

Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio

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Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Boca Rio Golf Club



Madelene Sagstrom

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the mirror at Gainbridge LPGA Boca Rio here in Boca Raton. We are joined by 2020 champion and the defending champion at Boca Rio, Madelene Sagstrom. Madelene, thanks for joining us today.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thanks for having me.

Q. When you stepped on site this week, probably a little different compared to the 2021 Gainbridge LPGA that was hosted by Lake Nona Golf and Country Club. What was to like to step foot here on Gainbridge grounds at Boca Rio?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Last time I was sitting in this room there was champagne on the side, a nice trophy. No, it's just so nice. I have really great memories from here, so I'm happy to be back, happy to be playing this course again.

I really enjoy coming back.

Q. A lot of past champions, when we ask them a question, the memories that strike up, they talk a lot about the shots, they can envision the shots they hit and those strike a cord when they get back out on the course. Has that happened to you this week, any déjà vu moments or anything that hopefully sparks win No. 2 here?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Well, I played the back nine yesterday, so we put out a little fake hole to where the final pin was on Sunday, and I stood on the left side, I was like, I know exactly what this putt does.

So it was kind of cool. I have a different caddie than when I won so he said, I'm just going to listen to you this week. I'm not going to say anything. I said, I think that's a good idea, because I'm pretty sure I know how to get around here.

Q. Good. Speaking of caddie, your boyfriend, Jack, his father, your father-in-law, was on the bag for you

when you won. I think both his maiden trip on the bag and also retired in the same tournament.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yeah, a very short career. But, no, he was here on vacation with a family. My then original caddie couldn't come so I said, Well, do you want to just pick up the bag and help me out? So he did. He wasn't from pretty much just walking in the bushes on the practice rounds. I was like, You kind of have to walk with me, to literally walking, like strolling on TV like, I love this thing.

So it was a big week for him, big week for the family, but we really had a good time.

Q. You couldn't convince him to come out of retirement for a week?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Well, I thought I would have to take him to the hospital after the week because he was so tired. We figured this is one and done. Got to finish on top.

Q. Just continuing, I guess this is the two-year anniversary to the day of your winning here. Just wondering what some of flash bulb memories are of that day. I remember when your opponent missed that putt you kind of having this stunned look, not really, you know, quite sure, trying to convince yourself that you won this thing. What are some of your memories?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think when you come back now it's the atmosphere. There is nobody out here yet so the atmosphere is so quiet. Last time I played it was so loud. The fans, I remember after I hit the shot on 17 the fans were screaming. I never heard that loud of a scream for me hitting a golf ball before.

It's kind of weird because it's so different, but it's just so many good memories. I can pinpoint some of those shots that we were just talking about before. It's just a nice comfortable feeling when you have -- you're really confident when you go to a place.

Q. Madelene, how much different was it last year to go to a tournament where you're the defending champion



and have it be at a complete different location?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Obviously I would've preferred to go back this year. You want to play on the same location. Lake Nona was such a good golf course for last year. It was still kind of home game for me, so I enjoy that, too.

But this feels a little bit different this year. I feel like the tournament -- like having Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio feels like where it's supposed to be for me.

Q. Exactly. When you heard it was coming back, how excited were you? And just the fan base we established here in year one seems like a pretty good fan base. What was it like from a your perspective to come back here?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Super excited. I mean, I think personally I live in Florida so I love every time something is here. I can drive my own car here. I got a really good (audio cut out) with all the membership, and we just -- it's just so nice to be back.

I'm happy that they want to support the LPGA. I think we had a really good turnout last time we were here. It's really good. Just like a nice warm, fuzzy feeling.

Q. Curious to know what you feel is -- how would you describe this golf course, first of all? What do you feel is the biggest key to playing it well?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Well, if we're going to get that inch of rain this afternoon it's going to play quite soft. I think from time to time the course plays quite long, which suited my game last time and suits my game this time.

But at the end of the day you got to keep it in play. It gets narrow from time to time and you got to start rolling the putter well. That's what I did last time I was here, I putted really well. The weather I think is supposed to be cold and windy on Saturday, so that's going to play a big part, too.

Q. What kind of factor does that play? You caught some cold weather last week at Lake Nona, unseasonably cold stuff this weekend. As a player what's that like mentally to know that it's coming?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think most people wish we had that coming to Scottish Open in the summer, but I guess we start in Florida this time. I think we all know you have to adjust your game when that happens. Obviously it would be nicer if it was 75 and sunny, but it's part of what we do for a living.

You just have to suck it up and just go with the flow. Bring some hand warmers out, bring the beanie out, and get ready.

Q. What was the biggest thing that winning did for you?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think the biggest thing was it made me feel like I belong. That was my fourth season on tour, and I kind of just -- it's hard when you come out and you don't really perform where you think you should perform.

So for me it was kind of I belong out here, I can play against the best players in the world, and just made me feel more comfortable, confident, and just trusting my game a little bit more.

So it was a huge step in that direction. I feel -- I mean, when I come out here I feel so much more calm. I remember my rookie season. I freaked out everywhere I go. I'm like, Where is the bathroom, where is the dining? Now I'm like, Okay, I know what I'm doing. I don't have to stress about anything anymore.

Q. On that note, is there anyone out there who you still see on the driving range who you still get kind of star struck or you have to pinch yourself, I can't believe I'm playing against this person or these two people? Like, wow, I'm on the LPGA Tour; look, there they are?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think my last star struck moment was last year when I played Gainbridge with the Annika and Anna and I stood there after and I'm like, Is this really happening? I get to play a tournament round with Annika. That was probably the last time.

But I have had the mentality ever since I came out, like stand next to the people you're uncomfortable with. So I remember when I was at U.S. Open in 2016. I was like, Okay, I'm going to stand next to Michelle Wie, next to Lexi, just because I want to get used to this because this is where I want to play, this is where I want to belong.

But probably Annika was still that little -- that was a little bit uncomfortable.

Q. Did you ever play with her growing up in Sweden?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: No, I didn't, but I was fortunate enough to do one of her kind of camp tournament stuff she had back home. So I got to meet her and that was really cool.

Just felt like that surreal moment. You'd only seen her on TV, so was it -- but now I'm like -- now I know her personally which is so cool, because she has so much insight. I mean, I can only dream to have the same experience she has.

So it's really cool going from not ever thinking you can talk to somebody to pick up the phone and call her.

Q. When you won here in 2020, that launched not only your career, but you were able to put yourself into that category of LPGA Tour champion; advanced to the 2021 and 2022 Hilton Grand Vacations. How nice is it to come into this event now having a week under your belt of competition and maybe a little bit of a leg up on the majority of the field?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yeah, when you show up here it's kind of like being back in high school. It's everybody saying hi to each other, and it's nice to have. I mean, last week was such a good warmup week. You play with some of the greatest players in sports and celebrities in all of America.

So it's a nice. I kind of know where my game is, and then you can build on it from there. It's a really nice way to start the season, and I feel more ready this week than I would've been just going straight into here.

Q. I was double checking with you, is it safe to say is it your boyfriend's dad that was caddieing when you won?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yes, that's correct.

Q. Was that his one and only time he ever caddied?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Yes, one and done. (Laughter.) He started and retired the same week.

Q. Is he an avid golfer?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: No, not at all actually. I think he quit playing golf a few years ago. He likes to come out and watch. They live back in England so they come and watch when we play overseas. This was the first time they came and saw us in America, so I figured why not make a full deal out of it.

Q. If you were making all the decisions out there, did he lend something to it? Would he say the right thing at the right time here and there? How did that work?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: We kind of sat down before the tournament and I said to him, Okay, all I want you to do

this week is make sure I add and subtract correctly, because math is not my strongest side.

So that was kind of the game plan, and then we kind of took it from there. We found a way to talk on the golf course. Talked about where we wanted to hit it. At the end of the day I made the decisions, but he encouraged me to keep playing my game.

I think from my perspective, just watching him really enjoying it, really enjoying the moment with the fans, talking to everybody, sometimes I had to call him over, like, We got hit now. You can't talk to anybody right now.

It really kept me really appreciating what I'm doing, and just the love for the game is kind of that, especially enjoying it with family like that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let you out of here on this one. We announced the Epson Tour earlier today and a couple great initiatives for the Tour with the Epson Tour Player Ambassador Program, \$10,000 to each of the ten graduates yearly, no purse under \$200,000, and lower the entry fees with their DEI partnership, hoping to cut them in half. To have a global brand like that join forces, what does it mean to the future of women's professional golf and a tour that you own a sing season money title on?

MADELENE SAGSTROM: I think that record is going to go, first of all. I mean, it's just fantastic. I mean, I played in it 2016 and it's just such a -- for me I always tell people I'm so happy I missed out of Q-School, because really playing on now Epson Tour just made me prepare for this life. It made me understand how do you travel, like what do you practice, how do you live this lifestyle.

So, I mean, I'm a proud graduate and it was so amazing. I know it's going to bring out a lot of good talent out here. It's I think just going to keep growing and get bigger, and I think it's good for women's golf overall.

Just going to keep growing the game.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Thank you so much. Best of luck this week at Boca Rio.

MADELENE SAGSTROM: Thank you.

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