got volunteers coming in from Europe, and from across the country, just to volunteer for the event. And we still have volunteer positions for both the Marathon Classic and the Solheim Cup available. And if anyone's interested in becoming a volunteer, you can just call the tournament office at 419-531-3277. And we'd love to have you you'd have a great experience volunteering.

H

Halie Morris 17:46

We'll include all of these links in the number and everything also in our blog posts or descriptions so that you can reach out easily with one click, as well after the episode. Wonderful. And it's also interesting to hear the work with Dan berry too, because they have been a guest. We've had Victoria Valle on who is one of their top sales people. And then we'll have an episode coming out shortly. Where we just talked to Dan about what Danberry has been experiencing this last year, what they're see going forward and you know, the housing market, but we also talked about the treasure chest, which is a really cool thing they do. And it's awesome to see, you know, another important part of our community be tied into something. Like you said, it's huge. It's going to be great for our economy and great for the community. And it's just this just this reintroduction into what we're going to be going forward post COVID.

J

Judd Silverman 18:48

Well, no doubt it will be a celebration in on many levels, for sure. And thanks to Danberry, for their generosity to sponsor this Solheim After Sundown event. And it will be a great fundraiser for the Treasure Chest for sure. But still, they had to step up to the plate and sponsor this event. And they've done that. And, you know, I think there's going to be a huge crowd at hanceville for the Solheim after sundown event to raise money for Deb Berry's treasure chest. And it'll be a great kickoff to Solheim Cup week. And then one other event I wanted to talk about, Halie, is on Tuesday, August 31, as well, in the afternoon, the Marathon Classic has a Women's Summit Leadership Conference every year. We've done it for four years already, and we typically do it at Highland Meadows during during the Marathon Classic in our big pavilion, the Champions Pavilion and we have about 400 to 420 Toledo area business women that attend that event, and it has been super successful that the steering committee led by Meg Ressler. She's the chair of the steering committee, that there they've just done a remarkable job. And their goal this year was well, why don't we do the women's summit in conjunction with the Solheim cup. So that maybe people that are coming in, for the Solheim Cup can attend the Women's Summit. So we're going to hold the Women's Summit on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 31, we're going to do it at the Stranahan Theater, Great Hall complex. So the luncheon portion of it will be in the Great Hall, and then the program will be in the theater. And it'll

be just a great event. The the committee right now is finalizing the keynote speakers for the event. The theme of the event is changing the game for Ferrari women. And, you know, I know it'll be another successful event, all the proceeds from the women's summit, will go to the first tee of greater Toledo, of Lake Erie. And the Boys and Girls Club there. That's being built on Hill Avenue right now. And then Habitat for Humanity. They're doing a build of a new house. And they're going to present the keys to the house to a woman who's going to who has already, I think been selected to win the home. And then the LPGA girls golf program is also going to receive part of the money from the Women's Summit. But we're we still have tables available in case any of your listeners, any of their companies want to buy a table to the event just again have him call our tournament office at 419-531-3277. And we'll fill him in on what it takes to secure a table of 10 for that event.

H

Halie Morris 22:06

All right. I'm excited for that. I mean, just as a woman in business, it sounds I mean, I didn't even realize we did that part, you know. And like I said, I used to live down the street from Highland meadows. And actually, before we lived at that house, I lived right around the corner in the condos by Inverness. So we are very familiar with the area Toledo has become, you know, my home and I think many of the people who have stuck around and enjoyed it, whether they've come from the university, they've grown up here all their lives. They've come in for business, in the community to be to be proud of and to see us doing so much. And to see so many people coming together for these events is incredible. But also exciting to see like what will this transition into for, you know, what are all these efforts going to turn out for? Because I think it's going to be pretty big.

J

Judd Silverman 23:06

No doubt. And Toledo is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. We have so many assets. In our community. Obviously we have great schools, great Metro parks, a wonderful university. You know, so many things to be thankful for. And, you know, the Solheim cup in the marathon classical both be nationally televised and really internationally televised. And it just sends a very positive message to the rest of the world about our community. And that's a good thing, because we certainly want people that, you know, may be interested in coming to work for Toledo area companies. We want them to be excited about Toledo. And with everything that's going on, and I'm excited to see summit street get completed and everything that's happened in downtown Toledo over the last 10 years is just amazing. With all the the people living downtown now the apartments, the restaurants, Fifth Third field, Huntington center for America's new headquarters, you know, the hotels, the Renaissance Hotel, and now the parking is totally

being redone. You know, there's just so much activity downtown. It's just, it's just awesome. And I think our communities just going to continue to flourish and grow.



Halie Morris 24:36

Exactly. And I know I've heard of a couple of people like opening up places down there for like, bars. I know one that's supposed to open up hopefully this year, actually our neighbors and some friends of theirs opened up a bar right in Hanceville you know, in the midst of all this and they did it very successfully.



Judd Silverman 24:59

And what's the name of that?



Halie Morris 25:01

Firefly.



Judd Silverman 25:02

Okay, I've heard of I haven't been to Firefly yet but my son has and said it's great.



Halie Morris 25:08

Yeah, no, it's it was cool to watch them get excited and talk about it and then they just a great opening and it's been one of the more popular spots since it's opened, which is a you know, I get to brag they're really cool people, really cool individuals and just to see their work pay off and it is an ideal spot right there in Hensville. And they just added the patio too. So yeah, if you haven't been you probably have heard about it in the area at this point, which is, you know, the mark of a successful opening, I guess.



Judd Silverman 25:39

Yeah. And friend of ours, son moved back from Chicago and opened up Hannon's Block right there next to M'Osteria. And that's had a very successful opening as well. So that's pretty neat that, you know, a young man, Mike Stancati, who grew up in Toledo and moved to Chicago and was in the restaurant business there to learn the restaurant business, that he and his wife, who's also from Toledo wanted to move back and actually open up a restaurant in downtown Toledo. I mean, it's just great. No, just great.

H

Halie Morris 26:14

I have to say, too, I get super proud to go downtown now, because you've got all these really cool places that have been there for a little while. And then new places that are opening up and I feel like you get really good food and really good drinks. Like we've got quality and Toledo and I have friends that go down to Columbus and stuff. And I was like, but I know really good places here.

J

Judd Silverman 26:38

Good for you. Absolutely. We have a lot, a lot to promote. That's for sure.

H

Halie Morris 26:44

I definitely agree. And I'm excited that we get to brag a bit, especially with not just one large event this summer, but with two and I think I heard somewhere on the news them saying something about the how we're doing the opening night for the Solheim cup is unique, because normally, isn't it on the golf course and we're not hosting it at the golf course.

J

Judd Silverman 27:07

That's correct. That's correct. And, you know, I give a lot of credit to the LPGA Becky Newell who's the tournament director, the Solheim Cup, And Mike Whan the commissioner. They were open to ideas of maybe not having the opening ceremonies at the golf course where they've had the where they've done it for every Solheim Cup that's been played in the US since 1980. And, you know, we showed them around to different spots and the river front, they just fell in love with the riverfront. And, you know, Randy Oh, strim from madico were so welcoming to them and said, Hey, if you do the opening ceremonies down here, we'll work with you on on a concert. And why have they lived up to that commitment, and it's just going to be incredible. But, you know, I really tip my hat to the LPGA for their vision and their willingness to think out of the box on this a little bit. And I think anybody that comes to downtown Toledo on Friday, September the third and takes part in the celebration and the festivities of the opening ceremonies and the concert of for the Solheim cup is is going to just have a wonderful time, it's going to be just a great kickoff to them the competition the next three days.

H

Halie Morris 28:35

I think it's exciting too, because it's it gives so much more room to bring more people into

the fold to get more people excited who wouldn't maybe normally attend or wouldn't normally pay as much attention. And then it brings the attention down to those businesses that are starting to open are starting to thrive again downtown, which is super exciting.

J Judd Silverman 28:55

Absolutely. Nope, that's a really good point. You know, most people haven't even heard of this Solheim cup or or maybe they're not golf fans, you know, or have never attended the marathon classic. This really gives people another opportunity to take part in the event. If you're not a golf fan, and and you're not planning on going out to Inverness to watch and cheer on the Americans. You know this, this gives you another opportunity to take part in really a sort of a once in a lifetime event, because the Solheim cup is they're going to move that around the country over the years. Who knows if it'll ever be back in Toledo, so don't miss this opportunity to be a part of it. But either by going to the Solheim after sundown event that will benefit to denbury treasure chest or, you know buying a ticket to the opening ceremonies on Friday, September 3 or to the Chris young concert on Saturday nights, September. You know, find a way to take part in one of these events because it it's going to make you proud of your community for sure. I mean, the work and effort that is going into the Solheim cup Halley by so many people and organizations in this community that are working behind the scenes, companies, people that are going to put these events on the city of Toledo Mayor caps a cabbage. I mean, everybody is pulling the oars on this event and I think our communities just gonna sparkle for seven days and show the rest of the world what a What a great city. Toledo is.

H Halie Morris 30:51

I'm excited I could say it a million times. I'm excited this is going to be I think it's gonna be a summer to remember for for everybody there's so many good things happening so many opportunities to to get involved and connect with people for for both marathon classic. And for the Solheim. There's a little something for everyone in there, which is kind of exciting.

J Judd Silverman 31:16

absolutely after everything everyone's been through over the last, you know, 12 to 15 months, just to be able to feel safe, and, and, and be allowed, you know, to come out and and not have to worry about social distancing. And wearing masks and that type of thing is truly, it's going to be a celebration for a number of reasons, you know, I mean, it's been a long haul for everybody. And, you know, who knows? If you would have said six months

ago that Oh, no problem the Solheim cup is going to, you know, be this unbelievable celebration, there won't be any restrictions. I don't know if we would have believed Yes, six months ago. But, you know, thankfully, everything is falling into place. And it is going to be a tremendous summer for Toledo, for sure.

H

Halie Morris 32:14

I say it's so hard to believe that, like, we are finally getting back to normal. And I think this will be a good opportunity to show people that we can start to kind of move on and recover now, which is great.

J

Judd Silverman 32:28

Yep. Of all people of all ages will be attending the tournament and downtown attending the opening ceremonies at all. It'll just be a great celebration.

H

Halie Morris 32:39

And Toledo is a pretty awesome place. Like, I'd moved up here at the start of high school. And I'd never even heard of Toledo. And now you know, now it's my home. You know, I've been out on the river. I've been down in as many restaurants and stuff that I can get into. Just to enjoy, and there's always so much to do. And now I feel like it's coming back to life after a year of quiet.

J

Judd Silverman 33:05

No doubt. Yeah. And I also want to thank double A solutions for their support, as well appreciate the opportunity to, to be with you today to you know, just help spread the word on these events. And, you know, if people have any other questions, just having contact the marathon classic tournament office, at the phone number I gave you, and we appreciate the support.

H

Halie Morris 33:35

Thank you. I'm so excited we got to have you on and I am so excited to share this with everybody. And you know, just get to introduce more of what's going on and where they should be at and everything. So



Judd Silverman 33:49

well. Thank you, Halie. appreciate it very much. And hope to see you real soon at the Marathon Classic in a few weeks, the week after July 4. That'll be you know, July 7 through the 11th. And hope everybody will come out and help us raise some money for 30, Toledo area children's charities and watch the Greatest Women golfers in the world.



Halie Morris 34:14

Thank you, Judd and I can't wait to see everybody start to gather. It's coming up quick. So get ready, everybody. Thank you.