

U.S Senior Women's Open Championship

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

Brooklawn Country Club

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: It is my pleasure to introduce the champion of the 3rd U.S. Women's Open, Annika Sorenstam. Try to put this moment into words.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it's really hard to describe. I think the joy and the happy tears, the moments, the journey, the shots, the friends, the family, everything has been great.

When we came here, we saw you about a month ago, and I just loved the place from the start. To come here, we stayed with some great friends around the corner. Things have kind of just been lining up.

Everything felt so good, and then obviously you have to go out there and finish it up, and today I really felt like I played very, very well. To come in here on Sunday knowing what I had to do and I did it, obviously I'm very happy.

THE MODERATOR: You see those moments more so on the men's side where they get to have their family out there. Likely when you retired you didn't know you were going to have this type of moment, so talk about that.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it's very different to share it with your loved ones, and I'm talking about immediate family with the kids and what we have gone through the last, whatever, almost 12 years. And it's been a lot of good stuff, but still, just to kind of have them walk here, walk the fairways, see what I do for a living and see what it takes to get there, and to be able to share it with them, like I said out there, this is a totally family affair in a lot of ways. It's a commitment from all of us.

When I turned 50 we had a discussion. I said, Do you want to see mama play? And they said, Yeah, we want to see mama play. I said, you know, To do that I have to put in some time. You just can't go out there and compete like with the women out here.



They have seen me hitting the balls, they've seen me make some putts, they've seen me drive it, and go out there and really put sweat and tears into it, so it's really paid off.

I obviously want to thank them because without them this would not really happen. It's certainly a team effort.

Q. Speaking of putting the time in, Mike said you found something on the range last night. What did you find?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, no, after the round we took a little break and then we went out and I got a little support. Ava kept telling me, When you hit a shot tomorrow, mommy, don't have anything in your mind.

And then Will told me to believe and that I can do it, and obviously Mike said, Just go out there and just enjoy. I got a lot of advice, a lot of good pointers. Sometimes you don't know if kids listen to what you say, but a lot of these words I feel like they've come out of my mouth to them and now I'm get being it back, so I'm happy about that. I've got to live to my own lessons.

Q. This victory gets you into the U.S. Women's Open next year at Pine Needles. Will we see you there?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You know, I'm not really sure. Obviously I just want to enjoy this moment. Again, it's been lots of months to prepare, lots of tournaments to play in to get ready for this. I'm still at a time in my life where my family comes first, and obviously my partners and some of the projects I have; I love to work on different things.

To play in these big events just takes a lot of effort, so I want to continue to focus on my foundation, and we'll see.

One thing at a time, but it's certainly been fun to be here.

Q. Were you able to enjoy the walks up to each hole and the congratulatory claps and everything because of the largely -- were you able to enjoy it more than in years past?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Absolutely. It was nice to have a little lead. It was nice to have a little buffer, just knowing there's some tough holes coming down the stretch. So yes, I enjoyed it, and just focusing on one shot at a time. I

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kept telling Mike, Let's just hit one shot, let's just see what happens.

But certainly when I came back there after when I made the putt on 16 I felt like this is a nice feeling. I started to look around a little bit, started to -- but you can never really let off your guard here. It's tough.

I just said, I just want to continue. I'm not going to make any mistakes. But it sure was a nice walk on 18, I can tell you that.

Q. What time is your flight to Tokyo?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I'm getting picked up at 6:30, so it's going to be an early one.

Q. This week you seemed to have a lot more fun with the fans, with the people around you than maybe you would have back in the day. How much has your perspective -- obviously it's changed drastically -- but how much has your perspective on that part of it --

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, there's no doubt I'm in a different time in my life. I'm very happy with my family, and that's what means the most. I have a distance now from golf. Every shot doesn't mean as much as it used to, even though I care, but I know by the end of the day I've got them, I've got the support and I'm living my life. I'm not going to let shots bother me as much.

I really enjoyed interacting with the fans the last 10 years or so with the Annika Foundation, just being with kids and remembering what it's like to be in their shoes. I want them to see somebody who's having fun do it. I want them to see that you can do that and you can enjoy what you're doing. I have a passion for golf, I have a passion for competing, so it's a lot easier.

And again, not feeling that super pressure that I did towards the end of my career where I felt like I always had to be at the top, it's a lot more fun to go out there and not feel that you have to do something or otherwise something is wrong.

There's nothing wrong with me. I'm just playing the game of golf and we're humans and we're just going to try and enjoy it.

Q. It seems like your children obviously enjoyed the moment on 18. If they asked you, Mom, please, I want to continue to watch you contend and win titles, would you reconsider and come back?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, we'll see. They know what

it takes, and now it's summer break, they can travel with me. But once school starts it's going to be a little different, it's going to be events for them. It's volleyball, it's going to be soccer. And Will has golf tournaments, so we're back to the agenda that really matters.

It's going to be hard to do everything, even though I'm trying to juggle. Mike is a great dad and a great supporter in a lot of ways, but I can't just disappear. You know what, it's not that important to me anymore. I've done that, and if they can't be part of it and it's not something we agree on, then certainly won't be.

I look forward to putting on the mama hat this evening and then tomorrow morning I'll put on the IGF hat, so there's a lot of hats to wear, so I want to make sure I do them all right.

Q. You've done so much work with Olympic golf. Wondering how late, if at all, you stayed up last night watching golf?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I wanted to watch it but I was actually quite tired. Will and I, we laid there on the sofa together watching, and I could just see the clock ticking. I said, I really want to watch, but he came in early and he told us who won, so it kind of spoiled the fun.

I'm happy to see. It was a great finish and obviously congratulations to the medal winners. It was great for golf, and I look forward to watching the women. I know it's been a lot of hassle to put the Games together. I know what the IGF have done behind the scenes and obviously IOC, so I look forward to going there, and hopefully the women can put on a great show and show why golf should be in the Olympics.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Annika. Congratulations again.

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