

American Century Championship

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Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Annika Sorenstam. 25 points today, five birdies. Let's kind of walk through the round. So early start with a bogey. Just kind of walk through the front nine, kind of recovering from the early start with the bogey, to get your wits back together and play in your round today.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: First of all, it's great to be here. Hole number 3, what can I say? It's been good to me so far. I was able to birdie that one today, rolled in a nice putt from behind. And then I birdied the par-3, also made a nice birdie putt, another breaking putt.

So, unfortunately, I bogeyed number 6, a three-putt. And then I made the turn, felt pretty comfortable. And then I birdied a few there, as you know. I rolled in some really cool putts there on 13 and 15 and then on 18.

So today my putter was really my friend. I had a lot of breaking putts, too, top of it. So excited to have the feel and was able to read the greens well today.

Q. We saw that fist pump after that long birdie putt on 15. Does that get your adrenaline going when those birdie putts kick in and knowing that you're moving up the leaderboard?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Of course. I mean, I think in the past I've hit the ball really well and have had a lot of chances but not been able to convert them. And today, it was a little scrappy, but then I got on the green and all of a sudden, you know, I walked away with a birdie and three points.

So it just shows you that you just gotta keep on grinding, keep on going. You never know. I was just lucky to be able to make those putts. And it felt like I'm still in there, even though those guys are playing well.

I looked at the leaderboard. I saw them. I could hear their roars and so forth, but I'm just going to keep going. You

never know. They can roll in from anywhere.

Q. You're currently standing in third going into tomorrow. You've been in this position, in the hunt many, many, many times in your career, including here. So this afternoon and going into tomorrow, what is going to be the rest of the day today and then what's going to be the mindset tomorrow going to into the final round?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I've got to keep putting the way I was putting today. I mean, that's really the key. And be able to put some pressure on the guys that just walked in here in the press tent. So hopefully they can hear me.

I'm not going to let my foot off the pedal. But I've got to go low. I mean, you can see today I had 25 points, and it's not enough. So that just shows you what kind of caliber of golf these guys are playing.

A lot of things need to click tomorrow. I've got to drive it well. I've got to have some opportunities. And then I've just got to be able to put some pressure on early. And then we'll see what happens.

But I mean, that's really when I play this. It's fun to have a chance and then be able to push yourself to the extreme and see what happens.

Q. Tomorrow group will be you, Joe Pavelski and Mardy Fish. You guys have played with each other quite a bit in this. It's going to be a competitive round tomorrow. You mentioned, are you guys going to push each other tomorrow, or is it going to be just foot on the gas and full competition for you guys tomorrow?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I mean, they hit it a mile. So the game will be very different. We'll meet on the greens, I'm sure. There will be a little competition from there.

I think we're all excited just to be here this week and coming down to the last round, which is always fun to have a chance. I know the crowds will be huge.

I'm just going to kind of prepare the way I normally do and



not try to do something crazy, and just see how things shape up tomorrow.

Q. How would you compare being in contention Sunday here versus being in contention Sunday in a major when you were playing on the LPGA Tour?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You know, I don't even remember. It was so long ago. 2008 was really the last year. So, wow, that's 18 years ago. I mean, I've always been a person, I live in the moment. Right now I'm just excited to be here, and tomorrow again, go out there and play.

I mean, of course I'm going to try to rely on everything I've done through my career and take those moments and gather them and be ready for tomorrow.

I have a pretty good feel for how I react in certain situations. I know how to deal with the nerves under these conditions. So hopefully we'll come back tomorrow and I will channel my old Annika and we'll see what happens.

Q. You talked in here yesterday about the aggressiveness required to win this tournament. Did you push yourself even a little bit more? Or was it just a matter of the putts were falling more today than yesterday?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I feel like -- we talked about it yesterday -- when are you going to be aggressive, and when can you not be? I feel like today, I looked at the lines, I looked at the hole and I never really thought about my second putt. This is what I need to do. This putt breaks 2 feet with the right speed that I have in mind. And that's what I was focusing on.

I think a lot of times here, you can get caught up with the speed of these greens, the undulations, and you worry about what's coming next. So today it was like, okay, stay in the moment. Hit this putt, and then whatever the result is, you deal with it then. But don't stand over a putt and be too cautious and worry about the outcome. So I think that really made a big difference.

Q. How important was that last one to get those three points and stay within four points where Mardy is right now?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Oh, it's huge. I know the last three holes, I mean, they're going to get seven or more points. When I didn't birdie 16, you're thinking now, okay, I'm already three behind. So you have to take advantage of the par-5s. I've been so-so about it this week. But had a great drive, had a great opportunity. I had to chip off the

green, which is always a little nerve-racking like that, want to make a big dent. But hit a good chip, and it just kind of took off. And I thought I had it right in my hand and rolled it in and felt good.

Q. How beneficial being in that last group and just seeing how they're playing and adjusting your game if necessary?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I've said it before, I love being in the last group. I love being at the top of the leaderboard. That doesn't scare me at all. On the contrary, I love being up there. But I've got to perform. And that's really the key. And tomorrow I can be right there with these guys. Played so well here. They both have won this championship. They're playing really good golf. For me, it's nice to be right there with them, and maybe that will spur me on a little bit and see what I've got to do.

Q. Talk about the crowds out there. Saturday is naturally the highest attended day that we have at the tournaments. What was the crowd like on 17 and throughout the round today?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Oh, a ton of people. The atmosphere is as high as I can remember. Every single hole, people are out there cheering and screaming, having a good time.

You come down to 17, I try to look at -- look at the amount of boats. I think that really is an indicator of how many people because it's so hard to see out there on the golf course. But people are having fun. That's what this tournament is all about.

The weather is certainly cooperating. So setting up to be another record-breaking week.

Q. With your foundation and with your tournament in Orlando, your big goal is to give back to the next generation of golfers. So here, a lot of young boys and girls are probably being introduced to golf for the first time but at this type of tournament. Right? How important is it for not only you who have done this your entire career, but to be on this stage with Mardy Fish and the stars of sports entertainment to help introduce young boys and girls to golf who may not have been introduced to this sport before this tournament?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I think it's huge, obviously. I think when people attend here, I think they're having such a good time. And you see all the young kids out there, they're following their idol, maybe it's a football player, baseball player or whatever, tennis player, they're out



there.

I think when they see their role models playing this game and playing this game at such a high level, I mean, of course it sparks an interest. There's a lot of fun activities around here. This tournament's all about having fun. I think when people are here, they feel like, well, we should be part of golf.

So hopefully these young kids can understand that you can play other sports, but you can play golf as well. So I think it's a great introduction to the sport to be here.

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JOE PAVELSKI:

MARDY FISH:

THE MODERATOR: We have our first and second place finishers after the second round with us, Mardy Fish and Joe Pavelski.

Mardy, nice finish with the eagle on 18, big six-point switch there, has you in the lead. Take us through the round.

MARDY FISH: Just giving Joe a little taste of his own medicine. He made back-to-back eagles at this tournament on 18. So it's nice to get one on him.

It was a tricky day out there. The course is in perfect condition. The weather is perfect. There's really not a whole lot of excuses so you go out there and you want to play so well.

It's super fun playing with Steph because you get a big crowd as well. It was tricky out there today in a way -- the altitude is what kind of gets you a little bit here in terms of your wedge game and stuff like that.

I spent a few months before this tournament kind of figuring out distances and wedges and stuff like that. And you know exactly what clubs you hit out here.

I actually took a 5-iron out of my bag, which I've never done before, I just won't hit it. Put a 7-wood in.

You know exactly what you're doing. And the defense out here is the greens. They're tough to read. They're tough to make putts on.

Made a lot more putts yesterday than I did today. But I was steady and just kind of kept sort of grinding and making pars. Made two bogeys that you kind of want back, but it happens. And you move forward.

I don't make a ton of eagles usually out here. And obviously six points on one hole is pretty big.

Q. We mentioned two birdies, two bogeys, and an eagle. Pretty solid round. I mean pretty consistent all day.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, a ton of pars. Would I like to make more birdies, sure, but kind of just continuing to move forward and not go backwards and just kind of trying to give yourself as many chances as you can, that's the goal every day.

Q. Joe, you had 19 points today. 29 yesterday. Looked like a little struggle on some of the par 3s today. But you're right there. Take us through your round?

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, the round, it was close to being good. I just made too many mistakes. And the biggest one highlighted by probably number 12, got my tee shot a little heavy, and then kind of didn't hit a great bunker shot, or not a lot of sand at the bottom of that one. And in that area. So didn't happen. So you try to stay away from and all of a sudden want to come up the sand game was not good. Left one in the bunker on 4. Did something similar on 12.

Couple mental mistakes on the clubs I picked on 4 and 5, hitting the approaches. But other than that, I hit a lot of good shots. Actually made putts today, made a couple of good ones.

It was close to being decent, and it was close to being not very good at all. So I kind of grinded it out and kept -- stayed within striking distance.

Q. You guys have been playing a lot of rounds together lately. Are you getting tired of each other?

MARDY FISHER: Never. The last three years, there's a tournament in Maine called the Drive for Kids, and we've gone the last three years -- last two years, and we haven't played one round together there.

I won last year. And he won this year. We still haven't played together there. But it seems like we play each other quite a lot. I really enjoy spending time with Joe, playing golf with him. He's a phenomenal golfer. Kind of awkward he's sitting right here next to me.

Q. Do you like talking good about Mardy?

JOE PAVELSKI: I like his caddie.



MARDY FISH: Our caddies get along. We've got good caddies I'd rather hang out with his caddie he's rather hang out with mine.

Q. What are your thoughts after two days playing on the course; today's scores weren't as good as yesterdays. I don't know if you were more revved up yesterday or the hockey guys that you referenced yesterday came to bite you in the left arm or right arm.

MARDY FISH: Not the hockey guys.

Q. Golf gods. Did I say hockey?

MARDY FISH: You did. They're out there too. We've got a flyer hat on. That's after two days what are your thoughts how do you approach tomorrow.

JOE PAVELSKI: The course is good and if you get off the tee you're going to have some good looks. Par 3s you still have to commit to shots and hit good shots and the greens, they don't let up. They were fast when we showed up here on Wednesday, Friday was fast, today was a little bit faster and the pins are they get tricky. So you'll hit a good shot and next thing you know you'll know, eight feet above it and you're pretty defensive.

D MARDY FISH: The superintendant does such an amazing job of getting this course in perfect condition. We feel like we're coming to a professional tournament. First-class all around. First-class run in terms of tee times, the way Milthorpe runs it. And the golf course is in beautiful, beautiful shape.

So really no excuses other than the greens are really difficult, and you're playing defense at all times, it feels like. You put yourself above the hole and stuff, and you're going to have a good comebacker if you miss it.

Just gotta keep it in front of you, not make any big numbers and try to make as many low ones as you can.

Q. If there was one shot each of you, one shot you could take back, what would you do differently? Which hole would it be?

JOE PAVELSKI: Number 12, par-3. I would have hit it on the green.

MARDY FISH: Take back the second shot on 18. I'd rather hit it in the hole. (Laughter).

Q. Did you guys see the planes come over today?

MARDY FISH: We stopped. I tried to get in front of it, and I hit a 3-wood and it was like, I'm up on number 9, and it was 11:58. My buddy caddying for me said, the flyover's coming. Just let me get right in front of it. I'm just going to hit it real quick. It was like my worst drive of the day. Hit it into the trees.

But it was cool. We didn't hear the Anthem. Was it on 17? I was trying to figure out how we were going to hear that.

Q. You two are paired with Annika for the final group tomorrow. For you two, you talked about the preparations going into tomorrow. Playing with Annika tomorrow, who has been in this position so many times in her career, how cool is it going to be for you two to play with her in the final grouping tomorrow?

JOE PAVELSKI: I've always enjoyed playing with Annika. We come out here, the setup is first class. You feel you're in a tournament. You play with Annika. You watch her short game, watch her warm up. You see some of the shots she hits, the speeds on her putt, you know she's a professional. You know she's been through it.

It's been fun to watch and play with her. And listening to her speak earlier, she has a lot of confidence. Seems like her game came around today. And yesterday it sounded like it was there too but she just didn't make any putts. So she's going to be tough tomorrow. It's going to be more about what you can do and not worry too much about them and go try to put up a number.

MARDY FISH: She's the greatest female golfer of all time. The cool part about these tournaments and these events is you get to spend a lot of time with people that you've sort of watched and looked up to. I'm a huge golf fan, both on the LPGA and PGA and LIV. It's sort of surreal to get to play with someone like Annika.

We go down to Orlando in the beginning of the year and get to play with the LPGA girls. And it's just fascinating to watch them play and how they play and how they get it into the hole so much quicker than we do.

Just getting to know Annika and Mike, her husband, and her kids, just awesome people, awesome family, and I really enjoy playing with her.

I haven't played with her a ton. Obviously see her a bunch and always want to play. Always want to play with her. She had, from 120 and in, she was maybe one of the best ever, male or female.

So getting to watch that, being able to be a part of that and



be in the same group and stuff is really exciting for us.

Q. You guys have played here for several years, also at the Hilton Grand Vacations. There's a lot of young boys and girls that are out here this week. They want to see their idols, but they want to see their idols play golf. This week is introducing the game of golf to a lot of young boys and girls that might not ordinarily have the opportunity to do that through another sport, lack of a better term, with all your different sports, this is what you guys do is kind of give back. But how cool is that to where you're giving back to a game that's your passion, not your profession, here at the tournament this week?

JOE PAVELSKI: I think it's special. Sports in general, whether basketball, football, hockey, baseball, golf.

MARDY FISH: Tennis.

JOE PAVELSKI: Tennis. Table tennis. Everything. Sport gives you so much. For me, I've met so many people in my life from it. So much has come from it. And golf is a sport that I love, everyone out here loves, that's why we're doing it. Hopefully this game, they have an opportunity and someone else will fall in love with it as well.

MARDY FISH: Golf is an awesome life skill. You get to create a lot of relationships and friendships and fellowship throughout the years on the golf course. I mean, so many awesome friendships through the game of golf. Highly, highly suggest getting your little ones or starting or starting at all at any age, it's just a phenomenal life game. You can play it forever.

It will piss you off to no end, but we're obsessed and can't wait to play again tomorrow.

Q. Mardy, you won two years ago. Joe, last year you won. Could you guys speak to the McGuire Sammy Sosa-esque competitive rivalry here at the Edgewood Tahoe resort?

MARDY FISH: There's too many good players for that. We haven't -- it's not like it's been back and forth, back and forth. Look, there's a lot of awesome players. There's a lot of players that more so now than I feel like in the last few years, certainly that you sort of look at when you're done with your round. I try not to look at the scoreboard too much in the first couple rounds because it doesn't really matter.

But there are more guys and gals that you'll look up and see how they're playing this year, it seems like, than maybe any other year.

But probably the first one that I'll look to see how he played, if I'm not in his group, is Joe. And just to see if we're still in striking distance, because he's a phenomenal player.

His game suits this golf course so well. It will be fun tomorrow for sure.

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, I mean, it is a funny analogy. The best home run hitters ever, just about. And you and me. Trying to break par. He made the perfect comment as far as like round's over and I'm checking to see what Mardy did.

Tomorrow we're going to be kind of keeping an eye on Steph, make sure he's not going off. There's some good players out there and you can see it. You can get it going out there.

If you get confidence with that putter, you're going to get plenty of looks, if you're hitting it good. There's a lot that can happen tomorrow.

MARDY FISH: A lot of points at the end, too. You never know. You're never out of it.

Q. Joe, do the birthday plans change at all tonight?

MARDY FISH: Congratulations on being born, Joe. (Laughter).

JOE PAVELSKI: Not really, we're going to go check out Bruchetta tonight, have a nice dinner and see what the rest of the night brings.

MARDY FISH: He'll be out late. He's a hockey player.

Q. Annika is what 72 victories in this country, 96 overall or whatever. I know you guys hit the ball farther than she does and you've been able to beat her the last couple of years. Do you think --

MARDY FISH: Are you sure he hits it further than her?

Q. Okay. Is there any intimidation factor with her career when you think about going up against her in the final round and she's in striking distance?

MARDY FISH: I heard her talk about she likes being in this position, likes being in the final group. Actually thrives on it. I'd be shocked if she said the opposite, right? You don't win that many times and put yourself in position to win that many times without seeking it, without craving it.



I can just go back to telling you golf is such an individual sport. Tennis is such an individual sport as well. I can kind of go back to put myself in the final of a tournament, and it's obsessive. I did it something like 26 times or something like that and didn't win as many as I wanted to, but it's a pretty fun spot to be in.

There's similar being in the final group of a tournament or something like that, I feel like. She certainly knows how to close. The only thing that we have is that she hasn't won one of these. So that's kind of what we have to sort of think about or what she has to think about, I guess.

But it's the fun part about golf. There's nothing I can do about him playing well or not playing well. In our sports, we could -- in tennis, specifically, I had a say in how the other person played or the way that they played or the style that they played or the style that I played, or whatever.

It's like I'm going tomorrow to play against myself and against the golf course and to see where we stand after, I don't know, 12, 13, 14 holes, kind of like this is where we all stand and we'll kind of then sort of figure it out there.

JOE PAVELSKI: He gave a great answer. We're all trying to be in this final group and making the turn, staying around 10, having an opportunity to have a good back nine and win this thing. And she's no different. And we're in a position right now going in --

MARDY FISH: We're all competitive. We all did something at a really high level, most of us, in sports. So we're familiar with the pressure as well.

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