

NW Arkansas Championship

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Andrea Lee

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started here. Welcome inside the media center at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G.

Here with our latest LPGA winner, our ninth Rolex first-time winner of the season, Andrea Lee. Andrea, I know it's been a whirlwind getting from Portland to here, winning on Sunday and everything that comes with that.

Just how excited are you to finally have that win under your belt?

ANDREA LEE: Super excited. I mean, I still can't really believe it. I think it's still sinking in. But it was definitely one of my goals this year in the latter half of the season, and to have accomplished that, it's just so special and means so much to me.

THE MODERATOR: Saw a really emotional moment with your dad, a lot of emotion in general. Like you said, it had been a long time coming at this point. What were some of the emotions that you were feeling, and now that you've had time to process, what are you feeling now?

ANDREA LEE: Just getting ready for another week to be honest. I think after I get back and finally go home this Sunday I can kind of step back and just relax a little bit, spend time with the family, celebrate with my mom who wasn't there on Sunday.

So I'm just excited to be able to get some down time and look back and reflect on just what a crazy season it's been really.

So just really grateful.

THE MODERATOR: And it was a long -- not a long time coming -- no surprise. I feel like it was always coming this year. You had three other Top 10s; you were playing some good golf before that week to finish T5 at Cincinnati.

Couple Top 15s in majors. What clicked last week? What was hitting a little bit different last week that really helped



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you to that victory?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, the crazy thing was that I shot even the first round, and I hit 16 greens that day and it was just so frustrating because I felt like there was a cap on the hole and I couldn't make anything.

Drew, my caddie, he said, they'll drop, don't worry. You're hitting great. Just keep plugging along.

Second round I shot 8-under so I was like, oh, okay, maybe something is clicking. The game felt really good and was just hitting to many fairway and hitting greens, playing really smart golf. Made all those putts on second day, which gave me a lot of confidence going into the weekend.

Yeah, just a whirlwind what happened, especially on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: How did you stay patient? Obviously having a lot of close calls; I talked to after Palos Verdes, that was a close one, being at the club that you're honorary member at. How did you tell yourself, hey, it's going to come; I'm going to stay patient and let it come when it comes?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, after all the solid golf that I had been playing I think I was getting a little bit anxious to keep playing well, and trying to get that first win in Canada and then in Toledo I think I was just playing kind of anxious golf a little bit; getting a little ahead of myself and trying to expect that I'm going to continue to play great golf and that the win will come.

Yeah, I think I was just getting a little too far ahead, so I just decided to slow it down after Toledo. Cincinnati, had a really good week there; T5 like you said.

Then, yeah, the week in Portland last week, just everything clicked together and I stayed super patient, especially the final round after being 2-over through three holes. Just told myself to keep going, and no matter what happens, it's just another great opportunity to be in contention and another great experience.

But luckily it went my way.

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THE MODERATOR: It's not your only win this year. Won on the Epson Tour back earlier this season. What kind of confidence did that give you? I think that's when the switch seemed it flip for you.

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, after last year, I keep saying this, but I had a really tough year and I struggled a lot. That win on the Epson Tour really helped with my confidence when I really doubted myself, can I even win on the professional circuit.

From then on, yeah, it was not smooth sailing, but just, yeah, I gained so much confidence from that. Had a lot of good finishes on the LPGA and got my full status back, which I didn't expect at the beginning of the year.

Yeah, just been wild for what's been happening this year.

THE MODERATOR: Now that you have the win under your belt, we're here in Arkansas. Have you been out here before, played in this event? If you have, and saw the golf course today with the pro-am, what did you think of Pinnacle?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, this is my third time. I played in 2020 when Austin won, and last year -- don't have the best track record to be honest here, but hopefully that will change this week. I really like the golf course. It's always in great shape. The greens are really nice.

There are some tricky holes out here where you have to play smart and maybe not hit driver off the tee, but for the most part everything is pretty in front of you. It's definitely a birdie barrage out there. The winner always shoots at least 16, 17-under for three days, which is pretty crazy. So it feels like for more of a spring this week than a marathon, which is usually what it is.

Yeah, just going to try and go out there and have the same game plan that I've been having.

Q. Just kind of now that the win is under your belt, you've played such good golf, how much is the Solheim on your mind? And to make that team next year, what would that mean to you?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, it's definitely been one of my huge goals after I turned professional. It would be the biggest honor to represent the USA at the highest level on the Solheim Cup team. I've played Junior Ryder Cups, Junior Solheim Cups, the Curtis Cup, and every time it's just such a special experience being able to represent your country.

You know, I watched the Solheim Cup every single year, and last year, too, and, yeah, it's always been a huge

dream of mine to be on a Solheim Cup team.

So definitely thinking about that, but I know we still have a year left and a lot can happen. Hopefully I can keep playing solid golf until then.

Q. Are there any specific memories from your time in team competition or from watching the Solheim that really stick out to you that you may want to emulate next year, try to emulate?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, definitely. I mean, you just never know what's going to happen with team events. They're all match play, and foursomes is not really a format that we usually play here in the states.

It's so fun. I have so many fond memories of playing for the U.S. and watching the Solheim Cup growing up. I think one of the standout years was -- I can't remember which year exactly, but Juli Inkster was the captain of the Solheim Cup team and they had a huge comeback on the last day.

Just things like that, stories like that are something that you dream about, and you hope to be able to be a part of the team that wins at the end of the day. So hopefully I'll be able to make a team and create memories of my own at a Solheim Cup.

Q. To have the opportunity to play under somebody like Stacy Lewis, who has been such a stalwart in the U.S. golf world for so long and been an inspiration to a lot of the younger Americans that have come up, what would that mean?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, it would mean so much to play under Stacy. I've looked up to her every since I was a junior golfer. She was No. 1 in the world and she's had her battles with scoliosis and she's just such a fighter.

I don't think you would really know unless you played with her on the golf course that she's kind of feisty and has that attitude. She's, like I said, just a fighter, and it would just mean so much to be able to have her as my captain on the Solheim Cup team.

So hopefully that will happen.

Q. Just going to switch gears a little bit. When you're kind of looking at your game or really working on your game, how much are you looking at the statistics and like how much are you relying on those numbers to tell you what you need to work on?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I definitely look at my stats every week, where was I in driving accuracy, greens hit. Mostly I



look at the short game statistics, how many percent did I get up and down and what do my sand saves look like and how many putts did I average during that week.

I think that helps me build off what I need to work on for the next tournament. Yeah, like I said, I've just been playing really solid and steady golf lately, and I'm not really looking to change anything. Just kind of still sharpen the edges on what I need to work on.

Q. Looking ahead, last few events of the season. You've got a win under your belt; played some solid golf this year. I think a lot of people may shift their goals a little bit when they do finally get a win. I was talking to Ally, and she was like, I'm just calmed down now. What are some of your goals now that you have that win under your belt, you've played such solid golf as you look ahead to the next few events?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, probably just staying consistent and continuing to play good golf hopefully. Another win or two would be really, really nice to cap off the season, but I'm not going to get too greedy.

Just going to keep doing what I've been doing and stay patient and see what happens out there. I'm really looking forward to the final stretch. I've never played in Korea before, so I'm really excited for that. And then the CME, which I played in 2020, and really looking forward to that.

So, yeah, I mean, I have a lot of goals, especially for next year, but for this year, just having a solid end to the season basically is what would be nice.

Q. And then, again, with not very many events left, it's been a long year. How have you managed your energy? Winning takes a lot out of you. How have you learned to manage your energy with all these events on the calendar?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, this is my fifth week in a row, which is definitely my cap I think. I've been taking it easy. Monday when I got in I didn't do anything, and then yesterday, Tuesday, I literally just came out and hit some balls and putted a little bit, but didn't go on the golf course, because today I had the 18 hole pro-am.

Yeah, just trying to conserve my energy because I definitely feel a little fatigued, especially after last week. I think just mentally and physically too. So I'm looking forward to a week off before the LA event.

I think five is my Max.

THE MODERATOR: That's a good number.

Q. One more from Bethan: So how long has Drew been on your bag, and how much has he helped you?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, Drew has been on my bag since -- I think our first event together was at Cognizant, in Founders in New Jersey. Yeah, he's been great. I think we work really well together. He's a veteran caddie. He's young, but he's been out here for ten years already, which is crazy.

But, yeah, he keeps me really calm out there and we joke around a lot trying to get the mind off of golf sometimes, which is really helpful.

And, yeah, I mean, he's been great and I'm really thankful for him to be a part of my team.

THE MODERATOR: And then I'm asking one fun final question of everybody. There is a big football game this weekend that's going to be taking place between Arkansas and Texas A&M. Considering where we are there is a very obvious answer, but who would you pick to win the football game?

ANDREA LEE: It I said Texas I probably get smacked right now. Arkansas, no, definitely.

THE MODERATOR: Any reason for that, or is it just because you're in Hog Country?

ANDREA LEE: Partly. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Good answer.

ANDREA LEE: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck this week. We're looking forward to it.

ANDREA LEE: Thank you.

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