

# Solheim Cup

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Gainesville, Virginia, USA

Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

## Team Europe

**Carlota Ciganda**

**Albane Valenzuela**

**Madelene Sagstrom**

Press Conference



ROBERT TRENT JONES  
GOLF CLUB  
GAINESVILLE, VA

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**THE MODERATOR:** Hello and welcome to the final press conference of the day. I'm delighted to be joined by Carlota Ciganda, Albane Valenzuela, and Madelene Sagstrom to the stage.

I'll begin with Carlota. It's been nearly a year since you holed that putt on the 17th green. How do you reflect one year on, and what do you make of this year's European team?

**CARLOTA CIGANDA:** Spain, obviously it was amazing to finish like that in my home country with my family, my friends, a lot of home crowd watching. Very, very special.

It is a new week. I'm ready for this week. I love playing Solheim Cups. I think playing in the States is beautiful as well. You have a lot of motivation to win here.

I think we have a great team. The team is really -- we're having a great time every night in the team room and practice, in the bus. I think we all love this week.

I'm just very happy to be here and do my best for the team.

**THE MODERATOR:** Albane, welcome to the Solheim Cup. You're making your debut this week. How have you found the experience of Team Europe so far? What are some of the best things that have happened?

**ALBANE VALENZUELA:** It's an incredible honor to be here, to be part of Team Europe. I can just echo what Carlota said, the energy we have inside of the team room and the car rides in the morning is just incredible. I think it's electric, and we're all really excited for the week.

We know that foreign soil is never easy, but at the same time, I think it gives us extra motivation, and we're ready for competition to start.

**THE MODERATOR:** Madelene, you've had a very, very busy summer, but how delighted are you to be here making your fourth appearance in the Solheim Cup?

**MADELENE SAGSTROM:** It's one of these weeks that you dream about as a kid. You dream about being here representing Europe. It's a huge honor to be here. My first one I played my way into myself, so it was a big moment in my career and my game.

It's just, like Carlota and Albane have said, we've had so much fun already. Our team is super strong, really united this year. So everything has been awesome so far.

**Q. Just one for each of you. Albane, I'll start with you. What an experience to get to have your first Solheim Cup in the U.S. and to be on this team representing Switzerland. What does this mean to you to be part of this team this year? Is this like a lifelong dream realized for you?**

**ALBANE VALENZUELA:** Definitely. This is a little girl's dream for me. The Solheim Cup is the biggest stage in golf. It's the most prestigious events. You have the 12 best Americans against the 12 best Europeans. There's no better stage in golf.

I couldn't be more excited. It's been hard to take the smile off my face this entire week. It's just incredible. There's no bigger honor, and I couldn't be more excited for the week.

**Q. Carlota, you have been excellent in the Solheim Cup in your own right, but when you look at this team this year, what do you think are the strengths of this European team? Obviously not on your own soil.**

**CARLOTA CIGANDA:** I think we have a great team. I think we have a lot of long hitters, and I think that's really good for this course. I think with Europe it's always the same. We are a team. We are very united. We all belong here. We try to support each other. We try to help each other.

Everyone knows that, if anyone needs help, we are there



for the players, for the caddies. I mean, even the helpers, the officials. We are just Europe. It's just all of us together in this, and we all win together, we all lose together.

It's just how it's always been, and I think we have that mentality. It's been great so far. But, yeah, we are ready to start on Friday and put up a good fight.

**Q. Madelene, obviously had a very special Saturday last week. Can you just talk us through the wedding and talk us through going from the wedding that you've been planning for quite a while to the Solheim Cup and trying to get yourself mentally locked in to play competitive golf this week?**

**MADELENE SAGSTROM:** It was always planned to have the wedding last Saturday. Actually, we decided to do -- we had changed it once, but to be honest, the best part of both of our worlds come together in the last two. We get to spend the whole week with family and friends to celebrate Jack and my love for each other with everyone, and it was absolutely fantastic since we don't get to see them very often.

We had a few moments we were like, should we hang out? No. I don't really want to hang out with you. I see you all the time. I want to hang out with everyone else.

So it was really amazing, and then to get to come here and do this together. It is literally the best of both worlds. I am very fortunate to do this as my job. I've been very fortunate to have been playing Solheim Cups before and getting the opportunity to do it again.

I couldn't think of any better way to spend my last two weeks. I probably will be very tired next week, but so far I've been sleeping okay.

**Q. Albane, obviously you know what it's like to play for Switzerland in the Olympics. Did that kind of get you geared up for the potential of representing Switzerland at the Solheim Cup and being the first Swiss player to ever make the team?**

**ALBANE VALENZUELA:** It's obviously an incredible honor to be the first Swiss player here, and it truly means a lot. I think you know from hearing my fellow teammates' experiences, nothing really prepares you for a Solheim Cup unless you tee it up on the 1st hole.

But I think I'm going to rely on those Olympic experiences. I think Golf National this year really brought great crowds. That 1st tee was intimidating, not an easy first shot, but also an incredible experience, electric. The crowds were unreal.

I know this week will be a little bit different. We'll have people rooting also against us. I know I'm relying on my teammates. I have a lot of people supporting me, and we're going to come in super united, and you know we have all of Europe having our backs.

**Q. Carlota or Madelene, the U.S. Team is the favorite on paper, if you look at the world ranking or other statistics, but on your team you have ten players who have won a Solheim Cup before and the U.S. only has two. Does that make you feel like the favorite in this event?**

**CARLOTA CIGANDA:** I don't think so. I think, to be honest, the last Solheim Cups, they've been very, very close. I think that's probably going to be more of the same.

I do think, yeah, the U.S. Team, they've been playing better than us on paper, as you said, and probably World Rankings, but I think this week is different. You have to make those putts to win, and I think Europeans we all know how to do that.

We've been playing match play since we were really young with our national teams, so I think that helps us a lot.

The U.S. Team is amazing. You all know Nelly Korda, Lilia, great players, world No. 1, world No. 3. But I know we're going to put up a good fight. I believe in this team, and I think we can do it.

**Q. Because they have been close, is that a sign that Europe in the Solheim Cup perhaps, as Europe has done in the Ryder Cup, has been able to build a team that is greater than the sum of its parts? A team that comes together as a team and isn't so much a collection of great individual players, but a cohesive team?**

**MADELENE SAGSTROM:** I feel like it's a little bit -- might be a little bit harsh, to be honest, because everyone has made this team. Both sides of the team are great golfers. You have to remember these are the best players in the world, and we play against each other all day every single day.

I think there are situations where your game might step up to a different level. Sometimes I think too, playing for something bigger than yourself might bring out a little extra in you. I do think the team spirit we've had and traditionally we've always had in Team Europe on Solheim Cups and Ryder Cups, that definitely brings a bit extra to it, but overall, every single person that's here, they're fantastic golfers.

I think it's just judging a book by its cover might be a little bit -- or just based on results are a little bit -- it's not always a true indication on how good the players really are.

**Q. Carlota and Madelene, could you compare how Suzann has been as a captain this year versus last year and any changes you've seen in her approach?**

**MADELENE SAGSTROM:** She brings the same energy, that's for sure. Obviously being in America and being in Europe are two very different things.

**CARLOTA CIGANDA:** I think Suzann is a very powerful woman, and I think she's been the same as it was last year. I think she's been doing a few things different. She's been studying the team. I think she's more prepared.

I think the first time you don't really know what to expect. I think the second time you learn from what you did, as anything in life, and I think she's more prepared. She wants us to have the best week of our lives. She's there for us.

For me, Suzann has been one of my heroes. She inspires me a lot. She has a lot of power, determination, and I love how she is, I love when she talks. I love what she says to the players, how she treat us. I know she might not be for everyone, but I think she's a great captain.

**Q. Madelene, after the wedding, this is your honeymoon week. Do you have any other honeymoon planned?**

**MADELENE SAGSTROM:** Right now, I think I loved my wedding. I'm also happy that it's done so I can actually focus on golf again. It's been the last few months, probably the last few weeks have been a little bit stressful in my mind, trying to make sure everything was organized.

As of now, maybe off-season, but I'm going to try to finish this season strong and play some good golf like I did beginning of the year.

**THE MODERATOR:** Albane, what's the best piece of advice that you've had coming into this week?

**ALBANE VALENZUELA:** That's a tough one. I'd say probably just play fearless and really enjoy the week. I think that's really something that defines European players. I see players like Anna Nordqvist, Leona Maguire, and even Carlota and Madelene standing here, and they're all extremely aggressive and determined players.

So I think really having that in mind, playing fearless,

playing aggressive, and giving everything we have is something that I really take to heart, and I'm going to try to do this upcoming three days.

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