

American Century Championship

Friday, July 10, 2026
Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA
Edgewood Tahoe

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference



Q. Very solid round today, an eagle, a bogey and 16 pars; is that right?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yes, that's right. Pretty steady. What can I say?

Q. You talked about it yesterday when you were in here about how consistent you are. I think the day was pretty consistent. Tell us about the eagle on 3.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: It's funny, because that hole has given me some trouble in the past. So the goal this year was to do better. And I did a little better. I skipped the birdie; I went directly to eagle.

I laid up, because I can't reach it in two. I had like 125 yards or something like that and hit a pitching wedge and landed kind of what I had in mind, and it just rolled in. So it was perfect. Kind of the aggressiveness that I need.

Q. It seems like there's a couple guys that have jumped ahead of you. Fish and Pavelski. One point ahead of you right now after 16 holes. But I think you're right where you want to be pretty close to where you want to be, if not on top?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I'm happy with my round. I'm happy with 22 points. I can't control what those guys are doing out there. As you know, today is the first day. A good start. I haven't really competed since January, so I feel from that perspective, I'm a little rusty.

So good to kind of get a decent round under my belt. But we all know I had to be a little more aggressive. You've got to make birdies out there. Pars really don't move you forward at all. But two more days. So pretty happy with the start. I'm going to go from here.

Q. How are you trying to balance the aggression without making a big mistake? Is it different than maybe the last couple of years you've been here?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: It's a very good question. I mean, there's some holes out there that I can be aggressive and some holes that I think I need to be a little bit more conservative. It all depends on the hole location.

I'm just thinking about a hole like No. 12. That's a hard location for me to do anything. 17. I just hit the green, it's just going to roll over.

There's some holes where I have a little shorter iron in that I can maybe fire at the flag and take advantage of those. I did some today, but some of them I kind of let it go a little bit.

But it's a game out there. You've got to see how you feel and where you are and where the wind is and kind of adjust it at the time. So maybe a little bit more aggressive on some of the putts.

But it's hard, if you're above the hole, as you know, these greens are really fast. You've got to be a little cautious. It's hard to feel like I'm aggressive when you've got to be just cautious down the hill.

But that's what makes this golf course. I feel like I have the experience. I feel like I have the knowledge, together with my husband Mike. We know the golf course. It's just I've got to do what we planned. That's the key.

Q. Walk us through the eagle and what that meant for some early momentum. Your name was basically at the top of the leaderboard the entire time you were out there.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, but I was one of the first out. Obviously when you make an eagle you get six points. So that kickstarted it. And I was so solid. I had opportunities on No. 4 as well that I feel like I kind of let slip away. But it was a perfect wedge on 3 and that's really I would say that's my wheelhouse, give me a wedge in my hand, I feel very comfortable.

Q. Being at the top of the leaderboard, do you look at that throughout the round, or is that even during your



career is that not something that you're really checking?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I'm a leaderboard checker. I mean, who doesn't love seeing your name at the top. Not as happy now because I'm not at the top. But it's fun. The reason why I look is I want to know where I stand in the tournament. When it's Sunday, you want to know what you've got to do. If you're behind, you're going to kind of see what they're doing. If you have to make a charge or it can be a little bit more kind of play safe.

Obviously today is day one. Anything can happen. But it's always fun. I've always said I want to be at the top of the leaderboard. You never know what's going to happen. I like to charge as fast as I can, if it's possible.

Q. You mentioned maybe not playing a ton leading into this. I guess what was the pretournament preparation to make you feel like you could come out here and compete?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Last time I played was Hilton Grand Vacation in Orlando, in Florida, it was, what, end of January, early February, maybe. That's six months. It's a little different.

It's hard to get tournament-ready when you're not playing in a tournament. So I try to, at home, play with our son and our family and try to score and make it like a real event, which we've tried to do.

But, still, I feel very comfortable with them obviously and we don't have the crowd. It's come here, all of a sudden, every shot matters, every putt matters and you've got to do it. That's why I'm glad I got off to a good start.

But it helps to be a little bit more tournament-ready, to be in what you call the swing of things. And it makes a difference.

Q. Is there like a number you feel like if you're going to win this tournament needs to be hit?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I'm looking at the leaderboard right in front of me. I see Mardy Fish, and I think he set a record last year -- not last year -- that was Joe, but the year before. So 20, 20, 20s isn't going to do it. You have to be in the 70s somehow. These guys are so good now. You need some shots like I did on 3. Maybe a little bit more aggressive on some of the other holes and make eagle. You know, it doesn't hurt to be lucky, right? I got the consistency, but I need some of those breaks to have a chance.

Q. Are there specific holes on the course where you feel like you need to get some points, you need to score well, just because there's opportunity to --

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: The par-5s, I was three today. But in general, I just don't play them as well as I should. Those are the holes where I have shorter irons in and I should do well, and I just haven't done it in the past. I haven't been really close with my wedges, and I can't really reach any of them in two, maybe the last one. 18, I can reach in two. The other ones I'm just laying up. So it makes a difference. But it's not going to stop me. I've played courses where they've been longer and I've been able to score. So that's just really what I've got to do.

Q. The name of your game has always been consistency. How challenging is it mentally for you knowing that maybe you've gotta go and put the foot on the gas, because as you mentioned, pars probably aren't going to get it done here.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I mean, I've never been really a super aggressive player. I've always been a steady person, hit a lot of fairways, hit a lot of greens. That's always been my game. It worked in my career. It worked what I did. But this type of format is a little different.

It rewards more aggressive play, as we've talked about, but also punishes somebody who is maybe too aggressive. Again, I don't compete full time now, so it makes it a little harder for me. But I've always been a competitor. Always will be.

In the bottom of my heart, you always feel like there's a chance. You're just going to keep on going. Never know what can happen. The wind can pick up. Stranger things have happened. So I'm just going to keep on my course, keep on going, and we'll see on Sunday.

Q. Obviously you ended towards the top of the leaderboard today. How do you kind of balance the competitive nature that you naturally have with sort of kind of enjoying the weekend? You're here with family. Obviously you're here in beautiful Lake Tahoe. How do you balance that?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: It's hard. I mean, there's so many fun activities. So much you want to participate in from dinners, to concerts, just entertainment in general, and then you've got family and friends and you want to share it with everybody and you realize I've got to be in tournament mode.

I've always wanted to have a nice warm-up. I always wanted to have kind of a little practice session after the



round. And friends and family, they're having a drink and having a good time. Or let's go to the pool, let's go in the lake, which I'm totally fine with. But it's you're trying to be, I'm also a player and trying to get in my zone, if you know what I mean.

It's a nice problem to have, but it's that kind of juggling where you want to go to bed early, and then you sing karaoke in the evening. It's kind of a different week that way end.

Q. Any particular favorite karaoke?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Not that comes to mind. Just a little Abba maybe.

Q. Dancing Queen?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Did you miss the performance?

Q. Yes, I did.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I'm glad you missed it. It was not one of my highlights. But it was just a fun thing to participate in. Everybody is so good here, I figured I'm going to join for everybody to have a laugh.

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