

# Solheim Cup

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Finca Cortesin

## Suzann Pettersen

### Press Conference



ROBERT TRENT JONES  
GOLF CLUB  
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**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you for joining us today. We are extremely happy to be able to announce that Suzann Pettersen will be our 2024 Solheim Cup captain. Suzann, you're obviously preparing for 2023 already, but how does it feel to have another opportunity when we go to the States next year?

**SUZANN PETERSEN:** Well, it's an incredible honor to be able to captain twice even before having played one shot of the first one.

For the European side, this was kind of part of the deal, especially because it's such a short gap between the first and the second one. It's almost about 11 months, so we figured it's quite a short time to swap out the entire team or leadership team.

I've kind of known for a while that it was kind of part of the gig, so I'm very happy to announce it. I must say it's already overlapping a lot. Already had several meetings regarding the '24. It's kind of hard because then you have to kind of put away the 2023 one and then try and think new and be different, creative, and yeah, so forth.

You know what, I think it's a fantastic journey to be part of, and to know that you're going to do it twice, it kind of gives me a little bit of longevity, as well, and especially all the new young upcoming players that we have on the European side, it kind of gives us time to get to know them.

Hopefully we'll have a few of them playing in '23, but definitely a lot more in the loop, as well, for the 2024.

I love it.

**Q. How does this change your strategy or your philosophy?**

**SUZANN PETERSEN:** It doesn't really change my philosophy. For me, this is really a lot of team building. I think I've said it before, but I think my most important key here is to kind of facilitate for the players, the surroundings of the team, make sure the energy is there.

I know the players are ready for it. Maybe it's easier for the players, as well, to kind of have one person to relate to over kind of a two-year plan.

I'm just super excited. So far it's been a great ride.

**Q. You mentioned that it was almost part of the deal that you were going to do both events. When did you precisely know? Did you even know before you were appointed for 2023?**

**SUZANN PETERSEN:** I don't know if I should say, tell the truth about it. Transparency has always been part of my deal, but yes, we talked about this kind of leading up to making the decisions for the 2023, but most likely this was going to be a two-year kind of gig.

I was obviously all for it. I didn't change my opinion one way or the other.

One thing, I'm sure it's going to be different to captain -- I know it's different to play in Europe versus U.S., and I'm sure it's going to be different kind of being a captain, being on home soil to being in the U.S., so I'm kind of -- I think I have the experience kind of on both sides, and I'm sure that 2023 is also going to give me a lot of experience in the aftermath of the event in September to bring on to '24, for the good or the bad.

I want all the players to be part of this journey, as well, so I'm very -- I'm trying to include a lot of the players in what's going on and decision making, and I feel like that's very important.

Like I've said earlier, this is a team competition. It's going to feel like a team surroundings leading up to it but also in the aftermath.

**Q. The fact that you obviously famously retired after holing the winning putt in 2019, a fantastic moment, but has that helped in that you're not trying to juggle a playing career so you can pretty much devote yourself to this full-time, I guess?**

**SUZANN PETERSEN:** Yeah, for sure. I think it would



... when all is said, we're done.®

have been -- well, it's probably doable, but it's quite nice not to have that extra pressure that you actually have to perform on the course. It feels different in a lot of ways because there's a lot of pressure, expectations.

I don't know, I must say it almost feels better to be a playing because you know what you're doing. You're going out there doing what you know the best, and you kind of feel like you have control. Sitting on the sideline is probably the worst for me.

That's the time when you just have to put all your faith and trust in the 12 players you have, and we are going to have a phenomenal team this year, even though it's quite a long way away. That's kind of the hard part for me is to not have control once the start goes.

**Q. You've played back on both the 2002 and 2003 teams. What was it like playing under two separate captains in such a short time frame, and did that influence you signing up for both years at once?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** It's such a long time ago. I was just so excited in 2002 to make the team that for me, it was like, I just took whatever they threw at me. 2002 was kind of a shock to the system, just kind of the adrenaline, the feelings, the emotions. They were overwhelming.

Going into 2003 in Barsebäck felt a little bit more comfortable even though I felt completely out of my shoes. It was in Sweden, and Annika was definitely at her peak in her career, and she was kind of the rock star of the team at her kind of home soil. I remember when the first pairing kind of came out and Catriona had put Annika and myself off first thing on Friday morning, and I didn't understand why I was paired with the best player in the world.

I've had several kind of emotions from all the different captains I've played under. But I think it was nice for me at that time to kind of go 2002 and 2003, was like two quick turnarounds, and it gave me a lot of boost moving forward.

For me it was like a stepping-stone to kind of get used to the pinnacle that Solheim Cup is.

**Q. Given the short time frame between these two Cups, could you see yourself possibly changing assistants between '23 and '24?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** No, not really. I've always been a feel player, and obviously we are going to base some of these two events on some kind of statistics, some kind of philosophy, but at the same time, I'm going to go with the flow in a lot of ways. I don't want to force anything on to the players.

I think it's going to feel quite similar both ways, but my most important key is kind of communicate with the players along the way up until the team is picked, and then obviously throughout, and that's probably just going to be continued instead of stopped at the end of Spain in '23.

**Q. We're obviously seven months out from the match now, but Europe have won four out of the last six. What are your confidence levels if you look into your crystal ball right now?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** I mean, I've looked into the crystal ball for many months already, and the crystal ball only gets stronger and stronger in my opinion. I love the progression that a lot of the European players have had and are having these days. A lot of our players have won over the last year. That's very important because winning brings confidence, and confidence brings belief again.

I want players to kind of believe in themselves that we can manage to bring it home once again at home soil. I really love how the team is shaping, and most importantly how all the players are feeling with their game and kind of the progress they have in kind of whatever they're working on. It's really paying off.

It's nice to have more than just one or two players who are winning. We've had several ones, and it's also fun to see the rookies who are kind of desperate to make the team.

I find that very exciting, and I also remember kind of how I went through those kind of emotions of my ultimate goal was kind of to make the Solheim Cup team that year. I can put myself in those shoes and kind of understand where their thoughts and plans are.

Already I've gotten to know quite a few of the players I didn't know as well before last year. I've started to know them a lot better already, and I think that also brings a comfort level from the players up quite a bit.

**Q. In consideration of the fact that you're doing this in back-to-back years, is there any player in particular who you're looking at who perhaps 2023 is too soon, but 2024 you're thinking that could be the right stage in their development curve? Obviously things change...**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Sure, there's several ones. Chiara Noja from Germany. I don't know if 2023 will be too soon. Only time will show. She's an amazing player, a fantastic golf swing, hits it a mile, great short game. She's proven to herself she can win at the highest level. Had a great week again last week. So she's obviously one I'm

looking at, keeping my eyes a little extra on. But she's 16; she has all the time in her career to kind of get ready for this.

At the same time, I want hungry, young players who's fearless who just want to bring it on, and she's definitely one of them.

You'll definitely have maybe a few more Swedes kind of from the same age group as Maja and Linn coming up. Again, '23 or seven months might maybe be too soon. Who knows. You have a Belgian girl who's playing really well, finished third last week, De Roey.

I can list names and names. But I think out of the extraordinary is probably Noja from Germany.

**Q. You'll have to forgive the clumsy segue, but there's a topical issue around golf. There's been a lot of discussion the last few days about Tiger Woods and Justin Thomas. You're a figurehead of female sports and golf in general, but what's been your observation of watching that and the reaction to it, as well?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** I know Tiger quite well. I don't know Justin Thomas as well, but I know kind of Tiger's humor, and that's a very probably boy ish joke between the two of them, and I don't really take it too personal.

Not much more to comment on that. I think that was supposed to be a gig between the two of them, and unfortunately some cameras caught kind of the gig in the heat of the moment. I don't know, I don't think he meant to be offensive in any way.

I don't really have any other comments. I'm pretty easy on stuff like that. I'm sure it was meant as a joke, not as a harassment to women in general.

**Q. I wonder if you could give an insight into how you're keeping tabs on your prospective players because many captains have the opportunity of playing alongside them in tournaments, but that's not something that's happening obviously with you. Just give us an insight on how you're keeping tabs.**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Well, I have my peeps out there watching out for me, but at the same time, I've made the decision last year to kind of tee it up in the Saudi event, the Aramco team event towards the end of the year to go down there, get to meet the players. It's always different when you're inside the ropes than when you're outside. You're completely right about that. I might eventually play a pro-am in one of the events or -- I'm playing the Dell team event, as well, in July.

I am going to put myself out there to kind of get the inside circle from the player group. Obviously Anna is one of my vice captains, Laura, as well, and they're out on Tour every week. I get the insight. I get the feedbacks. I get the scoops. I'm fairly close with quite a few of the players. I can do my Q & A with them, as well. But I have a pretty organized system that I've made up so I have a very clear overview of performance stats and everything else that's important, that I think is important.

There's no player that's going to go under my radar. This team is open for young players to come grab spots. Obviously I would love to have some experience among the players. But I want the players that are playing the best golf at the moment when the team is going to be picked.

Look, I've communicated to all the players. There are a lot of players that I would love to have on the team, but at the same time, they have to prove to me and to the rest of the world that they kind of earned their spot.

I like to kind of give the players a teaser, just some extra motivation, inspiration to kind of go out there and really try and earn and kind of get on the team, but at the same time, there's so much golf to be played from now until September that you might see a player that's maybe a little bit under the radar now but coming hot throughout the summer, and all of a sudden very potential player could play their way in through form.

Like I've said, there's not too many players that I'm not -- I feel I have a very good overview, even though I'm not out there every week.

**Q. During the Presidents Cup there was a lot of talk about the potential to have these kind of matches as being mixed matches with the very best players from the United States up against the very best players from either the rest of the world or Europe. Do you see somewhere down the line in the future some kind of match like that occurring, and would that be something that you would welcome?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Yeah, I would definitely welcome it, but I don't think any other format would kind of take away the prestige and the history that already existed from the Solheim Cup and the Ryder Cup. I think they should kind of be the pinnacle, as they are today.

But yeah, you can more than welcome maybe on seniors level or maybe where you kind of do a Ryder Cup where you have the six best females and the six best males playing against the opposite opponent.

I don't see anything kind of outdoing the Solheim or the Ryder Cup. Presidents Cup has their own thing, and they've had it for quite some years now, so they kind of start to get a bit of history, as well.

I would love to see the Solheim be the pinnacle of women's golf as long as I'm around.

**Q. It's obviously a huge honor to be the Solheim Cup captain, but at the same time it does take a lot out of your life, I'm sure. You've got a young family; was it something you had to think twice about, have a conversation with Christian about it perhaps, because it is a massive undertaking, isn't it?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Yeah, but -- thanks again for your feedback. I think everything in my world these days are family decisions. This is something I've always dreamt of doing, and family is not going to stop me chasing down my dreams.

I'm just glad that I can share this journey with my husband Christian and my two kids. Herman might understand it a little bit more September than when he did from Gleneagles, so that kind of excites me a little bit, that he kind of understands a little bit more the world that I used to live in.

My little one, she's still too young so she's not going to get it. At the same time, yeah, it's a little bit time-consuming, but at the same time, I love what I'm doing. I wouldn't change this for the world.

Whatever it takes, I'll make it work. It obviously helps that I'm not playing actively, as well, because that would have been probably harder on me, but for me to captain the team is very doable.

**Q. There's sort of a bit of a suggestion that we might be about to enter a period of U.S. dominance when it comes to the Ryder Cup. Do you think the opposite could almost be said for the Solheim Cup, that European golf is getting so strong? I don't know if dominance is the right word, but for years to come, Europe could sort of have the upper hand?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Well, you never really know kind of what the future brings. I think you can just look at the potential and the talent that you see on the Ladies European Tour these days. We keep saying it every year, but there's so much great talent coming up. But it really is a lot of great talent coming up.

I think Sweden represents kind of -- Linn and Maja

represents a new generation kind of players that are deadly solid in everything they do, and it really shows off on the golf course. I mentioned earlier you have a German girl, 16 year old, Chiara Noja. If you look at her standard of golf as a 16 year old, it's just extremely impressive.

I think all we can focus on from the European side is kind of keep generating, recruiting great young players, and eventually, come down to the Solheim Cup, at least the ones I've played, even though the results, the final results on paper might look differently, it's for the most part very, very close. It usually comes down to a putt here or shot there at a crucial point that kind of tips it one way or the other.

We've had a great kind of run over the last five or -- a great run since 2011, and I think the players really want it. When you really want something, you're ready to kind of roll up the sleeves and work for it.

I don't think it comes -- hard work pays off always over time, and I think that's kind of how the results relate here. It's hard for me to speak from the U.S. side because most of them play on the LPGA, and you kind of see them fairly often. On the European side there's maybe more new names popping up every season. That's either kick starting their professional career or breakthrough years.

**Q. Is Herman showing any interest in picking up a golf club yet?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** He's 100 times more interested in skiing. I kind of lost that battle so far. I have a daughter who's probably more stubborn than me, so I'm definitely going to try to make her swing some golf clubs because if she gets started, I'm sure she's not going to be happy until she's completely happy where she's at.

I might have one potential one out of the two.

**Q. Both yourself and Stacy are obviously very feisty competitors. How exciting is it for you to be going head-to-head and having two matches in the space of 12 months?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** I think it's great fun. I mean, obviously I've had a playing career with Stacy -- I feel like we have similar career paths. I probably retired a few years before she has, but we've kind of shared this journey inside the ropes as players for many, many years. We have very similar kind of career going. We both have a couple of majors. She's had a phenomenal run in the Solheim Cup.

It's fun also to see her kind of step it up as a captain. It





might be different for her; she's still playing. That's probably a little kind of differential that's kind of dividing us as of now. But I'm excited for her. I would have done it no matter who had captained the U.S. side, but I think it makes very much sense for both teams to kind of overlap the '23 and '24.

**Q. You were very complimentary of Gemma Dryburgh last season, and her confidence has really grown from that. What are you looking to see from Gemma going forward over the next few months?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Oh, she's been very impressive over the last six months I would say. She kind of broke through, and ever since she's broke through, she's put her name right on top of that list or in contention pretty much every week. Extremely impressive. It just shows she's worked hard over years and years, and all of a sudden she gets a little bit of a breakthrough and it gives her confidence, and obviously as soon as that confidence starts boosting, her true talent really starts showing off.

You know what, yeah, she's definitely got to put her name solidly on my list over the last six months. Just keep playing, keep plugging along the way you're doing, great results are going to come. I'm sure she's going to win coming before Solheim the way she's playing.

But you never know in golf. As a player, you just want to keep playing when you play that well, and she obviously does a lot of good stuff that kind of keeps the results coming week in, week out. We all know golf takes a lot of hard work, and she is a hard worker.

**Q. You spoke earlier about the difference between you inside and outside the ropes. Inside the ropes there was no more intimidating competitor in the game, and outside the ropes there's no better friend. Which Suzann shows up as captain?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Good question. I must say, though, I've thought a lot about this, but obviously my competitive side has kind of changed a little bit after, first of all, becoming a mother and then second stepping away from a competitive life. That feistiness and determination I had inside the ropes is probably still there, but it doesn't come clear as often as it used to.

But I really admire how Beany captained the last two. Obviously I've seen a lot of other great captains, as well, that I've played under, but Beany in particular kind of showed how her calmness -- her just being herself in all aspects made it so easy of a place to relate and kind of feel comfortable.

So I think I'm going to be more of the outside-the-ropes not joker, but more relaxed Suzann that you've probably seen. First of all, I have no control what these girls are going to do on the golf course, which I'm completely fine with, because these are the best players in the world. So just from giving away kind of that -- I don't know how to say, power, the best I can do is just to be very supportive from kind of an arm length distance and give them my best support.

I've always said, to facilitate the team the best I can is my most important job. I want the players to have the greatest energy, the best surroundings, the best kind of helpers, the support team. That is actually what Solheim is all about from the European side. It's not just the players, it's the caddies, it's the helpers, it's the staff. It's literally a team effort a lot further out than just player-caddie.

**Q. Last time we saw each other in Portugal, we discussed your selection. You said something like we never counted that many top girls in the top 25 in the Rolex Rankings. Can we assume by mid-August you will have played with the first section of let's say the 20 girls that could make the team, by mid-August?**

**SUZANN PETTERSEN:** Yeah, I mean, sure. I keep obviously updating the stats, all the different performance stats I have every week, and I've rarely seen as many European players that we have currently inside the top 30, 35. That's been a rare occasion in the past.

Hopefully this is the norm moving forward, that the Europeans keep climbing the World Rankings and keep doing well.

Rankings is just a number. It just kind of outlines how you've done over the last year or two years. There's a lot more to picking a team than just looking at where you stand in the World Rankings.

But that being said, there's also a lot of hungry players who knows what they need to do to kind of get my attention, to kind of prove themselves strong enough for the team. I think the criteria -- I mean, everyone knows the criteria, so there are six players off the World Rankings, there's two players from the LET, and then there's four wildcards.

I think just playing good golf, that will kind of take care of it. That's kind of my thought for that.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you, everybody. We'll call it a wrap there. We're looking forward to seeing you at Finca Cortesin in September and next year at the Robert Trent Jones golf club in Gainesville, Virginia.

