

# The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Friday, November 1, 2024

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

**Annika Sorenstam**

**Lilia Vu**

**Justin Sheehan**

**Ryan Dever**

Media Day Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for joining us for our media preview call for the Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican. Apologize that we were not able to do an in-person media day this year, but Hurricane Milton made that decision for us, unfortunately. We're glad that you guys are all here for this media preview call.

On the call we've got Justin Sheehan, director of golf and COO of Pelican Golf Club; Ryan Dever, tournament director for the Annika; and two ladies that don't need any introductions but I'll do it anyway, World Golf Hall of Famer and tournament host, Annika Sorenstam, and then world No. 2 and defending champion Lilia Vu.

A couple of items on the tournament. As everybody knows, the tournament is November 11 through 17 at Pelican Golf Club. We've got a great field shaping up for the tournament. Each of the top 8 and 16 of the top 20 are currently in the field. We have all of our past champions in the field. So Lilia, Sei Young Kim and two-time champion Nelly Korda, they've all committed to the tournament.

We also have, as you guys have seen, a cool pro-am day that's coming. We'll have WNBA star Caitlin Clark. She is going to be testing her golf skills. So she's going to be playing in the Wednesday pro-am alongside Annika. So that'll be a tremendous day for us, and it'll be -- I think it'll be cool for everybody. That's been a lot of buzz on that.

We'll also have a couple of IndyCar drivers that are going to be a part of this, so two past Firestone Grand Prix of St. Pete winners, Colton Herta and Marcus Ericsson. Annika, Marcus as a fellow Swede is super excited to be walking along inside the ropes with you guys. They are going to be



walking inside the ropes on Wednesday. They'll be guest caddies for Caitlin and Annika on Wednesday for the pro-am. That'll be a whole lot of fun for all of us, too.

You guys also saw a couple hours ago we issued our sponsor exemptions. So we previously announced Louise Rydqvist, University of South Carolina senior. She was our first sponsor exemption. That was courtesy of the Annika Intercollegiate where South Carolina won that event this year, and head coach Kalen Anderson gave Louise the exemption. This will be the second time she is playing as a sponsor exemption.

Rachel Kuehn, Wake Forest all-American, she is also going to be a sponsor exemption. She is turning professional for this event, and this will also be her second year playing in the event as a sponsor exemption.

Then lastly but not least, Brittany Lincicome, hometown Brittany Lincicome. She is going to be our third sponsor exemption. This also will be her final event of the 2024 season. It's also going to be her final full-time LPGA Tour season in 2024. She still will play a few events in 2025, but motherhood is -- she's going to focus on being a mom going forward in 2025.

We've got a lot of great things coming up with the tournament. I'll start with Justin and Ryan just to give us an overview on the tournament. Justin, first off, the course, Pelican Golf Club. Everybody knows here and for a lot of us in Tampa and central Florida, we've taken a beating the past month or so. Justin, give us an update on the course, how the course fared after Hurricanes Helene and Milton and where we are currently.

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Hurricane Helene didn't really affect us. It affected the beach communities and everybody in low-lying areas, just devastation.

Milton was pretty bad. I'm sure everybody has seen the photos of the golf course. We had five greens fully underwater, lost 32 trees, pine straw everywhere. It was just a disaster. But our team was awesome, and really it was how quickly is the water going to go back to normal levels, and it did within 24 hours, and the clean-up process



started.

I think it looks better than ever minus a few places where there were trees. I think it's drying out nicely. The greens are perfect. Probably a little firmer and faster than they've been the last couple years. We have a new superintendent this year. He's 28 and he's off to prove himself, so I think the ladies are going to have a nice test.

It's been a long month, but the place looks perfect.

THE MODERATOR: On that front, too, this has kind of been a personal project for you, too. One of the big things we're doing is helping support the community here in the area and also in supporting recovery efforts. You guys have probably seen the announcement on our Florida Strong shirt campaign. Justin, do you want to touch on that, on the campaign?

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Yeah, give Ryan some credit, too, because he was part of this. But we designed a couple tee-shirts. We're going to try to sell and donate the profits to the Florida disaster relief. You can do it online, it gets shipped to your house, or I put in an order, they'll be at the tournament, and hopefully we can help those in need because there's a lot of people who are hurting.

THE MODERATOR: They're available online and also in the pro shop during tournament week. Shirts will be on sale there, too.

Ryan, a little bit about the tournament from kind of allowing us to give thanks with the military and first responders. Do you want to touch on what the tournament is doing as a thank you for supporting all of us over the past month or so?

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, definitely. I know it's become a tradition at the Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican to offer complimentary attendance to our nation's military and veterans. The tournament falls in and around veterans day which this year is the Monday of tournament week, so we're excited to welcome back our nation's military to the Hero Outpost presented by FedData on the 12th hole as well as complimentary admission throughout the golf course, and then after the recent events with the back-to-back hurricanes and the number of sirens we've heard over the past month and September, we have extended complimentary admission to first responders, as well, police, fire, and EMS to join us, to hopefully sit back, relax and enjoy the golf, not only on the grounds but in a complimentary hospital venue on the 16th green, the First Responder Outpost presented by our friends at Servpro.

Annually we've taken care of our nation's military, and this

year we wanted to give thanks to those that were out there in harm's way keeping us safe and first and foremost helping us recover from the two recent hurricanes. So we're excited to do that, to give thanks to those two groups that mean so much to us and the country.

THE MODERATOR: As far as the tournament build itself, you guys want to touch on the build, kind of how things are progressing with getting the tournament ready in a couple weeks?

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, we started construction last week on the golf course. It's slowly but surely starting to look like a golf tournament. We've had great weather over the past two weeks, and that's helped production. We'll start to see the navy and pink come here shortly and some grandstands are wrapped in greens as we speak. Every day it gets closer to what we'll see the 11th to the 17th.

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: We haven't hit a sprinkler line yet. There hasn't been a dump truck that's driven on the grass yet. They're kicking butt this year. I think it's going to be awesome.

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, it's a team effort, not only all the parties involved to put the facilities on the golf course but Justin and his staff, Chris Coore, the superintendent and his team, we all work as one, the town of Belleair and their team helps bring this thing together on the golf course. All in all collaborative team effort, and it's always smiles. So we thank them, and we'll keep charging ahead.

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: It's an exciting day here, as well, and many thanks to Annika and Mike, but we just installed our Rolex clock on the range today, so that's pretty exciting.

THE MODERATOR: It's the little things.

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: It's pretty big. It's 15 feet tall.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I saw a photo. It looks great. Well deserved.

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Awesome addition. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Annika, I'll turn this over to you for some opening comments. This is year two of the Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican, so I know this has been something that you've been wanting to have happen is have a tournament namesake, so kind of give some opening thoughts about the tournament this year and what you're looking forward to.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, thank you, everybody, for joining. Great to see Lilia, too. I'm super excited. I think I



said it last year, this is a dream come true. To put your name on an LPGA tournament of this stature is just really -- it's a lot of fun, but it's also just -- I don't know, I'm just really, really proud and excited about being out there watching these amazing ladies.

But as you have heard from Jeremy, from Justin and Ryan, there's so much more outside the ropes that we like to do to either celebrate the community, celebrate women, and just kind of get the LPGA out there, get the exposure that they deserve, whether we got Caitlin Clark coming, which of course was an internet success. What she has done is amazing for women's basketball but also women's sports, young girls and women in general. For her to come out here, it's awesome that she plays golf. She really has an interest. I think it's going to draw a lot of attention and then get some of those IndyCar drivers out there.

Gainbridge, they do an awesome job. I want to thank them for their partnership but also the Doyle family. As you know, they own the Pelican, and they're so invested. As everybody knows, to put a tournament together, it takes a village, really. Proud to have Sheehan and his team, Justin, you're awesome there, and then also Ryan with Outlyr, thank you, and it's wonderful to have Lilia as our defending champion. Last year was a wonderful year, same this year, and I know she's going to talk about her successes this year, but it's wonderful to have a winner like her here coming to talk about the tournament. It's just being one of the top players in the world, it means a lot.

We do have a great field, as Jeremy mentioned. We're thankful for that. It's coming down to the end. This will be the second-to-last event, so a lot of the players are looking forward to finishing strong and making sure that they get in the CME for the following week where there's a lot on the line whether it's Player of the Year, Rookie of the Year, et cetera. There's a lot.

Jeremy, you mentioned the three sponsor invites. I can just echo, just very, very proud to have these wonderful ladies to join us. Different stories, of course. Brittany Lincicome, I've known her for many years, 20 plus, but she's been great for the game. When she came out, she was known as a long hitter, but really turned around to just being a solid contender every year, Solheim Cup veteran, et cetera, and want to wish her good luck in her next chapter, being a mom to two beautiful daughters, so I'm excited for that. But I'm sure we'll see her out here, but great addition being a Tampa resident, of course. It's nice to be able to extend this invite.

I remember when my career kind of came to an end how important those events were.

You mentioned Rachel Kuehn. Terrific ambassador, great record for Wake Forest. Then this week Louise Ryqvist has earned her way through the Annika Intercollegiate, as you mentioned.

Anyway, excited about a lot of things with the veterans, honoring them, and then I love the idea of the tee-shirts for Florida Strong, so we'll do our best to support the community.

Thank you, everybody, for getting this tournament ready because last year was amazing. I know the tournament has been there a few years but I felt like last year really took it to a different level, and so proud to be affiliated with that and the ANNIKA Foundation being the beneficiary.

I applaud the work that's been done. It looked horrible a month ago, but knowing the people on the ground, it's not a surprise but we're thankful for all the hard work and look forward to seeing you all in a few weeks.

THE MODERATOR: To follow up on that a little bit before I turn it over to Lilia, this tournament with Gainbridge, this is also a part of it's called Parity week, so they did -- this was an initiative that they kick-started last year, and Parity is a sister company of Gainbridge, and their goal and objective is to elevate women's sports, and having Caitlin Clark be at the pro-am is a big initiative of this.

Gainbridge is not only the title sponsor of this event, they're also the title sponsor, which is the following week, of the Billie Jean King Cup, which is the women's World Cup of tennis. We are going to be celebrating -- you'll see Parity week info during the week.

The big thing that Gainbridge is doing is they're offering grants to golf organizations and girls' organizations all over the country, so you'll see more info on that, and to have Annika and Billie Jean King as kind of the ambassadors of this to the biggest women's sports pioneers out there. It's really cool. You'll receive more info on that, as well.

Turn it over to Lilia. Let's go back first to last year, and talk about the tournament last year, your final round 66, and how that elevated you then to World No. 1, and let's fast forward to this year. Talk about last year and how you're looking forward to being defending champion for Annika's tournament.

LILIA VU: Yeah, I felt like last year this tournament was really important. I knew that Celine had just won in Malaysia and we were pretty neck-and-neck for Player of the Year at this point. I knew she wasn't playing Pelican and we had the last two tournaments left.

Came into the tournament really wanting to win, but knew that when you go into a tournament thinking to win, you end up not winning, so I was just sticking to my process. Started pretty slow at the beginning but was able to kind of move up the leaderboard every single day and get myself into contention.

I came into the week immediately fell in love with the course. I go back to the pro-am because that was probably the funnest pro-am I ever in my life. The guys were so funny, and we were all joking that if I win that I would give them a shout-out, and then I ended up winning.

It was just one of the best weeks ever, and I think that really helped solidify Player of the Year for me and give me some confidence going into the Tour Championship.

This tournament I think was the most important win of last year, in my opinion. I know that it looked like I had a really solid year just given four wins, but it was definitely a little bit of a roller coaster and I didn't perform the way I wanted and then somehow the British Open happened, kind of fell off a little bit after that and then came back with a win at Pelican was just a dream come true.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Looking ahead to this tournament this year, you still might be coming off of a little bit of a high from the Solheim Cup still, so talk about where your game is and where you're trending as the defending champion coming into this event.

LILIA VU: Definitely. It's been a little bit of a tough year again with my back injury stuff. I took two months off in the middle of the year. But unexpectedly won my first tournament back.

It's just been so fun this year given how my situation is, and I'm just trying to enjoy myself. Solheim was amazing. I think that venue was amazing. Just our team was so strong with each other and just had the time of our lives.

I've just been kind of going through the motions, trying to just play with what I have. But looking forward to coming back to Pelican, a place that I love and play well at and have good memories at. Excited to finish this season out in Tampa and Naples.

**Q. I was just wondering if you had ever met Caitlin Clark. If so, where, or even spoken to her, and if not, what you're looking forward to chatting to her about?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: No, I have not met here, so I'm excited like a lot of people. I've watched her, read about her. I've had a little communication through social media. But really don't think that counts.

I'm looking forward to spending some time with her and get to know her. She's just done so much for women's sport. She's the hottest thing right now. Glad she'll take some time out of her busy to schedule to come out and see what kind of golfer she is.

**Q. What were the key learnings from year one, and what will you change for year two? Even the smallest day tails.**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, it's a good question. I think the whole team overall, we strive to just make it better and better, and I think it starts really at the club with the Doyle family and of course -- that's Dan Doyle, and then you've got Dan Towriss for the Gainbridge and then myself always wanting to be as good as I possibly can.

A lot of it are I think things you see behind the scenes more, just logistically, but we want this to be an amazing experience, not just for the players and the viewers but spectators. So whether it comes to making sure that there's enough to eat and drink and hospitality tents and sitting areas, the golf course is just spectacular. I don't think there was really anything we could have done better there.

But according to Justin, it seems like it's already better, which will be exciting to see and play.

I think just small -- I think the biggest thing that I took out of the week is I want to hear from the players. We do a survey and said, hey, what worked or didn't work, what would you like to see, because it's important to us to make sure that the players talk about this event and they want to come back and then make sure we have the best field.

There's always something around the players, whether it's a little something in the food, just that area, but it's nothing really that you would see from the outside. Something I thought was amazing last year was the signage. You could not miss that there was a golf tournament in Belleair area. So hopefully they can continue to do that.

I think parking maybe there was a few things we could work on and signage, but nothing to the extent where it would hurt the tournament. But our goal is to make it bigger and better every year.

**Q. Lilia, you mentioned your injury earlier. I'm wondering if you can give us a report on are you playing in any pain these days, and what's your maintenance routine right now for your back?**

LILIA VU: Yeah, so I'm not in any pain, but I just haven't



been able to work out as hard as I usually do during the season, and so kind of all the work that I've done off-season, I think I've gotten a little weaker, and that's just kind of been something that I've been going through.

I can still play with my B, C game and be fine, but you want to be strong. You want to be able to go for par-5s in two. We're just struggling that we're towards the end of the season and kind of excited to have a longer off-season and then start back up again with all my strength training stuff. But I have no pain, I'm just waiting to get stronger. I think that's where I'm at right now.

**Q. Justin and maybe Ryan and Annika, after Milton hit, Justin, you mentioned five greens were underwater and maybe in those first 24 hours, everybody is just trying to figure out what's going on and immediate post-hurricane stuff, but what kind of feelings were you going through? Was there any worry at all about whether you could put this all back together in six weeks?**

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Well, the first night when I got back in town, Thursday night right after the storm and just saw the amount of water on the golf course was alarming. It's hard to fathom what it looked like.

The answer to that was going to be how long does it take for the water to go down. If it sits on the greens for three or four days, we would have been in serious problems. But when I came in Friday morning at sunrise, it pretty much had gone down to normal and then it was just a matter of cleaning up all the debris. At that point we knew the turf health was fine and the tournament was going to go on.

RYAN DEVER: Several days post-Milton when I got to reconnect with Justin and efforts were already well underway at the golf course, always had the utmost trust and confidence that the A team would get it back into shape. I think the next stop for us was just our target for date of construction for infrastructure on the golf course, which was about a week and a half removed from Milton's landfall.

With the great help of their team there, not only was there focus on the grounds itself, the greens and the golf course, but also making sure a lot of the back-of-house areas for infrastructure were ready to get going, and luckily in the nick of time, in the matter of a day or two, we had tractor trailers loading in to get this place built up, and it ended up working out seamlessly. Always had the utmost trust and confidence, and appreciate all their efforts in making sure things were ready for the tournament to get building.

**Q. Was there any sort of delay that you had to build in**

**with the build because the ground still -- even though it had drained was still going to be wet for a while?**

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, good question. Luckily we were able to commence as planned.

**Q. Annika, your thoughts on how all of this went down? I'm sure you had the phone burning to Pelican and Justin and Ryan about all of this. Again, six weeks just seems like a really amazing amount of time to put all this back together.**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it's an amazing team, but just a little background, I was texting with Dan Doyle quite a bit. First it started with him and his family, if they were staying, because that was kind of the thing, asking people are you evacuating from the Tampa area because they were in I think the path of the eye. He kept saying, oh, we're staying. So I'm like, okay.

You think about the golf course and so on, but in the end it's about the people and their lives at stake and things like that. Things can be replaced and back into place, but when I heard everybody was okay and not as much damage as they thought it would be, then it's like, okay, great. Dan kept texting me, don't worry, it's going to be fine.

Just to echo what Ryan said, they have an amazing team and so many volunteers. They have people from the area -- maybe not LPGA players but I've heard some players that have been with Annika initiatives that were out there helping.

I think it's been really a community thing, and I know they mentioned the first responders and so forth, but I think the community has helped a lot.

I think the excitement of having the tournament there obviously helps.

I think even though it wouldn't be in perfect shape, I think we would be excited to be there. You've got to put certain things to the side and just be happy that people are okay and that we can move forward.

**Q. Obviously the Lightning are playing again, the Bucs are playing, but what kind of bringing together of the community in most hurricane circumstances is this tournament this year?**

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, I think it's a focus for us each and every year, and like you said with the recent circumstances of back-to-back hurricanes, it's even that much more important. As Justin and Annika have mentioned, the town



of Belleair and the Tampa Bay community were in the direct wake of things, and whether you're a volunteer, a potential general spectator or one of our partners or even players that live here in the community, I think everybody had enough time to clean up the debris and make sure they and their families are okay and I think everybody is ready to rally together and just celebrate all the parties we bring together and women's golf as a whole.

Like Annika mentioned, there's a ton of things to celebrate inside the ropes but also outside, and I think everybody is ready for that break and opportunity to get out in the beautiful weather at Pelican Golf Club and cheer on their favorites.

I think this year more than most, we're ready to celebrate together.

**Q. Justin, do you want to chime in on Friday, the day after the hurricane, how members came out and how the juniors all came out to basically just help do what they do, help rake and get the course back in shape?**

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Yeah, our first goal was to get all the pine straw off the grass because if that sits there too long it's just going to end up wilting it. In some sick way, I think Helene made this whole process a lot smoother because we had just gone -- the devastation that Helene provided people by the water and up in North Carolina, we had just -- I was going to members' houses with my pickup truck moving stuff to storage. We were just in this mindset of helping everybody out, and I want to say in some weird way that that was kind of a calming effect when we were just out here putting the pieces back together.

**Q. Annika, obviously wanted to ask about the Caitlin Clark news and her being involved in the event. She is becoming a superstar in women's basketball. You know what it's like to be at the top of your game. Seeing how much interest she's taken in developing her golf game, getting lessons and actively playing, what are your thoughts on how she's developing her golf game and how she can be an ambassador for women's golf moving forward?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: No, she's an ambassador for women and sport. She seems very athletic. I'm sure she can do anything she puts her mind to.

But I do know she's playing quite a bit of golf growing up, and I believe it's one of her passions when she's not on the court making three-pointers.

The LPGA is a great -- as you know, there's so many great role models for young people out there, especially young

girls, and we always see -- I love seeing the young girls. That's why we have junior clinics and just getting girls interested in sports, especially golf. Then when you get somebody like Caitlin Clark to come, she brings another demographic. Obviously young girls but also there's a lot of men talking about her coming. They want to see her because she's just athletic.

I think that it just shows you that golf is for everyone, and I think it brings more attention to the tournament.

The women deserve to get more attention, and when we can get women together, it's going to be -- obviously I look forward to picking her brain and walking down the fairway, but also Nelly Korda is going to be there, Lilia is going to be there as you know. She's going to be mingling with all these players, and I think that's really cool because you share stories. Maybe you help each other.

But you can also see at the end of the day we're all women trying to achieve something, and I think that's what Gainbridge is so amazing, to highlight our successes on our different whatever, the course, the court, the tennis court, whatever it is. They're giving us a platform to be seen and heard. This tournament could not be at a better time to be able to do that.

**Q. Lilia, as current world No. 2 and playing week in and week out on the LPGA Tour, you see that the LPGA Tour does these crossovers with other sports. Having Caitlin Clark and just who she is, from your side, from the player side, how impactful is that going to be for you guys in elevating not only this tournament but women's sports in general?**

LILIA VU: Yeah, it's going to be huge. I love it when women's sports overlap. It's cool that she takes up golf in her off-season and off time, so I think it's going to be really cool. When the news was announced I immediately turned to my mom and I'm like, oh, my gosh, Caitlin Clark is coming to the Pelican. I thought it was the coolest thing. Hopefully I'm lucky enough to meet her on that pro-am day and hopefully run into her.

It's been so cool to see everything she's done. I think she's a great ambassador for women's sports and just someone you look up to, even though she's younger than me. So that's been really cool.

**Q. Justin, how much has the redesign of the course aided when things like this happen because I know a lot of courses might not survive a rain element like that and be ready to play a professional tournament weeks later. How much has that helped get the course ready and then just the process -- you've gone through this**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**before, had a round cancel a few years ago. Do you guys just spring into action when these things happen like an emergency response team?**

JUSTIN SHEEHAN: Obviously when you rebuild a golf club in 2019, the underground infrastructure, the drainage, everything, is state-of-the-art, and we've actually added some since then, which obviously is a huge benefit. Mother Nature just handles a lot of this, too, so that's what I was saying. It just depended on how quick the water went back down, and thankfully it went back down very quickly.

As far as handling these things, this tournament, we're trying to make it better every year, but our team at Outlyr is so awesome, and they really take over and do a great job.

Just the little things here and there, but it's going to be an exciting year.

**Q. Annika, with the course being ready, people around here are ready to have some entertainment and release and have some fun, and then the combination with the field and Caitlin Clark coming, this has the possibility of being really the year that the tournament takes off. Do you guys kind of have that feeling going in that everything is kind of lining up for that to happen?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, well, I'm glad you feel that way. I think we do, too. The thing is it's a lot of work behind it, but I also feel like it's organic. Pieces are coming together with the different partnerships. People want to be involved.

I get a lot of interest throughout the year saying how do I get involved, are there sponsorships available. Whether it's player that want to have sponsor exemptions, et cetera, people are interested. I think the timing of the year is great. The area is great. Then you've got the A team over there.

It's just very welcoming in a lot of ways. But we also pay tribute to -- it is veterans day and that means a lot to many of us, and we want to celebrate them and the charities because at the end of the day we're very lucky to do what we do so how can we help, whether it's through this disaster fund or junior golf funds, ANNIKA Foundation, et cetera. So there's a lot of foundation, but also it's purpose driven. We want to make sure that it's done well.

We haven't mentioned that we have a women's summit, which is a big deal also on Tuesday when we have lots of women come in and talk about what they do and share stories and motivate them.

At the end of the day it's friendships, partnerships, and also

the game of golf bringing people together. When you do that, you can achieve a lot of different things. That's really the goal of this tournament. We don't want it just to be 72 holes and the players come and then they go and then it's like goodbye. We want it to bring in these different people or partnerships and to create memories that will last a lot longer and make an impact in the community.

Now when you have hurricanes like this obviously added to the plate but things come naturally after that because you realize what the community needs and what we can do.

THE MODERATOR: Annika, you mentioned the women's leadership summit. I'll bring this up to everybody just as an FYI. The women's leadership summit which will be on Tuesday, Caitlin Clark also will be a panelist and a keynote in that women's leadership summit. We also will have another big keynote panelist in Kathy Ireland. She is also going to be a keynote for the women's leadership summit. So you have Kathy Ireland, Caitlin Clark and Annika Sorenstam. That's going to be a couple riveting fireside chats that we do on Tuesday for the women's leadership summit.

**Q. Out of curiosity, with Caitlin, do you know a little bit more about what kind of a player she's been, and has she played in some pro-ams and events so she's been kind of tested?**

THE MODERATOR: I can answer the first part as far as where she's played, then Annika -- since they've never met, it's not like she can talk about her play, but she has played -- she played in the John Deere Classic pro-am on the PGA TOUR last year with Zach Johnson, so there's some good write-ups on that. That was her first pro-am, so this will be her second pro-am playing, and her first LPGA pro-am.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I've only seen her swing on social media. But I'm not so worried about her. I don't think she's worried either. She's an athlete. She's used to big crowds. I think the format sets up well.

I'm sure she will shine whatever she does, if it's a long drive or an iron shot or a putt. I'm sure anybody would like to have her as a golf player on their team. It will just be fun to see her interacting with all the crowds and everything, but I think she's going to do awesome.

**Q. Lilia, you talked about having an instant liking at this venue. What about Pelican did you hit it off instantly with? What about the golf course is such a good fit?**

LILIA VU: I tend to like courses that are a little more



... when all is said, we're done.®

difficult and you can't mindlessly tee off out here and you've got to place yourself in the right spots. I think that's when my game shines the most is when it's difficult. You kind of have to think about every shot, and instead of getting ahead of yourself, thinking about the rest of your round, you really have to be where your feet are at.

I think instantly fell in love on Monday there last year and just felt good all week, and it turned out to be a great week.

**Q. Annika, in your role as a tournament host, is there a tournament you look at as kind of a model? You talked a little bit about things you learned last year. What are the metrics you use that will tell you if the week is a success?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, there's a lot of things. It starts really -- you come into town, how is the signage. If you've never been to a place, I try to put myself in every position, player, sponsor, spectator, volunteer. So you look at courses where we've been, it's like the signage. We want to make it easy. Parking needs to be easy. You can't have any mess-ups. People will get back in the car and they drive home.

You look at a lot of things. Some tournaments I've been to, them being great at certain things, you're like, I've got to remember that. That's easy. Then from a player standpoint, how is the clubhouse, how is the locker room.

There's a lot of places there where things have changed, as you know. Nowadays it's just top-notch, but I remember we would squeeze in 144 players in a regular ladies' locker room. I used to share lockers. I don't think Lilia has ever heard of that. Things have changed. Now we get the men's locker room. Maybe not at Pelican, but it's like you learn. You want to make sure that the players are just taken care of.

Food, we get a lot of the courses that we go to that just have fabulous food. Those are things that matter to players. Then the course, as you mentioned, Lilia really liked. How is the practice facility? It's like you pick that course, that tournament for this and then you pick that course and that tournament for that, and you like to make it the best that you can.

Some places you just make the most out of it, but I can tell you that here at Pelican or the Doyle family, every time you say something, I think you think it's going to happen next year; it happens tomorrow. They're so on it, and they just really want to please.

To answer your questions, we would like it to be a major field as far as -- not field, feel. Major feel as far as how the

players are treated, how we take care of caddies, et cetera. It really starts from the signage to the parking to the clubhouse to the course and just goes on, and activities around. What can we do for players, for their families, for their friends to have a good time.

Yeah, the question is good, but I can tell you that we take it from a lot of courses, and of course Outlyr, this is not their first tournament. They're good to respond.

**Q. I understand that you have a vision board. Could you tell me what's on your vision board for the last two tournaments and perhaps a glimpse into next year?**

LILIA VU: Yeah. This year has been really hard. I feel like after the high of Solheim, I was just kind of trying to find my footing again in my game, and it's been a little bit rough recently. I'm excited to regroup and come back to a place that I love and have played well at.

It's just always fun to finish the season off in Florida, and then later we're coming back to it for Grant Thornton, too. I'm excited for that.

Actually I can see my vision board right here, and it has all the majors up there. It has Solheim on there, and it's just something that I hope to achieve in the next coming years. It's something of a reminder where I've been at, and also I've come close to quitting golf during COVID. It was really hard. I wasn't even making the cut on Epson Tour.

I've come a long way, so every single time I think about how tough it is this year and feel sorry for myself, me in 2020 could only hope to be in my position. I kind of look forward to being more grateful, and it could be worse all the time. Someone would kill to be in my position. I'm just going to finish out the year really strong and in a good mindset, and you never know what happens.

**Q. You touched on how close you came to quitting in 2020. Sometimes you might have to remind yourself. What is on that vision board that reminds you of how tough things were in 2020 and to not go back down that path mentally?**

LILIA VU: I mean, I always think back to it. I think just not only that, but grandfather also passed away at the beginning of COVID, and I know that the last words he ever said to me was "go play well" because he was wishing me well to go play an Epson Tour event. Ended up playing horrible there and then came back.

I'm not just playing for myself. I'm just trying to make the best of what my family sacrificed for me. It's something that I think about often.



Just don't give up, keep trying. I think even when times are tough, it's not like life or death. I'm still healthy. I have my family. I have my friends. I have a great support team. I have the best people around me.

So why not just go make it the best week ever every tournament I show up to.

I just think that when I think back to it, it was a really hard time, but it was necessary and it needed to happen. I feel like whenever you get into a slump, it's right before when it propels you forward to your best golf ever. When I won the British Open it was after I had a horrible performance at the U.S. Open at Pebble, something that I've been looking forward to my entire life. Just to not be able to even get close to even making the cut at the U.S. Open was really hard, and just going through that and kind of had imposter syndrome for a little bit. I get into that quite a bit, actually.

The British Open I came into it with whatever happens happens, and my team sat me down on that Wednesday and told me, our only goal this week is to get into contention. Don't get mad when you're not in first place on the first day. Our goal was just to be in contention for the weekend, and then the cream always rises to the top. That's something my team still has to remind me, but it's been really fun, and I wouldn't want to be doing anything else.

**Q. You came within one hole of repeating this year at St Andrews.**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: I think we will wrap it up with that. Thank you, everybody, for joining. Again, the Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican is in a couple of weeks. I believe everybody on here has put in their media credentials. If you haven't -- [LPGAmediacredentials.com](https://LPGAmediacredentials.com). More info on tournament week, on pre-tournament interviews and storylines will be coming next week. Tickets are on sale at [TheAnnika.com](https://TheAnnika.com), and Annika, Lilia, Justin, Ryan, everybody, thank you for joining this call today.

Transcripts and recording will come your way to your inboxes this afternoon. Any questions, you know where to find me.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

