

NW Arkansas Championship

Thursday, September 26, 2024

Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Stacy Lewis

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome back inside the media center at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G. Pleased to be joined by Stacy Lewis.

Stacy, this is the first time we've seen you Anne LPGA Tour event since Robert Trent Jones. What has the last week been like reflecting, looking back and hopefully recovering.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, you know, I don't think it really hit me until Monday morning leaving D.C. that it was over. A little bit sad the week was over. You know, obviously happy that we got the trophy, but, yeah, just been trying to get some rest and recover and respond to texts and emails.

Doing a little debrief of the week as well because I think we got to keep moving forward and keep trying to do things better. So kind of working through that right now. But looking forwards to this week and actually playing some golf myself.

Q. You talked about before Solheim that in 2023 you had that moment of reflection on the plane, all the work and everything that led to that moment.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

Q. Was there any plane reflection moment this time?

STACY LEWIS: Not yet. I don't think I'm quite there. I think still just going through a debriefing that happened because I want to get things set up for whoever is next.

You know, the captain stuff comes in the next few months probably, so I wanted to get through that. That's something I wanted to do with this, is to kind of create a blueprint, a little book that we pass along to the next captain, to the next staff member that's kind of helping, so there is more of a seamless transition if one captain to the next.

Q. To come back and make your first appearance at a

place that's so comfortable to you, you said the other day at the food bank that 18 years this tournament has been a part and you've been around for mostly every single one.

STACY LEWIS: All of them.

Q. What is it like to be back here for the 18th edition and looking back over the span of your career?

STACY LEWIS: Well, it made me feel really old when I heard 18 because that's how long I've been out of school. Time has flown by. Doesn't seem that long.

Really proud of this event and the fact it's been around for 18 years and continues to thrive. Just thankful for the way the community has supported it and kept it going.

Just what an opportunity it provides for the Razorbacks golf team and the golfers that have come out of there. A lot to be proud of this week. I think I played a couple nine-hole rounds but haven't played 18 holes since the British Open. Today will be a good run to get ready for tomorrow.

Q. There is a Razorback that gets a sponsor invite into the field. What do you hope to pass on to Razorbacks and have them learn from watching you?

STACY LEWIS: It just creates such a good opportunity to see where their game is, to stack it up against the best professionals, to get comfortable in this environment, to know where you go to register and how you go about doing things.

-- it helps tremendously with that transition from amateur golf to professional. You see it with Maria and Gaby, the way they came out of that pretty seamless.

There is not going to be one person every year. That's how hard this game is and how hard it is to get out here, the comfort level. And we usually try to get a few in through the qualifier too so they have opportunities.

Helps prepare them for the next level.

Q. The Golf Channel crawl last night they listed you as the winner of the 2007 tournament. Is it official now?



STACY LEWIS: I don't think they've given it to me yet in the record books, no. I do still have the trophy, so...

Q. Also, will you have input on the next captain of the Solheim Cup team?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, so it's a committee, but it's the last three captains on the U.S. side as well as a couple -- like our player president and a couple other staff members.

Essentially comes down to your past three captains are the ones that make that decision.

Q. And I know you haven't had probably too much time to think about this, but do you have a time frame in mind for how long you would like to play this tour?

STACY LEWIS: It's becoming shorter. After this week I'm not going to play the rest of the year. I just need a break. I need some time off.

I still have plenty of things to do. Trust me. I have sponsor obligations that I pushed off to do after Solheim. But just need some more time at home. I think that's kind of what next year will look like, too.

I still plan on playing, but I think the playing the three weeks in a row, my body just can't do that anymore. I'll be a little bit more selective with what I play for sure.

Q. You've accomplished so much in your career, can you talk to me about just this event, it means so much to you, you cherish your wins here and your desire to win here is probably still pretty high?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

Q. Been No. 1, you've won majors. But this event, there is probably still that strong desire there.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I mean, prior to winning in 2014 there was a lot of pressure of wanting to win here and wanting to get over that hump. It's really hard though. It's really hard to win any hometown event or anything where you have helped the event come to fruition.

A lot of that is just because the extra obligations that happen and the pressure you put on yourself. That win in 2014 is probably still one of the highlights of my career. I remember the putts to this day that I made on 15, 16, and 18, that finish there.

It's just really special. It's special to see the current players having the opportunities they have, and this tournament has been a big part of that.

Q. For sure. You said 18 kind of made you feel old a little bit. Can you talk to me about how I think it's kind of unique that this tournament has thrived with you. You won it is an amateur. As a professional.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

Q. Off the course you got married; you have a child.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

Q. The span of this tournament has really grown with you, and just the success, ya'll are kind of two both rise at the same time kind of thing.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, lots of life events here. We even did a fireworks celebration to find out if I was having a boy or girl.

That first year of the tournament with the rain-out, literally couldn't have ended in a better way for the event sure for the sponsors, for the community. Yes, did we want to play it and get it in.

But having your local Razorbacks unofficially get a win, it really started the tournament off on a great foot. It helped me progress in my career. I got the opportunity the next year to come play on sponsor invites.

Just the comfort level being in this area, so many friends here, so many sponsors, and people that have supported me. I have, I've grown up with this event. The event continues to grow with us, too.

Q. So those 18 years, sorry to say that number again.

STACY LEWIS: I know.

Q. Have you seen this tournament have an impact on the golf community in this region, specifically women's golf community?

STACY LEWIS: I'm probably not here enough to really say that, but I see it in the kids, the kids that come out. I mean, Brooke Matthews is a perfect example. When this tournament started she was one of those little kids running around and looks like she's now locked up her card for next year.

So you see it in the impact and the amount of kids out running around. The interest in women's golf at the college level, people want to come to Arkansas now. They know what we're doing here and what it's about. They want to come here and get better.



Q. Yesterday Lilia was talking about her strategic point there at the end. No one really said anything to her. As a captain, were you thinking to go say we really need this match?

STACY LEWIS: I think they all knew, especially from Spain, that we had to get to 14 and a half. Lilia, she's one of those players that she likes to be left alone. She doesn't need a rah-rah cheerleader. She didn't need somebody walking with her to chitchat about the day.

Like myself, she just likes to do it herself. I just stayed away and let her do her thing there on 18. There was a big ole scoreboard there so I think she knew exactly what she needed to do.

Q. When you finish playing, is coaching something you like to do?

STACY LEWIS: I don't know. Probably not to be honest. I've seen what my husband goes through at the college level with NIL and everything that's going on. But I do see staying in the game of women's golf and figuring out a way to continue to move this tour forward.

You know, what's going on in women's sports right now is pretty tremendous. We need to do a better job taking advantage of that and rising with these other leagues right now.

Q. One more on the golf course. How has the golf course changed in the 18 years?

STACY LEWIS: It's gotten longer for me. I don't know if that's just a product of getting older, but you know, really hasn't changed a ton. Some years it's -- again, it's pretty soft this year like it has been the last few.

I think everybody now knows you just got to go make a bunch of birdies. That's really what wins it here. It's a sprint, a three-day sprint.

But really hasn't changed much over the years. Given what this golf course and community has gone through with the weather and then the drainage, sewage issues, pipes they had to replace this year, the golf course is in really good shape this year.

Q. On the community aspect, talking about the food bank couple days ago. When you're traveling on tour there is a lot of these events, but you don't have too many where you have 15+ LPGA players.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

Q. Talk about that from a player's standpoint and a community aspect because it's so close to your heart.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, so I had heard rave reviews of this food bank so I was excited to go see it. The facility is amazing. Having Tyson and Walmart and the companies that you have in this area to support it was pretty amazing.

And then to have all those players show up, they get it. They get, yes, we're playing professional golf and trying to win tournaments, but these events are about the community and giving back.

That's why the communities continue to support us, is because of that giving back aspect. So it was a lot of fun. We kind of worked an assembly line of putting boxes together. They made us stop at one point. I guess we were getting kicked out.

But we had made almost -- Megan was there. Almost 3,000 and all the players were like, typical athletes, why can't we go to 3000? They wanted to keep going, doing more.

So it was a lot of fun. Hopefully inspired some people to go do it on their own too.

THE MODERATOR: 2,794 I think was the number.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, why we stopped, I don't know.

Q. Stacy, you mentioned analytics, big topic of discussion at Solheim Cup. Do you use analytics preparing for an event like this week?

STACY LEWIS: Yes and no. Not to the extent. You know, there is so much strategy that went into Solheim and these pairings. There is really only so much you can learn about a golf course, especially one like that that I know so well.

I know what holes you need to take advantage of. I know what holes are going to play harder. So, yes and no. Solheim is definitely one where the stats were very high on my list.

Q. And did you ever think you would use analytics this much in golf?

STACY LEWIS: I mean, 20 years ago, no. The way things have progressed, yes. There is our much data and information available in our lives. Just became a natural progression. It adds to the experience of our viewers.



If we can get it to where -- similar to what the PGA TOUR has, where you as viewers can see exactly how far a putt is or what your make percentage is or how close you expect a player to hit a shot from 130 yards.

There is a lot to be learned in the game, and I think it can add a lot to the experience of those watching us.

Q. Do you see it as the future the golf where it will keep growing and growing?

STACY LEWIS: I do. I think it's a thing that becomes cheaper over time and becomes -- you're more capable of doing it as well.

That's something we're fighting right now, is the cost associated with having that data in real time.

Yeah, I mean, it's just the world, right? We're moving in that direction. That's why we have lasers at golf tournament. We do it all the time. It becomes a normal thing.

You know, you watch other sporting events now. You watch baseball, all these other -- hockey even -- and there is data and analytics into those experiences. So it's how do we continue to evolve it into golf.

Q. The news from yesterday with Ally Ewing, we've been asking -- Lilia was in as well and you've seen a lot over the last couple hours. You know what that's like for Ally. After spending so much time that you have spent with her, what did that announcement mean to you?

STACY LEWIS: Well, she did give me a little heads up, I would have to say. I did know it was coming. I just wish she would've got that point on Sunday a little Solheim even more after she told me that.

You know, I told her it was -- it's crazy how our careers have intersected. It was early on. She Monday qualified for the British and was looking for a place to stay. It was when we were at Kingsbarns and I was staying at the Dunvegan. Through other people somebody was looking for a room. I had an extra room, so she stayed with us that entire week.

Then I have to pull out of Gleneagles, Solheim, and she was my sub that came in and played for me. So it's just kind of crazy how your careers intersect. But I always knew with her there was a time frame for her. She was definitely not somebody that was going to play until 40.

Just amazing how she took advantage of that time. I

mean, she is probably playing some of her best golf right now, which is I think why the news is such a shock to a lot of people.

Wasn't a surprise to me, and I'm really happy for her. Excited to see what she does next.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports