

American Century Championship

Friday, July 8, 2022

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Annika Sörenstam

Tony Romo

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Nice finish on 18 with the birdie, one behind is Mr. Tony Romo. Great to have you both in the meeting room. Annika, take us through your round. Are you tired of Tony, been with him all day.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: It's great to be here. Thanks to American Century for hosting this tournament. This is one of the highlights of the summer. The fans were great. My pairings, I'm happy with my pairings, nice guys, obviously Tony and Larry, just fantastic gentlemen out there.

I think we had a good time. Overall the course played a little tougher this year. The greens are a little more tricky, I think. But overall my game, it was a little mixed bag. I hit some really good shots. Missed a few on the par 3s. I think the par 3s got me in the bunker and didn't make up-and-down.

But obviously it feels good to finish with a birdie, makes lunch feel better, and three points is a lot more than one, so I'll take it.

Q. Tony, how about your round today. We heard the course is tough. We haven't had a crazy score yet. It's early. Looked like the conditions are difficult?

TONY ROMO: They are. I feel like the fairways aren't necessarily running out a ton. So it plays a little longer. And the greens are tricky, like she said. Even when you hit a really good putt, you can go five holes and feel like on different courses you'd make three or four of them and you're 0-for-5 or 1-for-5 at best. The reads, the pacing, you have to match it perfectly.

There's no putt that's just here it is, it's a ball out., go ahead. If it's a ball out, you have to have the exact pace to match that. Kudos to the team here at Edgewood. They've done an incredible job. It's in pristine condition.

It's fun. I like it because the wind picks up a little bit, and now all of a sudden you've got to control your ball a little better, and that separates the players who really can go on and win this thing over the weekend.

I thought it was a good test of golf today. It was fun playing with our group. It was a great group.

Q. You guys are used to being up, you're used to, one, being in the media room and, two, because you're playing good golf. We see Mulder jumped up in the lead. Birdied the 18. You have some familiar faces, what's that mean to you, Annika? You've been with these guys. You've got to play the same tees as these guys, you're hanging there with them?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I think it's fair. And obviously I don't hit it as far as them. I'm trying to hit fairways and greens. The holes where I had a good birdie chance I was able to capitalize on it.

Tomorrow I'm going to go out there and play my own game. That's all I can do. And hopefully improve a little bit from today.

Again, like Tony said, the wind on the last few makes it a little tricky. Have to get good ball control, and obviously on the speed of the greens it might dry them out a little bit. But I know that I have to put my foot on the gas to have a chance.

These guys are, as you know, very good players. They're fantastic in their own sports and their own industry, but many of them are very good golfers. I've just got to go out there play as hard as I can and see what happens.

Q. Tony, you mentioned on the way you might have left a few out there on the putting green, whatnot. As far as where your game is right now, how confident are you?

TONY ROMO: One of those is you adjust as the week goes along. One of the questions yesterday was just I improve each day. Sometimes out here. Last year I did. A lot of that is when you go into a tournament, sometimes



you're over-reading or you're under-reading or things like that in general.

If you're in a Bermuda course that has a lot of grain or something, as the ball dies it starts to rip. And here it's different. It's going to play it through the break more often. I think today I still played it to continue to die. And so tomorrow I'll adjust that.

And I had a lot of opportunities. I got up there pretty close to the green on a handful of holes that I got nothing out of.

I made six pars from probably 30 yards in, if not -- maybe eight, to be honest with you.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: You did. I wish I would have been there.

TONY ROMO: Even if I get half of those tomorrow we'll be okay. So a good number is coming, I think.

Q. Did you think that looking around at the gallery today, on a Friday afternoon, we're looking at some big numbers looks like this year. It's been a couple of years obviously when we had COVID and had no one here, and last year we had to have limited. What's that feel like out there? Did you see a noticeable difference, feel a noticeable difference?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I think so. It's nice that we're back to somewhat normal. People love this tournament. People love Lake Tahoe this time of year, combining it with July 4th that was just a few days ago I think it's a perfect spot to be.

The crowds is really what makes this tournament, I think. More things are happening now in the front nine. Used to be just 17 and 18. Now it's like I feel like on every hole there's something happening.

But that's what makes it fun. We have a lot of friends and family out there. It's obviously the golf is important. We focus as much as we can inside the ropes. But it really is a party atmosphere. The evenings with activities they have here, they do an excellent job.

We want the people. We want the fans. We want the loudness. It's what makes this tournament the way it is.

Q. Speaking of activities, you've got a busy schedule ahead of you over the next few weeks, don't you?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I do. I was talking to Tony, I think his schedule is even more hectic. I think he's playing more golf than I am. He's going from one place to another.

You're right. I'm heading to Michigan for the Dow next week, I'm partnering up with Madelene Sagström, another Swede, and then heading to Minnesota for a few days, and then I'll play in the LPGA Senior Championship in Kansas.

Yes, this is the beginning of three tournaments in a row, which I can't remember when I played three tournaments in a row. Hopefully I make it.

TONY ROMO: I'm going out on a limb after watching her and saying I bet she'll be there at the top at the end of that LPGA Championship.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I hope you're right.

Q. How about a shout out to your caddie?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Thank you, sweetie. I won't tell you what I told him on 17, but gave him the thumbs up on 18.

Q. I don't know that much about golf, but I can look at statistics. And last year, Annika, you finished the first round in fourth place with 23 points. You were ahead now third place, a position better with 18. Looks like the leaders shot a little less this year in the first round. And the other thing I pointed out with Tony yesterday, of the last top five finishers last year, no one closed except for Tony, only one to improve his score the first three days. Is there more going on, more people in the audience, in the gallery, to change your dynamics, your thinking, the weather, the greens, the fairways, what the hell is going on out there that people aren't shooting as well?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I think the course is a little tougher. You can see that because there's really nobody that made a ton of birdies. Sometimes -- I mean, wasn't it one year that Mardy made ten birdies or something like that.

You didn't see that today. The greens are tricky. I think they're faster. I think several of the holes we played, if you're a little bit on the side or a little past, you just can't be aggressive. Then I think you play more conservative and take a par.

So I think that's where you won't see as many points today. Who knows if it's not as windy tomorrow, if the greens slow down a little bit, you might see players being aggressive, firing at the pins a little more.

As far as golf goes, I love having the people here, but I have to hit one shot at a time, focus on my game. If you

play golf, some days are just the way it is. You just do the best out of it.

I tried today. Left maybe a few out there. But overall, quite happy. But like Tony said, if you can improve every day, that's probably the best thing that can happen.

Q. Why do you hit from the men's tees and not the ladies tees? Would your score be better if you did?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Would my score be better if I was more forward?

TONY ROMO: If you played 30 yards --

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Because I'm a professional golfer I think that's the way they take the distance with what I do for a living. I don't do it much for a living anymore. Make it more fair.

Q. Greatest female player in history. She can handle it. Tony, any follow-up?

TONY ROMO: I agree with everything that she says. I'm glad she's playing from our tees. I think it's great. The best comment is this: Until you play this course, in these conditions, with the setup it is, you're more defensive putting than almost on any other tournament courses that you play. It truly is one of the most defensive putting tournaments you go in all year.

So if you're rolling them in, you're hitting them close or have a break or two. But she hit 10 good putts that didn't go in but could have, but it's not -- it's almost out of your control. But you don't have these 12-footers that are right-edge. Everything is very subtle and very difficult, and it's very quick.

So it's hard to make six, seven, eight birdies out there, five. That's why I honestly feel like whoever plays the par-5s the best, those are the ones where I did a poor job today, just hit them in, 2-putt, and that would be hopefully what I do better tomorrow because the rest of it is tough.

Q. You play in a lot of golf tournaments. Was this always how you imagined what you would be doing post-football, that you'd always want to golf? Is it just kind of going like between that and doing broadcasting about as ideally as you could ask for?

TONY ROMO: The good Lord has blessed me. I'm not complaining, I'll tell you that. I'm very blessed. I've got three young boys, and we have an incredible time at home. I feel it's like the greatest time periods of my life. I have a wonderful wife who is just amazing, and I'm thankful that I

met her. And I love golf. I love competing.

For me to be able to still compete at something that I'm passionate about and trying to improve on and then still be involved in football, which I played my whole life, basically, in a lot of ways, and study it, it's just -- I feel very fortunate.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports