

# ANA Inspiration

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club



## Stacy Lewis

### Press Conference

**THE MODERATOR:** Welcome to the virtual media center here at the ANA Inspiration in Rancho Mirage, California. I'm pleased to introduce 13-time LPGA Tour champion, Stacy Lewis. Thank you so much for joining us today.

**STACY LEWIS:** Thank you.

**THE MODERATOR:** You're a past champion here of the ANA Inspiration in 2011. You also have three additional top-5 finishes in this event. You finished T5 in 2007 earning low amateur honors, so there's a lot of history at Mission Hills Country Club, not only for everyone but specifically for you. You seem to really embrace it. What kind of memories and feelings are evoked when you pull in off Dinah Shore Drive?

**STACY LEWIS:** I think I just get a smile on my face. I truly love it here. I love the golf course. I love the challenge of it. But this had such good memories from the start, as I said, fifth as an amateur. That week really kind of set me up for my career, so just happy when I pull in the gate, and I just love this event.

**THE MODERATOR:** You've made 52 career starts in major tournaments since 2007, dating back to your amateur days, and you're a two-time major champion and 29 total top-20 performances.

**STACY LEWIS:** That's not bad.

**THE MODERATOR:** What is it about major championship golf that brings out the best in Stacy Lewis?

**STACY LEWIS:** I love it. I love that it's hard. I love the challenge of it. Different courses demand different things, but I love when a golf course plays hard, when it's firm and when it's fast, and you have to think a little bit. You can't just bomb it around there and fly it to every pin and it stops. A golf course like this, when the greens get firm, it's very difficult. So it brings out the best in me. It kind of brings out the best in my personality, and I just love the challenge.

**THE MODERATOR:** Speaking of the toughness of it, there

are some changes around the Dinah Shore tournament course, roughly 100 trees taken out, numerous bunkers added, no grandstands, of course, no high fives coming down 18, and then the grass is completely different from what a lot of players have said than the typical spring date. What has it been like adjusting to this overall setting this week, and how do you hope to build off what you've accomplished in the past?

**STACY LEWIS:** Well, I kind of knew because I played Q-school here. That was 10 plus years ago now, but I kind of knew what the grass was going to be like, the type of grass, just the Bermuda, the Bermuda rough, the surrounds, obviously, there's more grain in the greens, so you have to adjust everything, and I think a lot of the adjustments are chip shots you're playing. You're chipping a lot more into the grain. You can get a little bit more spin, I think, on some. In some aspects it plays easier. Doglegs the ball is not going to run through. It's definitely playing longer, just being the fairways have a ton more grass in them than normal. You can probably hit more fairways, but when you do miss, I think the rough now is tougher than the rough we play in April, so the ball goes to the bottom.

But fortunately for me, I live in Texas. I play in Bermuda all the time. I know how to hit the different types of chips out of the rough, so I feel like I have a little bit of an advantage there.

**THE MODERATOR:** For fans at home that might not necessarily understand Bermuda rough, if they were to watch last week at the East Lake Cup, is that something kind of similar to what we can expect out here this week?

**STACY LEWIS:** Yeah, I think Bermuda the biggest thing is a lot of times when you're walking up to the ball you can't see it. You're going to see a lot of players be two and three feet from their ball and looking for it, versus April you can kind of get some lies that it kind of sits up in and you can get it out of there, but there's places here if you hit it in the rough you're going to be chipping out and trying to get up-and-down for par, but again, that's what a major should be.

**THE MODERATOR:** Obviously you mentioned some of the physical changes on the course and then a little bit different of an atmosphere with the caddies being allowed to take electric carts or push carts this week if they so



choose. What was your reaction to that news and how have you approached this option with your caddie?

STACY LEWIS: A little bit surprised by it, to be honest, because it's hot when we're here in April, too. So a little bit surprised I would say. We used it yesterday to play 18 holes, but that was just more energy, to be able to rest. We're going to walk and he's going to carry this afternoon for nine holes, just to kind of see how it is. But truthfully the smoke I feel like has been more of an issue than the heat itself.

I'm not too worried about it, to be honest. I think we'll try to -- as long as my caddie is doing okay, we're going to not take the cart and do our normal thing.

THE MODERATOR: Two top-10 finishes in your last four starts, including a 13th career LPGA title at the Aberdeen Standard Investments Ladies Scottish Open. Where do you feel like your game is heading into the ANA Inspiration, and what would you say is the current strong point?

STACY LEWIS: Well, the game is good. I've been really excited with the way my golf swing has felt, the way it's held up over this last, like you said, month or so. Putting just needs to definitely be a lot better this week. It's kind of been hit-or-miss, a little bit streaky. If I can putt it good this week, I feel like I can have a chance come Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Your win in Scotland last month was your first since welcoming daughter Chesnee to the world in 2018. A huge accomplishment; I'm sure it was extra special to be able to come home and celebrate with her.

STACY LEWIS: Yes, it was.

THE MODERATOR: To add to the supermom theme, there are three moms in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open for tennis right now. What is it like to compete and perform at the highest level as a mother and have the chance to celebrate moments like you recently had and then also see other moms have success in their respective sports?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, winning there was super cool. I wish Chesnee would have been there in person to be able to celebrate with her, but people just don't realize what goes into a day with a baby and what it takes to get to the first tee and to be able to do your job. I was actually watching the tennis these last couple days and thinking, gosh, they're finishing at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 at night, and you have to have somebody with you to help get the baby to bed on time and all that kind of stuff.

You know the challenges that they're going through, as well, and I think it was Victoria Azarenka, she was so

excited to win her match the other night, because you get it. I was there, too. You understand what it's like, the work that you put back into it to get to that point again. So it definitely gives you some motivation to see other women doing it, too.

THE MODERATOR: I would imagine that you want to get them to bed at the right time, but when you're in Scotland or when they're getting done late, there might be a little wiggle room.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, we were changing time zones and you're trying to adjust, they're trying to adjust. We've been up since 6:15 this morning. You kind of do the best you can. You go to bed when she goes to bed, and they become more adaptable, too.

THE MODERATOR: Last one I have for you, we've asked everyone over the last couple days to find out the array of answers. If you get the chance to leap into Poppies Pond for what would be the second time, knowing what you know from your jump in 2011, what style jump would you do today and why?

STACY LEWIS: We would just jump out as far as possible so my mom doesn't get hurt again.

THE MODERATOR: Oh, she got hurt?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it was a story. But they've dug out the pond since then, but the biggest thing is Chesnee is not a big jumper yet, so she would have to kind of crawl in there. Hopefully I'd love for her to be the first kid that gets to go in the pond.

**Q. I wanted to go back to the mother thing for a minute. Did you find yourself appreciating what Inkster did after you had children or more than you've had before?**

STACY LEWIS: I think any mom -- Catriona Matthew winning, was it 11 weeks after having her baby? Which is unimaginable. I just think all the moms, they would tell you stories and things like that, but it doesn't hit home until you actually do it yourself. Just the logistics of having someone there to help you and the energy level and when they're really little they're not sleeping much, you're not sleeping much. There's a level of appreciation and there's also that they've done it, they've been there, they know what you're going through.

On my second flight here, Juli and Pat were on my flight and Chesnee was just tired and just to that point where she was just tired and she was crying. There wasn't anything I could do. Coming off the plane, Juli just grabs my stroller

and takes off with it. So they get it, and it's nice to have those helping hands every now and then.

**Q. When you won in Scotland, could you just talk about your confidence level, how different it was going to Troon, how different it is here compared with other years when you weren't getting the results you wanted?**

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I think the win just -- it gives you confidence that you can hit the shot when you need to, hit the putt when you need to. That more than anything. But coming here, I mean, it always -- it brings a smile to my face. This golf course fits my game. So just coming here playing well is just an added bonus.

**Q. The last thing I had was I'm sure you would have played with her last year at some point, but is it weird to get your head around the idea that Jin-Young Ko is not here, is probably not playing over here this year?**

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it's a little strange, but with COVID, everything is strange this year, right? The way the fields are set, the time of the year that we're playing, the who is here and who is not here. Everything about this year is strange. I mean, if I lived in Korea and I could go play every single week and not have to travel and not have to worry about it, I mean, I wouldn't come over here and play, either.

It's just a strange year.

**Q. I guess the smoke is better today, but what has it been like there in terms of smoke, and how has that sort of impacted you?**

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, today is nice. You can actually see a blue sky today. You can see the mountains, which is probably hard to imagine that yesterday standing on the driving range you couldn't see any of the mountains in the background. So it's been crazy. Eyes are burning, your throat is scratchy, all that kind of stuff. For me I think that, the smoke itself, has probably been more of an issue that the heat.

**Q. Just switching gears for a second, which holes out there look the most different to you? Will you play different? What's the most substantial impact?**

STACY LEWIS: I think look-wise the front nine is a lot different. Most holes are cleared out, but between 3 and 4, 4 is looks completely different off the tee. You see -- you can actually almost see through the trees and see all the way up to the green. Yeah, 7, the left trees are gone. 7 looks really different. But it doesn't really change the way

you play the hole because the rough is still cut to the corner. Visually it looks like you can hit it over the corner, but the rough is there to grab it.

You know, they added a bunker on the lay-up on 18, some other little runoffs, so it's really subtle changes that will affect things, I think, at the end. But more than anything, your drives aren't rolling out as far so your shots are playing longer. I think it's going to be the biggest change versus playing in April.

**Q. One thing I'm curious about, and I know you talked about the smoke and we're over here in western Riverside County and we've dealt with it, too, but the heat, you're going to have like three days of 100-degree temperatures. Are there things that you do like a week, two weeks, what have you before as far as hydration, as far as whatever, to prepare for this, to kind of get yourself ready to face those conditions?**

STACY LEWIS: I mean, I'd say weeks before there's probably not a whole lot you can do, but it's more the night before, of getting yourself ready. They say when you're thirsty it's too late. It's the night before, making sure you're hydrated when you go to bed and making sure you start as soon as you wake up in the morning, and then you just have to keep that routine going all day long.

Again, I live in Texas. This is not even that hot right now. For me I know how to manage this. It's just going to be encouraging my caddie to stay hydrated and take care of himself, too.

**Q. How many bottles of water would you go through in a round in conditions?**

STACY LEWIS: I don't know. I mean, yesterday riding in the cart I think I had probably four or five, so probably a few more if you're walking. But you've got to get some Gatorade, some hydration, extra kind of electrolytes in you, too. You have to eat. I think that's something that gets overlooked in this whole process is you need to eat, too. When you do this long enough you learn all the tricks. We just don't want anybody to go down this week.

**Q. I know there's been a lot of differences this year in so many different ways, but since you've arrived here, has there been anything that's surprised you that you've maybe had to alter your preparation a bit that you didn't expect?**

STACY LEWIS: Not really. I mean, I knew what the golf course was going to play like, so that was the biggest thing. You know, every week it seems like we just have to kind of figure out all the COVID rules. The rules are

different in every tournament we go to and every county, so making sure you're following all the rules and doing everything right off the golf course has kind of been -- my biggest concern going forward is I don't want to do something that's going to jeopardize the whole tournament being played.

But as far as golf course-wise, you know the preparation is kind of what I thought it would be.

**Q. With no fans this year, kind of how do you expect it to be different maybe on that final day or for that -- if you come out on top jumping into Poppies Pond without anybody there in the crowd, and what about this tournament is so special that might be missing this year without the spectators?**

STACY LEWIS: The most special part is that walk up 18. I can see it right out the window here, just being able to high five all the fans and just that walk as a champion is something that you never forget. So just to think that the winner this year is not going to be able to do that is pretty disappointing, because at the same time it's the way this year is. It stinks for the fans in this community. It is pretty quiet here this time of the year, so I don't know how many fans we would have had out with the heat anyway. It's probably a pretty good thing it's keeping everybody safe heat-wise and COVID-wise, too.

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