

Solheim Cup

Saturday, September 14, 2024

Gainesville, Virginia, USA

Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

Team Europe

Captain Suzann Pettersen

Mel Reid

Press Conference



ROBERT TRENT JONES
GOLF CLUB
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THE MODERATOR: European captain Suzann Pettersen, European vice captain Mel Reid. Welcome back to the media center after another long intense day. With the scores at 10-6, Suzann, how would you summarize today?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I think today was a great day of golf. I think we played really, really solid in the morning, and I think we played really solid in the afternoon.

I think the outcome of the morning, if I could kind of go back, I would maybe hope for another point, and the way we played, 2-2 was kind of a fair play, I think.

Then great matches again in the best balls in the afternoon. Yeah, we had to come off to a strong start today, and the girls were fired to go out.

At the same time, we're still a long ways behind, but if there's a hope, there's always a chance.

We're still in it. We need a massive day tomorrow. We need to go another record singles series again. It's been done before.

I think that just shows that these girls are going to go to bed tonight thinking that we have every opportunity. It will be a miracle, but we've seen it before.

Q. What's your strategy with the singles pairings?

SUZANN PETERSEN: We don't really have much options. We have to go by form, try to send the players that have been playing really good out first because if we don't get enough points in the first six, seven matches, it's game over anyway.

I mean, we have to go strong. But the lineup, if it would go further down the list, we have great players that's ready to kind of take on that responsibility.

But first of all, we have to cover -- try and cover the first top half.

Q. Suzann, you pretty much mentioned this, but is the miracle at Medinah on players' minds or even what happened in 2015 at the Solheim Cup?

SUZANN PETERSEN: It's definitely on my mind. I was on the opposite side in Germany, and I know what it feels like. I know what it feels like going into Sunday.

Everyone remembers Medinah. I mean, it's a tough task. It's a lot to ask. But the situation is 10-6. All you can do is just literally go out hard, play your heart out, and hopefully we get enough points that we can kind of keep this exciting and fun for the bottom half to show up and get their points, as well.

It's just literally -- it is what it is at this point.

Q. Suzann, how would you describe the mood of the team right now?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I mean, I thought it was quite fun out there towards the end. We kind of managed to silence the crowd a little bit. It doesn't take much for these girls to get fired up at that. But I think that was like the first time in two days that we've kind of silenced the crowd.

I feel like we have some momentum, if that's allowed -- if I can even say that. Because it takes its toll to always have to come from the back. Again, poor Friday morning is kind of what put us in this situation.

I think from yesterday afternoon, we picked it up, and today, all day today, I think we've matched the Americans. Tee to green I think we're playing fantastic. We obviously are not making any putts, and that's the difference in what you see on the scores.

Q. Suzann, did you see the American caddies who took their shirts off in celebration, and do you have any comments on that?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I would just say, sex sells. Go for



... when all is said, we're done.®

it.

MEL REID: I don't know about that. I don't know if that's going to sell sex. I'm not going to lie. We've got a couple caddies in our thing that maybe sex would sell, but them two, probably not.

I'm joking. Fair play.

Q. Considering Leona Maguire's success the last couple Solheim Cups, what went into the decision to sit her for both sessions today?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Yeah, nobody can take away Leona's record, the value that she carries into the European team, playing or not playing. Just her presence on our team is very valuable.

When it ended up being where we kind of stood after yesterday, we kind of had to go by form. Unfortunately up until now, Leona hasn't kind of been, I don't know, the rock that I kind of was hoping for.

That being said, that doesn't mean she's not fired up about going out there tomorrow and playing her absolute best. She's fine with it. She's a team player. She cares about the team. For her to kind of go support all the teammates on the course, not having played today, that's a tough task, as well. But she takes it as a champ, and I'm really proud of her for that.

But it surely doesn't take away anything, and like I told her, she doesn't have to prove anything to any of us. She's kind of won us the Solheim the last two times. She has all the reasons to kind of be disappointed, but she also has the character and the guts to say, you know what, fair play, I'm not playing my best, and go play someone else who kind of has a better chance of getting points on the board.

We're playing the best players in the world. We have to try and gear up and kind of put our full force out.

Q. Leona did have her left wrist taped this afternoon out on the course. Did that play any part of the reason why she only did one session?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I didn't even know.

MEL REID: I think she normally has it taped up.

SUZANN PETTERSEN: It's for show.

MEL REID: Exactly. She likes the tan lines. She's really tan this week, so yeah.

Q. We saw Emily get emotional after winning that match and Carlota, as well, her first point of the sessions. To see those two veterans get that point, what did that do for the morale of the team?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I mean, if there's -- people might say Emily was a gutsy pick. In my mind she's an obvious pick. I know what she's capable of. We know what she's capable of. I'm probably one of her biggest fans.

Being a captain, I kind of have the options of picking whoever I want, but I want people who care, who's a good teammate, and is capable of finding something in your game to play the way she's been this week.

I mean, had she played like this each and every week, I think things would have looked different for her. I'm trying to keep -- I keep telling her that she is that good. This week she's enjoying herself so much, so her kind of anger management is well managed because I think that's where she's lacking. That's kind of probably where she reminds me a bit of myself. I can relate a little bit.

But that's what Solheim does. I haven't come across one player over the time of my Solheim career where you don't find something that just clicks that week in your game. I don't know if that's the atmosphere, if it's the team atmosphere. Whatever it is, somehow you just kind of scramble something together and then what you see of Emily now is kind of the player she is.

Q. You mentioned looking for one more point from that morning session. Are there any other lineup changes or buttons you wish you pressed throughout this week to get that extra point?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I mean, I don't think we can regret any of the decisions that we've done so far. We've tried to kind of, as best as we could, kind of set the team up for what we thought would be best case, like our best kind of possibility of getting points on the board.

I mean, we're playing the best players in the world, as well, and sometimes you can play great golf and still lose.

I really feel like we haven't had any magic on the greens. We haven't had many momentums kind of going our way, and still, we're managing to kind of get two halves out of all of today, 2-2, 2-2. I think we're doing pretty good.

I just think what hurt us the most was, again, the very slow start. It kind of puts us behind straight off the bat. But like I said, as long as there's a hope, there's a chance.

Q. The team had three 2-up leads or greater during the

first session today. What was the team's attitude like after coming away with the session tied from the morning?

SUZANN PETERSEN: This morning our only goal was to kind of get one point. Like first match out, get the first hole, the next hole, the next hole, like match by match.

We didn't even think about the afternoon lineup because all we needed was a very strong morning to even put us in a position where we could go out there and kind of feel confident thinking that this is possible.

I think we did a great job. I'm really proud of the way they came out today and really proved to the world that this is a tight match.

Q. You just gave a lengthy defense for Emily, that she elevates her play in Solheim Cups. I think I'm a little confused that Leona has done that twice. What did you see that didn't justify Leona getting a second session to prove that she can elevate her game again?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I think Leona is feeling quite good, actually, to be honest. It's a good question.

Sometimes it's a little bit of gut feel, as well. I mean, I saw Leona the practice days. She was hitting it pretty decent. Under pressure, she might not kind of have executed the way she wanted to, and that kind of does something with your confidence, as well.

At the same time, she is a warrior. She is a match player. She's born to do this. But she's only played one session. That's how it is playing on a team.

We also have another 11 great players. I can't just think of where I'm going to play Leona because it's also got to fit with the remaining kind of possible player, how they're paired up. That's a huge part that comes into this.

It's not just Leona didn't get her point in the second session and then we don't play her anymore. That's not usually how it works.

The way it worked this time around, she played once. Last year we had Caroline played once. I want them all to be ready 100 percent by tomorrow, and they all know that, and they're all in with that.

Q. You've talked a lot this week about analytics. Have you always been a data person, and if not, what has spurred this interest?

SUZANN PETERSEN: Does it look like I'm a number

person? (Smiling).

It's probably the biggest difference between Stacy and I. Even as a player, yes, I cared about the stats, but I was very much a feel player. I was very much kind of play by heart, even though there was a system to that, as well.

But I think the stats for us, I think it's quite relevant kind of coming into the week, and then obviously stats can change. Like for some girls, they might -- all the stats might completely be different if they hit some kind of button that kind of accelerates their form throughout the week. Then kind of the remaining stats for the year, it's kind of literally out the window.

Say, for example, Emily. If she elevates her game to where she really belongs, then the stats that she's had this year is not really relevant. Then she's literally our No. 1 player tee to green.

You also have to look between -- see between the fingers, and at the end of the day, you've got to play by heart.

Q. Can you give any specific sense of the type of data you looked into, and did anything go into determining the order for tomorrow's matches?

SUZANN PETERSEN: No. For tomorrow's order, we went by form, who we think has the best chance of getting their point early on because otherwise it's game over.

What types of analytics, it's so detailed. I could probably send you the spreadsheets. They're quite detailed, and for a street-smart girl like me, even I have problems figuring it out.

Q. Maybe you explained it earlier, but did you have any specific conversations with Leona today explaining that she wasn't going to play today?

SUZANN PETERSEN: We told all the girls. We don't know what the afternoon is going to look like. That was literally a fact.

We had to take it by ear, like how this morning's session went, and after the morning session we had to sit down and reevaluate where we thought we could most likely get our points. Unfortunately she was one who fell short. There's nothing more to it, really.

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