

# AIG Women's Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

## Anna Nordqvist



OLIVIA McMILLAN: Welcome to the AIG Women's Open. We are joined by our defending champion, Anna Nordqvist.

Anna, thank you so much joining us. Welcome to Muirfield. What are your first impressions?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I got to play nine holes yesterday, the back nine. It was a little bit less windy than it is today, so I would say it's going to be a challenge but I think it's an amazing venue.

I've never been here before. I think it's going to be a true British Open, so to say, with the conditions. But so far, I'm really impressed with the venue and all the setup and it just really feels like a major with the atmosphere and everything.

**Q. How special is it to walk into the championship as the defending champion, your face is everywhere. Is there extra excitement arriving this week?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: It's obviously a very special honour, if someone would have said when I as a young girl that I would one day win the AIG Women's Open, I probably would have told them they were crazy. It's probably the biggest childhood dream I've ever had, especially being from Europe.

So it is very special. I'm going to embrace the opportunity teeing up on the first hole being announced as the defending champion. It's been a huge honour having the trophy and getting to share it with my friends and family for the last year.

Half of the time I'm probably still pinching myself that I went through to win because for me, I don't think it could have been a more special place than Carnoustie.

**Q. Can you talk about coming here for the first time? Was it the "wow" factor you were expecting? And last night, the we reception for the players, what were your thoughts?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, obviously I've heard a lot about Muirfield. I know the guys have played here over the

years, so I think it's an amazing opportunity for us to have Muirfield added to our Open rotation.

It's pretty cool seeing the pictures. I've been looking forward to this week for a long time. It's one of my favourite weeks out of the year. I've had a lot of special memories playing the British Open over the years starting in 2007 when I qualified, Monday qualified as an amateur into St Andrews.

Just have a lot of good memories, so I think coming in through the gate, saw my picture, it's the first picture you see, obviously it still feels pretty surreal to have my name on the trophy. It's just a very proud accomplishment.

It was quite a long day for me with some media things, and I tried to get out to play the back nine. Obviously this is my fourth week on the road so I did not make the dinner, the function last night.

But I think it's amazing to be here, and I think even last year, coming off COVID, that was really the first event where we started having a lot of spectators and the setup. This is the atmosphere and the conditions that we all love, and it just feels really special coming through the gates.

**Q. Did you think the back nine is a different challenging to Carnoustie, more elevation on that back nine?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: I thought the back nine was great. Just tried to see it and tried to figure out what bunkers to stay out. It was a little bit windy yesterday but nothing like today. I think what's cool about it is the holes go in all different directions, and you're going to have to deal with wind in all different directions. I kind of like that challenge, having to challenge some bunkers or having to maybe aim in the thick rough and letting the wind play a part of it.

So I love this kind of game and I really embrace every time I come back to Scotland and getting to play links golf.

**Q. Speaking to Gemma Dryburgh the other day. She said as a Scot, suddenly going to the LPGA Tour, she felt a little bit nervous about starting out in that company. Now for you, a Norwegian person, that must have been huge when you suddenly went from home**



## to America to play on the pro tour?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so I'm born and raised in Sweden, and I didn't start until I was 13. So I was a little later than normal. I found my way into the national team finally when I was 17. My first event was actually the Girls' British Open in 2004, so a couple years ago.

Just through the national team, I had some opportunity to play some in Europe, and getting to meet some college coaches, so I think that's when my dream started wanting to go to the U.S. I ended up going to Arizona State University and that was an amazing opportunity. I would not be where I am today without their support and finding that place because it was the perfect place for me.

So I always wanted to give it a shot and see if I can play professionally. I do think it's a lot easier going through college than coming out on tour than maybe some girls turning pro early or staying in Europe and trying to make the step to the U.S.

I think the goal, everyone knows the golf, but I think it's learn the culture and figure out the place where you feel like home over there.

I moved to Florida for a good eight, nine years and just never felt like home. Now that I'm back in Arizona, kind of back to my roots, I love being back there. LPGA Tour has been amazing and it's been a good challenge over the year. The competition is really strong so it keeps pushing you, wanting to get better. It's just not -- it's not easy because everyone is so good these days. It's not like you can just show up a week and expect to make the cut.

Certainly it's hard winning out there because everyone is so good, so you're really going to have to put in four really solid rounds. Before last year, I had not won for four years. Wasn't in contention. It's just hard to pull through and winning, so when you do, it's just so special, and I think, you know, I'm 35. I've been out on tour for a while but I'm still motivated, and I think it's those moments where you actually beat the challenge or you work so hard for something for so long, you finally come through. Those are the moments that makes it all worthwhile.

Hopefully I have got a few good couple more years in me. But being in the US and being challenged by the best golfers in the world week-in and week-out has been really something that has grown me as a person and as a player over the years.

**Q. Sorry, I'm always confusing Norwegian, Swedish. Could you tell just say, do your coaches as an amateur go and look at the setup in America so they tell you,**

## they know which places, which universities you should head for?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think coaches that you have growing up are supportive. What's help for me as a Swede, I went to Arizona State universe city and there's been a couple good golfers since I've left that's gone there as well.

Certainly Arizona State, Oklahoma State, there's been a few schools that's had really good programs that a lot of Swedes over the years, they have enjoyed their experience and it's helped them grow the game. Just having grass 11 months out of the year is something we were not spoiled with growing up obviously.

But I think also coming from Sweden and only having like April through September, you're very motivated and you have to work really hard and you have to be very dedicated in the winter. I remember standing out in November, December, January, having my own balls and going out with a couple extra gloves and a couple extra sweaters and just beating balls on the range because I just wanted to see the ball fly. We didn't have simulators and TrackMan and all those things.

You have to be creative and I think that's what's toughened me up over the years and that's probably where I love tough challenges, too, because it's kind of what I've developed through over the years.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: While we are on your amateur career, you are one of two players to have won the Girls' Amateur Championship and the Women's Amateur Championship and the AIG British Open. Is that special to you to have a piece of that history?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Absolutely. I mean, it's obviously a very proud accomplishment. I thought it was very thoughtful to bring all the trophies yesterday. I obviously haven't seen the girls British Open since 2005 when I won at West Hill, and then the British Open when I won in 2008, actually, at North Berwick, so not too far away from here.

Yeah, it was really cool, and knowing that I have the first two, you obviously think about, oh, how cool would it be to have the real trophy, too. So what I did last year, it was very special, and then obviously when I found out I was going to be reunited with the trophy, it was going to be even pre special.

I love these events and obviously been fortunate to play in them since two though four. I played the British Amateur, and was in the final three years in a row before I won. So they are just very special to me, and I think over the years,



I've been very fortunate through those championships being able to play a lot of links golf and a lot of golf in the U.K. They are so well run, and it feels very special. And I think that's what made it feel even more special last year winning the trophy, knowing that those championships have meant so much to me over the years.

**Q. This event is taking place on the back of a football triumph south of the border. How much of a boost do you think that can be for women's sport across the board, not just football?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: Are you referring to as far as the Europe...

**Q. The Lionesses.**

ANNA NORDQVIST: The fact that England won (laughter).

It's just exciting to see that I think women's sport over the world is getting more attention. I followed quite a bit until we lost against England in I think the semifinals. It's awesome. I heard there was -- it was quite a big event, the way they were hosting it and the TV times. I think that's very important.

I think our tee times is getting better, too. A lot of times, we tee off early is because we have to kind of go after the guys schedule. But I think it's getting better for us, too. It's just nice to see attention for the women's golf because I think there's so many good women athletes all over the world.

I love following other sports. I got to meet Ana Ivanovic for the first time at Evian a couple weeks ago, and I've always been a huge fan, so that was a huge moment, meeting her as a person. She had just picked up golf and she tried to refer golf, like how it was compared to tennis.

Yeah, every time I get to meet another female athlete, I think it's an amazing opportunity because I really admire and I understand the hard work that's being put on behind the scenes. Certainly was great to see a great turnout for the soccer for the football no matter who the champion was because I know we Scots -- well American/Scottish guys, so I know the battle with England is quite harsh at times.

**Q. Did you say you're 34?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: 35 years old.

**Q. That's still young for a lot of us. There's a lot of cool things about becoming the Women's Open Champion but what's been one of the coolest perks or**

**coolest moments about being the Women's Open Champion?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, it's pretty cool, like obviously getting to keep the trophy for a year. A lot of people have enjoyed -- I'm not a big drinker but a lot of people enjoyed to drink out of it.

I think just the coolest thing for me was to win at Carnoustie, knowing my husband's ten, 15 minutes away, that's where he grew up. Doing it at Carnoustie, I got to come back there a couple weeks ago. We played 15 holes. It was a two-ball wait on 16, and it was already 9.30 at night and we kind of gave up.

I think it's just knowing huh hard I worked and for that childhood dream to come true after so many years, but being defending champion this week is going to be very special.

**Q. How was the walk into this championship this week as defending champion? Did that feel pretty cool?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, I think I'm pretty down-to-earth and I think I'm just very grateful and very appreciative of all the things that golf has given me over the years. Cool to see your pictures, but again, like being reunited with those trophies, knowing how much the championships has meant to me, my family over the years. It's just a special feeling and I think it makes you realise, you look back on all of the things you've done over the years and how much you've practised and see all that come together.

It's just being very proud. I don't feel like I have any pressure on me this week. I'm not trying to prove anything. I'm just trying to enjoy myself.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: I think that's it, Anna. It's been a pleasure having you as our champion for the past year. We wish you the best of luck in your title defence. Thanks very much.

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