

# Gainbridge LPGA

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

## Madelene Sagstrom

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Thank you and welcome inside here at the Gainbridge LPGA virtual media center. We are here with defending champion, Madelene Sagstrom.

But before we get this started, as you see, Mike Whan is on the call, and he had a couple things he would like to say to you, Madelene.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thank you.

MIKE WHAN: Well, Sags, I'm sorry I'm not there sitting next to you, but I am waiting for my results too, so maybe better. I will see you this afternoon.

I just want say to everybody listening and yourself, in my 11 years there are so many reasons why people should follow these athletes. Their stories, their perseverance, their talent, and their courage, and so many of those reasons have nothing to do with how they play golf.

I just want to say I'm 56 years old and I consider you a hero. I remember when I first read this story. It reminded me of the first time I read Michael Phelps talk about mental health. Demystifying this whole stupid thing is really how we take the power out of the room.

I've know you for seven, eight years; would never have known this story; none of my business. At the same time, this story, not this story, you're one of the most incredible athletes I know. The fact that you're going to take that athletic platform and help literally millions of young women all around the world, and to be honest with you, probably millions of women my age all around the world that have been sitting in their own stories a lot longer that you have.

I just want to say that you're just another great example of courage in a sport that requires it, but life is that doesn't always. I hope you never lose that courage, I hope you never forget what you're doing today and what you're going to do for the future.

Being LPGA commissioner, one of the greatest things I get is a front row seat to incredible females. You're at the top

of that list, so just want to say thanks for courage you're taking not only today, but you have obviously taken in your life and realizing that you're a leader.

A lot of people kind of hear and it rolls off their back. Other people hear it and embrace it, and you're a role model for embracing it. I'm just proud to know you and proud to call you my friend.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thank you. I don't know what to say. I'm just so happy to have this whole organization behind my back in just wanting to share our stories, because we're so much more than just professional athlete and professional golfers.

I have never felt so comfortable at sharing my life and my struggles and my successes. I think it's just knowing that we all have each other's backs. It's just fantastic. So thank you so much for having my back and thank you for creating this phenomenal environment that we all get to call home and get to call our job.

It's just wonderful.

MIKE WHAN: Well enjoy your week and defending your championship on a really world class venue this week.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thank you.

MIKE WHAN: Bye, buddy.

THE MODERATOR: Some amazing words there. As you hear from Mike Whan, what are some of your immediate reflections and reaction there?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think just over these last, especially few weeks because it's been quite intense with a lot of Zoom calls, I mean, just having that -- just having the LPGA's back and like just the whole golf community just proves that they care about us so much more than just as the athlete.

They care about us as human beings and know that this platform can change lives. I think golf is an entertainment, but it's easy to make it your entire world. They're just



showing that we're so much more, and I'm so happy that they wanted to share my story and that everybody is proud of what I have done and the LPGA has done.

I'm so grateful at the moment. It's slightly overwhelming, but it feels so good inside.

THE MODERATOR: Incredibly grateful. I think that is the perfect world.

Let's switch gears a little bit to this tournament here. It's been a little bit of a long night for. Tell us what the last couple days have been like for you announcing your DriveOn story, on top of that getting to this championship where you'll be defending. What have the last few days been like for you?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: No, it's actually started out -- I left quite soon after Diamond to go back to the U.K. and get my U.S. visa done, and unfortunately I got stuck a little bit longer than I was hoping for. I have been trying to get my passport back and just making sure I can come back and play. I've had great support in this the whole journey.

And I was hoping to get back in Thursday last week, then Saturday, then Monday, but ended up flying here yesterday. So it's been a little bit of stress going on. I haven't really prepared as I would've liked. I'm just really happy to be here. I'm happy to be outside.

When I walked up I'm like, Oh, my goodness. It feels off good to be outside in this world again. Just like I say, the gratitude of just playing golf this week.

THE MODERATOR: When you were over in the U.K. were you able to practice, get ready for this event?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: So the U.K. is been in a very strict lockdown. Nothing is open. It's just grocery stores and essential shops. I'm very fortunate. My boyfriend has a studio in his backyard, so I've been able to hit balls from zero to two meters.

So I haven't really done too much preparation. I was able to go out and hit onto a field for the last few days when I was back there. But I was telling people, it just shows me -- going back to basics just shows you the gratitude when you have the perfect surroundings like this week. I mean, the grass is perfect, the course is perfect, everything is perfect here.

Just makes me so comfortable and so excited to be on site.

THE MODERATOR: As we mentioned a couple times, we

did release your DriveOn story this week. What are some of the reactions you've gotten? Have players come to you? Have people outside of golf reached out to you since Monday when we released the video?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think the biggest thing is just -- I mean, there has been so many people reaching out, and I'm so-so grateful people are getting the message. I mean, that's the really big thing, because we worked on this for a long time. I think the biggest thing for me was will people understand what we're trying to do.

I mean, the feedback has been phenomenal. I've had both players, I mean, people reaching out to me who are really close to me and also strangers that would never talk to me otherwise. It's been very humbling and very I'm grateful that people are getting the message. It's a really personal piece to me, and I'm really showing my -- it's just you feel quite naked when you're telling something like that.

So I'm so grateful that people are taking it to heart and just not feeling alone in the whole thing. That's the whole reason for it, just telling people they're not alone.

THE MODERATOR: The gravity of the story and just the courage you've shown over the past few days, what's it been like for you mentally as you prepare for this tournament while also knowing that you were able to tell such an incredible story along the way?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think the biggest thing was -- I was worried. I mean, it's been -- you go up and down with the emotions all the time. Half the time you want to pull back and not do it and the other time it's the best idea ever.

I'm actually quite happy I wasn't on site on Monday when it was released because I could actually deal with my own emotions on the side and really got strong in my own position and the whole piece and not having that instant feedback.

When you release something like this people don't know how to react, so I think that now I'm just going to go here, be myself, and just hopefully people are going to be like that towards me too.

THE MODERATOR: Have you ever played this golf course before? I know you stay in Orlando when you are here in the States. Have you ever been here and have you practiced here? I know this is kind of your first time on site today.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yeah, no, I've been here plenty of times. I don't play a lot of golf outside of Four Seasons when I'm home, but I've been here and I've played here

before, so I feel comfortable that it's this week in particular that my whole passport situation happened and I'm staying at home and I do feel very comfortable.

I'm excited to see the course and just hoping that my game is somewhat okay.

THE MODERATOR: We've got the pairings out and tomorrow you will be teeing off the first two rounds with Anna Nordqvist and Annika Sorenstam. First off, when you heard Annika would be in the field this week, as a fellow Swede yourself, what was going through your mind and how excited were you for that?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think Annika is one of those people that she does everything so full hearted. I know that she's prepared both for the PNC events last -- like she prepares so hard. She prepared so hard for Diamond, and I know that this obviously was -- I mean, I was like, Wow, this is cool, when I say her name that she was going to do it. I was like, I know she's going to go in full hearted, and just being able to see that spirit on the golf course and playing with who might have been the best golfer of all-time is going to be amazing and an experience that as a little girl I could never have dreamed of doing.

Playing with her and Anna is going to be great. I do feel sorry for our caddies because we're going to be speaking Swedish, but it's going to be such a good time and I'm really excited about it.

THE MODERATOR: You had had a relationship with Annika before being on Solheim. Will there be any first tee jitters now that you are officially teeing it off against her?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think the day I don't have first jitters on the tee, whatever tournament it is, I'm going to be like, okay, how badly do you want this?

It's one of those things you want to have those butterflies on the tee because you want it so bad and you want to do well. They will definitely be there.

THE MODERATOR: What are you most looking forward to defending a title this week? You became a Rolex first time winner with your win at Gainbridge last year, a one-stroke victory, your father-in-law on the bag. It all came together.

What's it like being able to say, I'm defending a championship?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: It still feels a bit surreal. Like I know I'm an LPGA winner, but sometimes you forget that because you're in your own bubble. I think that just being here, just going out and doing my best, I mean, the thing

I'm going to be most excited about is just the green grass, just being able to hear a ball fly, just being able to see the ball fly, and just trying to go into that bubble of fighting and just fighting hard for the score and fighting hard for everything around it.

It's just going to be fun.

THE MODERATOR: Have you been able to reflect on your win last year? Feels like a lifetime ago with COVID. With the Rolex Awards we just had you were able to talk about what it was like. Have you been able to think about that with the DriveOn story as you prepare for this week at all?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yea, I mean, I've obviously gone over it many times in my head and just kind of the reasons why did I succeed at that point in time. It's one of those things that's easy to forget when you're in the bubble of doing all the other things and trying to perform every week. It's one of those things when I doubt that I go back to. I have won out here. I am good enough. I know what to do. Just trust that process.

So I'm probably going to forget that when I'm out playing this week, but I know deep in my heart.

THE MODERATOR: I know you haven't been on the course yet, but you played this course a number times. A little plug for the Aon Risk-Reward Challenge hole is No. 15 this week; it's a par-5. We have been asking everyone that comes in what are they expecting out of that hole this week. Knowing that you've played it here before, is there anything any difference in strategy knowing that it's part of the season-long competition?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think you really don't want to make it different. I mean, I always have the same mindset every Par-5 I want to birdie. I mean, every hole I want to birdie. I think that just going into the mindset of making good decisions, taking your medicine if you have to, and trying to score as well as you can.

I think just going out and doing the best is all I can do. I mean, I go for everything. I try to not let anything hold me back. If I have the chance, I will. If I don't, I will layup and do the best I can.

THE MODERATOR: With that, if we have any last call for questions for Madelene I think I'm going to wrap it up here by saying I've asked a couple of the girls that have come in goals for 2021. 2020 was so different. You became a Rolex first-time winner with your win in 2020, but have you thought about what you want to accomplish in 2021 as you get your second event underway here at Gainbridge?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Well, I finished 2020 quite strong and I was excited about the way I was playing, so golf-wise I want to bring that into 2021. I would love to be a winner again. I would love to give myself some shot at majors.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thanks.

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Other than that, I just really want to take my personal development to the next level, continue to grow in myself, and like we started -- look I started this week, just continue to share that with other people and just be myself more fully every day and go for it. Like I'm really happy to call golf my job and I just want to see how far I can take it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We do have a question.

**Q. Sorry I'm late to the party. Do you feel extra nerves? Do you think you'll feel extra nerves playing alongside Annika or just pure excitement?**

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Right now I just feel excitement. I don't really know where my game stands, and I just want to go out there and have a great time. I mean, I feel -- like I have a personal relationship with Annika and I feel comfortable around her, so at this point I'm really excited.

I want to just go out there and do my best and then we'll see where it takes us.

**Q. And have you played this golf course that much?**

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yes, I have played it. I haven't played it in a while, but I've played here plenty of times to have fairly good knowledge. I know my caddie has been here doing the prep, so I'm just going to listen to him and then we're just going to go for it.

**Q. So I guess that helps with the late arrival then, huh?**

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Definitely. The caddies help a lot. And I do trust my caddie a lot, so we're just going to go for and just trying to make putts and just be very accepting this week. I know that's probably the thing I'm going to struggle with the most, trying to hit perfect shots and just think that I am where I was before.

Just go out and be patient, accepting, and just appreciate being outside and playing golf.

**Q. Thank you.**

THE MODERATOR: All right, I think that will do it for us here. Thank you for joining us and we'll open back up at 2:30 for Annika.

