

ShopRite LPGA Classic

Presented by Acer

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Galloway, New Jersey, USA

Seaview, A Dolce Hotel

Maja Stark

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Okay, welcome to the media center here at the 2025 ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer. Joined by our most recent winner and major champion, Maja Stark. Maja, welcome to ShopRite.

MAJA STARK: Thank you.

Q. First things first, can you summarize what the past couple days have been like for you as a recent major champion?

MAJA STARK: Feels like it hasn't hit yet. Feels pretty normal. I feel normal. It's just more work.

So I'm just still waiting. Obviously we've had a lot of fun and got celebrate a little bit, but I'm still waiting for it to settle in, waiting for it to just make me crash and just, yeah, start crying and sleeping a lot.

But I haven't been able to sleep really.

Q. Can you speak to any other fun ways you've been able to celebrate in particular? How does a major champion celebrate afterwards?

MAJA STARK: By signing autographs for about an hour and media for two. Yeah, it wasn't really until we got here that I got to start the celebrations really. Had the bottle the champagne in my room and I said to one of my friends, I've got one champagne bottle and two glasses; you want to come in and start celebrating?

Then we went to the pub here with a couple players and caddies and friends and stuff.

Q. Awesome. Any fun messages you received in the past couple days from anyone notable?

MAJA STARK: I think it was cool to see that Justin Rose was following along. Billie Jean King, got a message from her. Who else?

I'm sure there are a lot of cool people. I haven't gone through all of my messages yet.

Q. Do you still have a lot of messages on your phone on read?

MAJA STARK: Yeah. I'm trying to do iMessage first. Not done with that. Then just keep, you know.

Q. This week, first time here, what are your thoughts on this course? I heard you were looking for dining a little bit ago.

MAJA STARK: I'm excited. I think it's really nice that we get to stay on the course and the tournament setting us up here. That's super convenient.

I like the vibe here. I like that it's a seaside town. It feels kind of like home, pine trees and everything. The course really reminds me of courses at home so it's also really nice.

Yeah, was out there playing. It's in good shape, good condition. Yeah, I'm excited to get ready to go again on Friday.

Q. How do you balance the energy you're bringing into a new tournament, a new week? How do you balance those emotions?

MAJA STARK: I think that people have been telling me to take a couple days off and take it slow. I tried that and I was bored as hell. So I just thought, no, I got to do what I usually do and still enjoy all of last week and everything that came with that.

Just go back to normal more. And today in the pro-am I wasn't really that locked in until my -- there was a hole where the caddies got to hit as well, and my caddie just goes, if I hit it inside of you, I'm going to do like blah, blah, blah, blah.

I thought, okay, I got step up. I hit a 6-iron up to like 11 feet, and he saw that I can turn it on again. It's not just that



I'm trying to save energy or whatever here.

Q. How much time are you going to need to let your past success catch up to you in the present?

MAJA STARK: I have no idea. I'm still just waiting for it to hit. I don't know if it's going to or anything, but, yeah, I'm surprised and happy that everything feels the same.

Q. If TV can be believed, the announcers were saying that you prefer a tough course; single digit winner. That's not this course. What are your chances do you think this week?

MAJA STARK: I don't know. I don't want predict anything.

Q. (Regarding a birdiefest.)

MAJA STARK: I think I go in with a different mindset to those. I have better acceptance for mistakes during those weeks.

You know, now maybe I'll be good at making birdies.

Q. How aware are you that Swedish players have done really well here? Annika won here three times I believe. Does that not really -- have you not been here long enough?

MAJA STARK: I haven't really thought about that. Linnea's win last year was so much fun and I was following along on the leaderboard. She shot 11-under, she's going to win this. And then it was such a long wait, obviously longer for her than for us.

But no, it's really fun that Sweden had that much success here.

Q. Has it hit you yet? I guess it hasn't because of what you were saying. For the rest of your life no matter what you do you're always going to be introduced as the U.S. Women's Open champion. That's what many champions have said is the great thing. That's forever.

MAJA STARK: Obviously it's fun and I like that I won it, but I don't think I necessarily think too much about that.

I think that it's really weird. I think that it kind of puts like a separation now, like more between like you as a player and as a person, and I feel like I don't want anything to change but it feels like it's going to change.

So I'm just trying to mentally prepare for the fact that people are going to say -- maybe going to say like that's

the U.S. Women's Open champion, Maja Stark, and I'm just preparing to hear that instead of just, here is Maja Stark, she plays golf, you know.

Q. We seem to avoid talking about the money. \$2.4 million changes lives. I realize a U.S. Open is a major; \$2.4 million is pretty impressive, too.

MAJA STARK: Yeah, it's huge. It's really cool to see where women's golf has gotten. I think they said it was -- the purse was up \$4.5 million from just six, seven years ago. That's huge.

I'm fortunate to be in a position where I don't have to worry about the money. You know, if someone told me when I started out as a pro and I didn't have any money, one day you're going to win \$2.4 million, I would be over the moon. I'm lucky I've gotten to the point that's all secondary.

There was a point in my career and obviously in everyone career where you're so worried about money because this is your dream and you want to keep doing that. It all depends on do I have the funds to even do this.

Q. If you have evaluated your last round or performance throughout the U.S. Open, what impressed you the most about how you won?

MAJA STARK: I think during the whole week, I had my coaches there and I asked them for advice on tiny things which I usually don't do. I usually try to leave that to off weeks or weeks -- because I might struggle with something they can't help it -- can't fix it right then and there.

Last week I did ask because it just felt too important. I didn't want to lose the championship and think, man, I should have asked this. I'm really happy about the preparations and that I talked to the coaches and my sports psych and took the time to be honest with them and say, hey, I don't think I'm doing this right. Could you maybe check this little thing?

So try to take up I guess more of their time. Even though they're there to help me, you know, I don't want to be a burden on them.

Q. I'm sure you answered this on Sunday, but how much more meaning did it give, if any, the fact that Nelly was trying to catch you on Sunday and got really tight? After it's over and you look back and say, I beat Nelly, does that make it any -- or not really matter or is that more for us?

MAJA STARK: I think that's probably more media, you know. I think to us players she's obviously an amazing

player but she is just another player, so you don't really think about that. If it was Nelly or if it was Julia or Rio who is chasing, you know, you just know a person -- everyone is going to be chasing and that's just how it's going to be.

Obviously I didn't look at the leaderboards until 17. And Nelly knows how to do this. She's won major championships before. She has more routine than I do. Obviously I felt like she's not going to crumble. I have to play really well to win this.

Q. Congratulations.

MAJA STARK: Thank you.

Q. What I noticed watching the other day is you seemed to stay very focused mentally. Has this always been a strength of your game, that you're able to stay focused in tight situations like that?

MAJA STARK: It really depends. The other LPGA, the co-sanctioned one with the LET that I won, that time I didn't look at the leaderboards either. I managed to calm myself down when I felt like I was getting ahead of myself. I had a mantra that I said before every shot that just seemed to put me in the right position.

It was kind of the same last week, but I haven't really been able to do that any other times. So I think -- I don't think it's the focus part. I think it's I guess attention, what I pay attention to instead of just like just being -- staying focused. What does that mean? What are your actions when you say, I stayed focused, you know.

Q. Was there one point in the round or during the weekend that you really held things together? I'm thinking it was that last putt on Saturday perhaps.

MAJA STARK: Oh, no, I think it was the Sunday one, the one down the hill. It was super quick and I knew that I still needed to do everything properly and just kind of do the same things I had done earlier that round with the lag putts. Just trust that my body knew the speed and not try to force anything or change anything.

Q. Big congratulations. I read somewhere that when you arrived at this golf camp at the age of 14 you had a football under one arm and the a guitar under the other. You didn't want to identify as a golfer. Is this true? And when did you start seeing yourself as a golfer? When did you realize, wow, I might actually be good at this?

MAJA STARK: I think it was more just that, oh, it would be fun to bring a guitar and a football to camp, maybe more

than I don't want to be seen as a golfer. You know, it's weird. When I think of myself I don't think golfer. I think everything else that I like and this is just my job. You know, maybe you as a journalist don't think of yourself just as a journalist, and it's kind of the same for me.

I don't think I really realized that I was good at it until a few months after that camp and I won my first somewhat big competition at home in Sweden.

So, yeah, I didn't know what it took either. I didn't know anything back then really.

Q. I see. And which golf role models have inspired you the most throughout your career would you say?

MAJA STARK: I think Tiger. Generic answer, but, you know, no one has done with Tiger has done and just the way that he was able to run away with tournaments sometimes and he didn't play scared; he played smart and he would pull off the hero shots when he needed to.

I think that's really cool and that's the way I want to play. I want to play and have fun. Seemed like the easiest way to play sometimes for him would be to just chip it out into the fairway. The cool thing and the thing that everyone talks about when someone says Tiger is the amazing shots that he hit.

Q. So more Tiger than Annika?

MAJA STARK: See, I've never watched Annika play because she was done before I really started. I don't really know how she played.

Q. Okay. She was quite good I can tell you. But so are you.

MAJA STARK: I've heard.

Q. You're the first winner of the U.S. Open since Annika Sorenstam. How big is this for you? It's very big in Sweden I can tell you.

MAJA STARK: That's very cool. It hasn't sunk in yet. Obviously it's really cool, but I think since I was playing and it felt like, okay, this is another tournament that I'm playing and it just -- it didn't just happen, which -- I don't know. It's such a weird feeling for me, too.

It feels like I knew everything that had to be put into that whole week and how I -- all the preparations I had to do to play well. I think when I look at that week, I see what I did good. I didn't see the winning part.

Q. Okay. One last question: How do you see your future in golf? What are your goals following this victory?

MAJA STARK: I don't want predict stuff. Kind of prepared for everything, but I think that I know now that I actually can do it. Just knowing that and not doubting myself again and whether I can win a major championship or not and if I'm good enough. Those doubts are kind of gone, at least right now.

We'll see how it is in a couple years, if I don't play well.

But what was the other question?

Q. Not really. I'm just very impressed by you and congratulations and I wish you all the best. Thank you very much.

MAJA STARK: Thank you.

Q. One other fun question. Can you just speak to your caddie and his energy that he brings when he's carrying your bag. Saw some fun pictures of him after the round with flags.

MAJA STARK: Yeah, he's a hoot. He did such a good job, especially on Sunday since I didn't look at any leaderboards, and he was the same from the first hole until the 18th. You know, he never seemed to freak out. He is just a cool cucumber apparently during pressure, and I didn't know that because it was just our fourth week working together.

But, yeah, he was so good. He did so much homework before that week in preparations. He said that the first time that whole week -- he was there from Friday -- first time that he set an alarm after 6:00 in the morning was on the Friday when we had an afternoon tee time. He had been at the course just looking at other people playing all day every day.

Q. How did you two pair up?

MAJA STARK: How did we? Oh, I decided to -- well, me and my former caddie made a mutual decision we weren't going to work together anymore because we noticed that this isn't working and we're great friends. My old caddie said to me, I don't feel comfortable with this because I don't think I can help you as much as someone else could, and I don't feel good taking your money as your friend. We're still great friends. He was the one that gave me the biggest hug now that I got to this tournament.

And then, you know, word spreads fast and I told one

caddie that, hey, I'm looking for a new caddie. If you hear of anyone, send them my way. He knew Jeff was looking for a new player, so that's just how it happened.

Q. (Regarding name of...)

MAJA STARK: Colin Montgomery.

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