

# ShopRite LPGA Classic

## Presented by Acer

Sunday, June 9, 2024

Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

## Linnea Strom

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the media center at the ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. I am pleased to be joined by this year's 2024 champion Linnea Strom.

I know we talked to you after your record-setting 60 here. What has the last couple hours been like for you?

LINNEA STROM: I mean, I don't know. Time went quick. At first I was like, what I'm going to do with the time. It's just so hard to put your head like around it.

I was like, I'm obviously very happy with my round today and I felt like winning would just be a bonus. You know, it's always been a dream of mine to win on the LPGA, so extra happy to be sitting here right now. I worked hard for it, so makes it even better.

But, yeah, waiting around those four and a half hours, I don't know. I had a longer lunch and waited and went to the gym, did some stretching, and then I was pretty much ready to just start my warmup again.

Yeah, it was interesting.

**Q. Did you check your phone? How much did you warm up? And how closely were you watching the leaderboard?**

LINNEA STROM: I checked my phone, talked a little bit with my family and coach back home. So it was nice just to check in with them. They have obviously been following from back home in Sweden, so it was nice to get some energy from them.

But I watched the leaderboard a little bit just to keep an eye on it. I just tried telling myself to mentally prepare for a playoff. You know, just do as good as I could have, but it's hard when you don't know what's going to happen.

**Q. You talked about earlier how your dad kind of decided on a whim to come this week. What does it**

**mean to you to do what you did today in front of family, to be able to grab your first LPGA victory in front of someone like your dad?**

LINNEA STROM: It means so much. I love playing in front of family and fans. The fans out here today were amazing, so I think this whole week has been great.

Like I said, he basically booked a last-minute flight. I asked him a couple weeks ago, do you want to coming any of the next tournaments. He said, I can come here. It's not too long of a trip from Sweden.

So obviously very glad he decided to come. We've had a great week here. I shared the apartment with Frida Kinhult this week, too, so it's been good. Just had a Swedish week. We been cooking some food in the evening, so it's been enjoyable.

**Q. Talk about what your first LPGA victory means to you.**

LINNEA STROM: I mean, I don't even know if it's quite sunk in yet. It feels surreal. I mean, I worked so hard for this and this has always been a dream. The last couple years have been a little bit up and down for me. Lost my tour card, went back to the Epson, and did a year on the Epson and was Player of the Year. That kind of gave me some confidence going into last year.

Then this year, obviously really haven't had the start of the season that I was hoping for, so the last month or so I just sat down with my team and I was like, I need to do some changes. Is it the swing or what I need to work on.

So it's been eventful, but obviously super thankful and happy that I have so many people supporting me and helping me.

So, yeah, feels like it was special, especially when it's so hard to win out here. I think everyone on tour knows that. So I'm just very happy that it was able to be my week this week.



**Q. What about the history making of the event? You're the sixth LPGA player to shoot 60 or better; largest comeback position-wise by an LPGA winner since 1984. You not only won today, but you made system history, too. What about that aspect of it?**

LINNEA STROM: That's pretty cool. I didn't know all of that. That's very cool. Obviously very proud of that. But it's just golf. You should never give up. I think that's what I told myself going into today. It's not over until that final putt is dropped.

So obviously super cool. It was my personal best round today, so that was pretty fun as well, yeah.

**Q. This is a tournament that Sorenstam won three times. What do you think about getting your first win at a tournament that she kind of really excelled at? Do you know her or have a relationship with her?**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, I met Annika the first time when I was 13. She had a camp back in Sweden, and I think ever since then she's been a role model, you know, and someone that I look up to. It's been obviously pretty cool what she's done to women's golf.

Yeah, it's fun to win where she has won. I think Anna Nordqvist won here as well and she's another player from Sweden that I admire.

Very proud to have my name on that list.

**Q. (Mic garbled.)**

LINNEA STROM: I think I was in the gym stretching and I texted my caddie when I think it was maybe like an hour before they were going to be done. I said, should we go out and do some putting. We decided to and we were on the green, and I think my dad was probably watching the coverage on his phone, which was nice. Then I felt like I could focus on warming up and not have to worry about anything else.

Then we went over to the driving range and I was so nervous and I was just trying to do my warmup, just concentrate, and I had my mindset on going out to 18 and just do the playoff.

And then my caddie told me -- I think he was texting with a couple of his caddie friends that were sitting on 18. He was the one that told me, and it was, yeah, a pretty special moment.

**Q. Was there a concern if you did have to go back for a playoff? In the morning your adrenaline was really**

**going, but now you had to kind of like reset all over again.**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, for sure. Obviously after like a four hour long break and knowing whoever I was going to be in a playoff with probably just finished their round. I do think it's a little bit easier to go right after your round rather than having a longer break.

But I think that's why I mentally tried to tell myself it's going to be a playoff, so just prepare for it and do the best.

**Q. You were really zoned in. Obviously got off to a fast start and kept it up.**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, I mean, I don't think I -- I actually didn't think about winning once during the round, because the leaders hadn't even tee'd off yet.

So it was just pretty special position to be in. So I think I just kept telling myself that just try and make as many birdies as I can. Whatever happens, happens.

I don't think it was until I was on the 18th green when I holed that birdie putt that I thought I could maybe have a chance.

**Q. Your career has had ups and downs to it, as a lot of people have. Does that make this win even more satisfying?**

LINNEA STROM: I think so for sure. Obviously there are moments you're going to start doubting yourself, especially if you haven't had a win out here. There are so many good players out here and a lot of players that have wins and a lot of players that haven't had wins.

You know, for sure have been moments where I've been doubting myself if I'm good enough to win out here. So it's just very special to prove it to myself today that I do belong here.

Yeah, it feels pretty special.

**Q. One more: Just reflect back on yesterday. You had to birdie 18 to make the cut. Just reflect a little bit on if that putt doesn't go in you don't play today, and that putt on a Saturday evening to make the cut goes in and changes your whole golfing life, that one putt.**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, I think that's just -- I mean, this is golf. I think that's important to remember, that sometimes you're going to have the luck on your side and other times you're not going to have the luck on your side.

I had a couple tournaments this year, probably four or five events, where I missed the cut by a shot. When you do that week after week it kind of gets to you. You're very hard on yourself and you feel sorry for yourself when you should be out there working harder.

So I think I'm just very thankful for my family and my team that kept pushing me through those situations and those moments to let go of the past result and always focus on the next.

And holing that putt yesterday on 18 kind of just told myself that, okay, maybe this is actually going to be good week after all. Yeah, it's small margins.

**Q. Congratulations.**

LINNEA STROM: Thank you.

**Q. Before I ask my big-picture question, how long was that putt on Saturday to make the cut on the last hole?**

LINNEA STROM: I think it was maybe around 12 feet. Yeah, made up and down from the bunker. Yeah, about 12 feet.

**Q. Perfect. Thank you. So I want to go back a little bit to that second stint on the Epson Tour in 2022. What did you learn from at that time out there and I guess? I imagine it's hard to mentally wrap your head around the fact you're having to do that again. How do you think it made you a stronger player?**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, for sure it was tough. It was really tough going into a season knowing that and fully prepare for a year on the Epson.

I think I kind of decided early on this year that I wasn't going to try and get back on LPGA. I was just going to focus on Epson four a whole season and see what happens.

And I think it helped that I had that mindset going into it. I got a win early in the season on Epson and I think that was kind of taking some pressure off me and helping me, you know, just giving me some confidence.

It's always nice to be in the winning circle. Doesn't really matter what tour. Getting that win on the Epson was so special to me, and it obviously helped me getting my tour card back to the LPGA.

So it was kind of -- you know, overall just I'm thankful looking back at it that I had that season, because it kind of taught me how to get through the struggles and kind of sit

down and rethink some things and what I need to work on.

This year my focus or my goal was to win on the LPGA, so it always comes down to like what do I need to do in order to win. That's pretty much what I've been working on the last couple months: improve my game, improve everything that I can.

**Q. And just one more. You mentioned you've been working on your swing. Did you have one swing thought today that you kind of clung to? You had only 20 putts, which it was amazing. Was there similarly something on the greens you focused on as well?**

LINNEA STROM: Well, I think I don't have as many swing thoughts out on the course. I'm just trying -- especially with the driver, I'm trying to feel a high draw so I think that's my swing thought on the course.

Always been a draw player.

But I think lately I just kind of struggle a little bit to like be consistent with the draw and being able to control it. So that was my swing thought for this week.

And on the greens, I mean, I think I'm not thinking much. I'm just trying to commit to the line and make a good stroke and trust it, and obviously it's easier to do that when you feel like you're putting well.

I feel like from the first day this week I found the speed pretty quickly, so I think I've just told myself if I keep hitting good putts then some of them are going to drop.

**Q. At one point on the TV they said at the start of the day you had a .001 chance to win. Does that even like compute now that you're sitting here?**

LINNEA STROM: Yeah, that's -- I mean, that's actually pretty cool to hear. I mean, I think it just, yeah, you should never give up. I didn't today and I'm very happy that I didn't.

But I'm also just -- I mean, it's kind of nice to play also like I didn't have any pressure today. I just tried to put a good score out there, try to enjoy it. And like I said, like having my dad here, I wanted to finish off with a good score for him, for being here watching me.

So, yeah, I just enjoyed it and, yeah, it ended up working out.

THE MODERATOR: One more from me. I think you have a pretty impressive support group around you that's very excited to help you celebrate tonight. What goes on in

your mind about celebrating your first LPGA Tour win?

LINNEA STROM: It's crazy and I feel like I kind of -- I've imagined this moment so many times before, but it's surreal when it's finally happening.

You know, I'm very close with my caddie, George, and I could tell how special this win was for him as well. Apparently he thought more about it today during the round than I did. So I guess that's a good thing that I didn't think about it. But he didn't show it, which was great.

He stayed calm throughout the whole round and he's just been supporting me as well this whole season. I think we been working together for a year soon, so it's been a good year and it's nice to have that trust in each other. It's important to enjoy spending time with your caddie.

THE MODERATOR: What did you have for lunch?

LINNEA STROM: For lunch I had some of the tortellini pasta and chicken. It was good. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: With that, thank you and congratulations.

LINNEA STROM: Thank you.

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