

ISPS HANDA World Invitational

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

Northern Ireland

Galgorm Castle & Massereene Golf Club

Leona Maguire Stephanie Meadow

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to the media center. I'm here with Leona Maguire and Stephanie Meadow, our Irish and Northern Irish players in the field from the LPGA. Start off with an easy question for the both of you. Your impressions of the courses this week and how excited you are to play.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think two very different tests this week. Obviously one being links, one being parkland. Castlerock is a pure links golf course. Conditions will very much be dependent on weather. There's semi-blind tee shots and things like that.

Like on any golf course you need to stay out of those pot bunkers that can be pretty penal.

And then Galgorm is playing lush and playing soft, a little bit more target golf I think, and stay out of the rough. I think the guys have the strength to get it out of the rough and spin it. We don't, so definitely a premium on hitting fairways around Galgorm.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: It's definitely an interesting test. I don't think I've every played a tournament where we're playing links and parkland back-to-back days. It'll be interesting. You've got to be able to switch from one mindset to the other pretty quickly.

Yeah, the rough is pretty lush here and accuracy is going to be pretty key.

THE MODERATOR: For those who don't know, Stephanie, describe for us the main differences between a links course and parkland course out here.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Parkland, obviously they're very green, lush. Links is a lot more wispy rough and kind of brown fairways. It runs out a lot more. Bunkers tend to be more pot bunkers.



Presented by Aviv Clinics

I wouldn't say Castlerock is playing like as bouncy as I've ever seen a links course play, but it's obviously way more firm than it is here. And links, obviously wind and conditions come way more into play than what they would here.

Northwest Ireland can be pretty unpredictable with weather, so yesterday we both played there. We stood on the range and it was pouring and windy and cold, and an hour later it was sunny and we had everything -- all the layers off.

It will be interesting to see how that plays out.

Q. Leona, how much is the mental game going to be important this week? Yesterday you said yesterday how much thinking goes into playing this week?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think in links in particular, I think with the winds, there's some shots that you can hit four different clubs and there's not really a right or a wrong club. It's whatever you think at that moment in time.

Whereas over here on this side at Galgorm it's more target golf and you're just going to hit it straight at the pin. An adjustment in mindset, but I think that's the fun of it. I think it's nice when you have to be a little bit more creative and use your imagination a little bit, and it's not just stand up and hit it wherever you want.

I think that's the beauty of links golf. We played Castlerock pretty calm yesterday in one wind, and then on Thursday and Friday it could be completely different. It can be you hit driver wedge one day and it could be driver 3-wood the next day, so it kind of depends and you have to sort of judge it when you get there and take each one as it comes.

Q. Stephanie, you won this event in its first playing before it was an LPGA-LET event. I think it was your first professional win. Describe some of the memories you have and how you feel familiar out here.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Yeah, definitely. I mean, that was such an amazing memory to have all my friends and family here. My husband was on the bag. To do it at a golf course where I took lessons up on the range there when I



was 10 years old, I mean, talk about a transformation.

Obviously a super special memory and I'm excited to be back here again.

Q. Stephanie, can you talk about after coming out of this season a different style of event, is that a good thing because you kind of get to relax a little bit, or is it something where it's a little harder to keep your focus because you just came out of the buzz saw that was major season?

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Yeah, obviously I think for both of us it's the fourth week in a row. Having two golf courses, obviously there's a little bit more preparation that goes into it, so I would say both of us are probably playing a few more holes than we typically would prior to Thursday, which after a major can be a little bit tiring.

But I think it's reenergizing to come somewhere where it's a little bit different this week, see some new faces. We all look at each other most weeks on Tour, so it's nice to have a different perspective and do something a little bit different. Just like a team event earlier in the year, it's nice to come here and see the guys. We can always learn something from them and they can learn something from us, too.

Q. You were a little under the weather last week.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I was, yes.

Q. Feeling better?

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Getting there, yeah.

Q. Is there more pressure when you're home? Some players say it's so much; others say it's great to see friends and family.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Obviously I think we want to do well, but I've seen so many faces this week that I probably only get to see once a year. Friends came out and walked with me yesterday at Castlerock. It was just really special to kind of share that with them.

Just trying to take it one day at a time and one shot at a time, and if I play great, then it's a fabulous week to do it, and if I don't, then unfortunately it's just another week on Tour. But obviously we'd both love to play well.

Q. Leona, do you like when you're playing back in Ireland and Northern Ireland? Your picture is on every magazine; you're on every poster. It's kind of incredible coming from Texas. Is that flattering or

humbling and difficult?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't necessarily call it pressure. I think the Irish fans are fantastic to come out and support their own, whether it's golf or whether it's Women's World Cup a few weeks ago or whatever it is.

I think it's always nice to have people wishing you well and rooting you on and wanting to see you do well. You can call it pressure, but either way you want to do as well as you can every week, and this week is really no different.

It's nice to have that sort of extra support there when you hit a good shot and things like that. Yeah, it's just a little bit of an extra incentive to do better this week.

Q. A couple Solheim questions for you. Have you been to the host site?

LEONA MAGUIRE: I have, yeah.

Q. Your impressions?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, it's a very different golf course, that's for sure. I think Suzann has a lot of choices to make in terms of course setup, and I think it'll play very difficult for us in the four-ball and things like that. It's a big hitter's golf course I would say. It's a big golf course.

But at the same time, around the greens are very tricky and things like that. I played it last November. We took like a team trip there at the last minute at the end of last year, so excited to go back. The team should be shaping up pretty well, as is the American team.

Q. Are there other pre-tournament trips planned for you guys?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Not that I'm aware of.

Q. What do you think about the opening hole being a drivable par-4. Do you like that to start a round?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, it'll be fun for the fans, I think. Probably different strategy for foursomes versus four-balls probably depending on the pairings and where they put the tee. It could be a driver straight on to the green or you could play it a little right. It's definitely dramatic for the opening hole.

I know they did that a few years ago I think it was in Des Moines and didn't work out very well for the Europeans that year, so hopefully this time around it'll be a bit more in our favor.



Q. What were the crowds like when you've competed in Spain?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Hopefully there will be a lot of Europeans. I would imagine a very different experience. Be very little support there with all the travel restrictions and everything. I know there's a lot of Swedish that winter down there. There's a lot of Irish people that do, as well.

So hopefully they'll come out in droves and we'll have a very Swedish heavy team this year, so, yeah, hopefully a lot of people making the trip there rooting us on.

Q. Do you think from Ireland? Like I said, you're everywhere; people are going to want to see you.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Hopefully there will be a lot of Irish people. I know a lot of Irish people have winter homes down there and stuff like that, so hopefully they'll be -- I know Finca is going to be a little bit tricky in terms of crowds getting around, but yeah, hopefully there will be as many cheering us on as they can.

Q. This is obviously a unique event; DP World Tour playing on one side of the draw. What's the vibe like? What's the atmosphere like?

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Well, it's been a bit of a -- I haven't actually seen very many men yet. We played Castlerock early yesterday morning. There was one guy in front of us and he kind of disappeared, and this is my first day coming to Galgorm. I wasn't on site on Monday. I was taking a break.

But I think everything is a little bit different for us this week, and then I kind of learned the layout and how things work.

But I think it's just exciting to see and hear like the men hitting it off the first tee and it's like, wait, what's that? So it is a little bit different, but it's exciting to see them. It'll be exciting to see how they play the golf course, what kind of scores they can shoot, and what kind of scores we can shoot.

Hopefully we can all make a lot of birdies and be very entertaining.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think like Steph said, it's a very different week. I think with the layout of the two golf courses a lot of our tees are actually the same as the guys'. We'll probably have quite different strategies in terms of how we play the holes. We'll probably be going driver a lot out here; whereas they're probably taking 2-irons and things off tees.

Yeah, it's fun to see. A few of the guys I played junior golf with, and I was up here on Monday afternoon and two of the first guys I saw were Matteo Manassero and Adrian Otaegui, who I played the Junior Ryder Cup with in 2008. I haven't really seen them since, so nice to catch up with them and see how far we've all come. We've all won on Tour now, and nice to see the journey.

Yeah, it'll be fun for the fans as well to see those sort of alternating groups, sort of see the difference, and hopefully people don't try to compare too much. I think that you can enjoy the skill of both the ladies and the men without having to sort of compare and contrast them too much.

I think there's great things to see and learn from both sides without having to constantly compare them.

Q. You touched on the fans. Who is coming to watch you this week, friends, family?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, my mom and dad are here, my sister Lisa is on the bag, and lots of friends. Like Stephanie said, a lot of friends from junior golf and stuff like that that we haven't seen in a quite a while.

It's nice to see some of those familiar faces, and anytime you've got people rooting you on, it makes it that extra bit special so I'm looking forward to seeing them.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: Well, both my golf clubs over here, Ballyclare Golf Club and Portrush, I would expect there will be a lot of members out, which is awesome. I dropped in at both places already, yesterday and Monday, to kind of say hello.

I'm sure they'll be out, and friends and family, as well. And there's all those faces that I haven't seen since I was 10 or 11, probably, that always pop their hands out. It's a cool week to kind of see everyone again.

Q. Leona, you've had a little time to reflect on the last two majors; how would you assess them now in hindsight?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think Walton Heath went okay last week. I didn't do a whole lot wrong. It was just sort of one of those steady weeks; just didn't do quite enough right.

Then maybe the weekend didn't go as well in the end as I would have liked, but I feel like my game is in really good shape.

All the pieces are there. It's just getting them to click at the right time. Hopefully that can sort of happen over the next

few weeks again.

I suppose the way the year has gone, getting the win and everything, everything that happens for the second half of the season is kind of a bonus. I'm not really putting too much pressure on myself. Just enjoy these few weeks of golf and the last of the European stretch and then we'll finish the season off really strong.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

