

# The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

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Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

## Rachel Kuehn

## Louise Rydqvist

### Press Conference



Yeah, it's been a little different. I think I know a little bit more what to expect with the golf course. Again, I know if I can go out and play my golf game, then hopefully I'll be able to compete.

So it's definitely just been a different level of excitement, maybe a little bit of nerves. All really good things.

**Q. Louise, some exciting stuff from you since we seen you last. Played at St Andrews at the AIG Women's Open. What kind of experience was that like and how did that maybe kind of boost a little bit of confidence as well heading into this week?**

LOUISE RYDQVIST: For sure. My summer was awesome on the golf course. Played some really good golf and was fortunate I enough to receive the exemption into the AIG Women's Open. Just had a blast there. We played some really good golf in tough conditions. My family was there as well.

So just gaining more experience on Tour and getting more confidence out there. Getting more comfortable around these players. They come with a lot of respect, so just being around it you learn a lot.

**Q. Again, both of you, Annika is such a name, especially in the collegiate golf world. As two very prestigious collegiate golfers, what does it mean to be able to a little bit double dip? You obviously do stuff with her at the college level, but now to play in her pro event, what does it mean to both of you?**

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Yeah, for me as a Sweden, I mean, she's a legend. I grew up seeing pictures around her. She's the best, the GOAT, you name it.

So it's just awesome.

I played a lot of her junior events, her collegiate event, and now being here closing the full circle. So it's just an honor. Super, super grateful to be here.

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, to build off that, she's obviously the GOAT. Everything she touches turns to gold really. I

THE MODERATOR: All right, very pleased to be joined by two of our sponsor invites this year at the ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican, Rachel Kuehn, Louise Rydqvist.

Start with a question for both you of you. Second time back at this event. What do you remember most about last year playing here and what were some of the highlights?

RACHEL KUEHN: For me, definitely was just playing well here and kind of soaking in the moment. I think I took a lot of confidence from knowing that I can compete out here and knowing my game can rise to the occasion every once in a while.

I think for me it's been a huge confidence builder, and definitely just some great memories from last year.

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Yeah, for me as well. It was just such an awesome event. The hospitality down here is just beautiful. Course is amazing. Fortunate enough to play some good golf out here and know that we can compete was a huge blessing.

Just boosts your confidence so much knowing you can be out here making a cut and compete with these players out here.

So, yeah.

**Q. Rachel, second start here. A little bit different this year. Your first official professional start. A little bit of a different buzz, different feeling? How would you describe preparing for this week compared to last year?**

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I've been really fortunate to get another invite back here to make my pro debut. I loved amateur golf and I am really excited for professional golf.



feel particularly lucky because for me I feel like my first big amateur kind of accomplishment was winning her collegiate event.

To make my pro debut here comes full circle. I think what's really cool about Annika is not only how much she's accomplished but how much she's given back.

Just to see how she's supported women's and girls golf at all levels is really inspirational, and something that we as players can kind of aspire to be hopefully as our careers grow, too.

**Q. Rachel, can you talk about the decision to turn professional? With Q-School, probably a little bit easier and your time to college coming to an end. What led to your decision?**

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I've always wanted to play professional golf. For me I want to wait and play one last Curtis Cup, to get to have that opportunity, and then this kind of popped up and made sense to stay amateur and make my pro debut here.

I just love golf. I love practicing and seeing how good I can get. The cool thing about this sport is no one can really tell you how good you can or can't be.

Now just seemed like the right time. It's bittersweet but I am definitely excited for sure.

**Q. Obviously a Girls' Golf alum through the Peggy Kirk Bell Tour. Little girls, big dreams. This is a huge dream for you.**

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah.

**Q. What does it mean to represent Girls' Golf on this level, a professional level, knowing how many girls you influence and how many people influenced you as you were growing up and going through that program?**

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I think I'm in a really cool position because so many of these girls out here are people that I watched play growing up and people that I aspire to be.

To tee it up in the same events with them, it's just really special. I think it's really easy for us to lose site of what matters and get really wrapped up in one week here, one week there, one finish.

But I think it's important for all of us to be reminded of what really matters. That's influencing the next generation and being a positive influence on a lot of little girls and everyone that watches.

We don't play for ourselves. We play for the people that are watching and the people we can make a positive impact on their lives.

**Q. Louise, you mentioned looking up to Annika, but there are so many talented Swedes out here. She started, her and Liselotte Neumann started the whole trend of Swedes. Are there any Swedes that you still look up to that maybe you're picking their brains or chatting with out there?**

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Oh, yeah, for sure. I have the same swing coach as Madelene Sagstrom. I was fortunate enough to play nine holes with her and my swing coach yesterday. Learned a lot just by having casual conversations about Tour life and what they're going through and what's coming their way and what they have to deal with week in and week out.

I'm really good friends with Frida Kinhult, Linn Grant, Maja Stark. Went to high school with Linn and Maja. They're all great influences for me. I would say the Swedish National Team and Federation, they've done something tremendously well to have us very bonded together and to share insights with each other.

If she can do it I can do it and we can do it together, that kind of thing. So, yeah, it's awesome. Super glad to be around them out here.

**Q. You've come so far. Congratulations to both of you. Just amazing. I remember Louise, met you before the media luncheon out in the lobby. I don't think you'd ever faced a press conference before. I can tell you've faced a lot since then. You've come a long way. Congratulations on that, and also on winning the European Amateur. I'm just curious, have you considered after your senior year at South Carolina when you might turn pro?**

LOUISE RYDQVIST: It's definitely going to happen sometime next summer. I'll see what the opportunities are as an amateur and a pro and make my decisions from there.

**Q. Great answer. Also, congratulations to both of you for making the cut last year and doing so well. Wish you all the luck in the world and so happy you're here.**

RACHEL KUEHN: Thank you.

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Thank you.

**Q. Rachel, so I know your relationship with Alex**



**Fitzpatrick had been showcased on the Netflix Full Swing series. He made a lot of headway with his professional career in the last year or two. What have you learned from his last year or two of success and how can you apply that to the beginning of your professional career?**

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I'm really fortunate to have someone that I care a lot about that cares about me that is kind of going through everything that I'm going through except a year or two ahead. So he's experiencing it and I'm getting to learn from the things he's doing well, learning from.

I think one of the things that he and I have talked a lot about is scheduling. He I think self-admittedly will tell you he has a tendency to over schedule. He tries to sometimes play seven or eight weeks in a row and hasn't gone very well sometimes. I think that's one of the things I learned, to listen to you your body.

Also, what's been really cool to see him do and then what I'm kind of starting to do is build the team of people around me, swing coach, putting coach, you know, the people that I work with back home where I live in Charlotte.

So seeing him build his team of people he trusts and learning from that and building my own team has been really fun, too. Definitely always following him probably maybe some later nights than I want to with the time difference, but it's been great to learn from him.

**Q. Any chance he takes a week off in the future and caddies for you like he did at Champions Retreat?**

RACHEL KUEHN: Maybe. He's busy chasing his own dreams right now and he's got my full support. If the schedules line up possibly, but he has bigger things to do.

**Q. For both of you, what will you hope to take from this week and work on as you head into the next big stages of your careers before we see you guys again next on Tour?**

RACHEL KUEHN: For me this next year is going to be full of learning. I'll be on the Epson Tour full time, so getting adjusted to traveling full time and managing recovery and getting used to doing it all without any college team around me.

It's going to be a huge adjustment, so looking forward to learning a lot. Hopefully it's going to serve me down the line.

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Yeah, I would definitely say I'm glad

to have another half year in college because I can gain a lot of insights on what the pros are doing really well out here and work on my game until it's finally time for me to also turn pro.

I'm very, very excited about it, but still got some work to do. I'm excited about that part as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both so much. Good luck this week.

RACHEL KUEHN: Thank you.

LOUISE RYDQVIST: Thank you.

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