

The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

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Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, I'll go ahead and start us off. I am joined by two-time defending champion Nelly Korda. How does it feel to be back here at Pelican Golf Club?

NELLY KORDA: Feels nice. Obviously haven't been back since last year, so lots of memories, a lot of great memories.

And it's close to home so feels nice to drive to a tournament.

Q. You you mentioned it, but what are some of those core memories from '21 or '22 that stick out?

NELLY KORDA: I think obviously '22, just overcoming what I overcame that year, and then '21 coming off a great year, too.

It's always nice when family and friends are out here supporting me, and being so close to home and just feeling really good at a tournament.

Q. What is it about this course or the tournament itself that seems to bring out the best of your game?

NELLY KORDA: I don't know, but I hope it continues to happen. (Smiling.)

As I said, I think it kind of reminds me a little bit of my home course, Concession, and I grew up in this weather, grew up on this grass, so I think I have a sense of comfort and I like the layout.

At the end of the day, even if you're comfortable and you played on this type of grass or in this type of weather, you still have to make putts and play well. That's what I'm hoping for this week as well.

Q. Saw you out there grinding away on the putting greens earlier.



NELLY KORDA: Yeah, so I don't know if I'm going to botch his last name but Eric Dietrich. I started working with him just after Solheim, maybe a little bit before. It was an unofficial kind of lesson. I switched putters, I switched grips, and it's just a little bit more organized.

I feel like after seven years I finally needed to do something with it. I'm grinding pretty hard on it.

Q. When you say organized, what do you mean exactly?

NELLY KORDA: Felt like I just have a plan now, or I have tendencies that I know about that I can always go into a drill and kind of work on those tendencies.

Where before I was kind of blind going to a putting green. I did it myself.

Q. What's your grip now?

NELLY KORDA: Back to conventional, yeah. No more left-hand low.

Q. This being the first time back since the re-brand to The ANNIKA, does that add anything to the experience of this event or the prestige of it?

NELLY KORDA: For sure. If you have a legend like Annika, her name is on the title of the tournament, so having her out here, just the presence of her, is really, really neat and cool.

I think it just brings a little extra to an amazing again.

Q. Any pressure to three-peat?

NELLY KORDA: To three-peat, obviously there is pressure that I want to perform, but I try not to think about it.

Really what I'm focused on today is going out, playing nine holes, play a practice round, work on my game, and eventually the first tee shot, and go from there.



I try to stay in the present as much as possible, even with all the outside noise.

Q. Looks like your results have been pretty good; something very close. What do you feel could uptick you that little bit to push you across?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I feel like -- I mean, I had really good kind of starts. I talked about it a couple times like where the beginning of the year golf felt in a sense like I don't want to take it for granted, but felt easy, top 10ing, playing well, and being in contention.

Then I got injured and just felt hard to get back into that flow. I somehow like had a hard time finding it, so that's kind of why I brought Eric in. And with Jamie, we're all working really hard on my entire game. Hopefully we can continue improving, but it's more about the consistency.

As easy as it sounds, it's very hard in the game of golf or just sports in general, being consistent when it comes to how your body feels and performance.

Q. What kind of boost is it for to you always know that the schedule wraps around and returns to Florida with your record in the state?

NELLY KORDA: I love it. More importantly I love that my parents are out here coming with me to events. I'll have Jess for the next two, which will be really nice. I haven't seen her in a while.

There is just a level of comfort having the ones closest to you near you during events.

Q. Apologies, a bit not focused on this event. What about the future the LPGA Tour, future of golf gets you excited?

NELLY KORDA: I think what excites me is growing the game obviously. For me, I've always loved seeing the little kids out, excited to meet us, and for us to, you know, hopefully influence them to love this sport as much as we love it, and why we love competing.

But selfishly, probably playing all the amazing golf courses that are lined up in the major championships and get to go compete.

And, I don't know, there is something about being -- for me, being in contention in the last nine holes where the rush of emotions is amazing.

And then obviously getting to do that on amazing golf courses and create history for me, I feel like the game is

trending in an amazing direction, and I feel like when we get put on these amazing venues and we have Annika come out here and she's part of such a big event, I think that just pushes the game forward for us.

Q. Is there a particular course that you're really excited to play?

NELLY KORDA: Probably St. Andrews. I've never played it, so I'm very excited about that one.

Q. Is there any common thread between the two wins you've had here already?

NELLY KORDA: No. They've been -- I mean, every win you're overcoming kind of something. The only common thing is they're close to home and I have the same people out every year.

When it comes to the performance every year is different. Last year it was a three-day event because we had a hurricane go through on Thursday, so every year I think is different.

I don't like to have in a sense high expectations. I like to stay very, very present from what I've learned in the past and take the week as it goes.

Q. Again, with the kind of name that's over your shoulder here, the PGA TOUR has the Arnold Palmer Invitational, Byron Nelson events known as Jack's and Tiger's events. How important is it for the LPGA to maybe honor some of its Hall of Famers with tournaments like this?

NELLY KORDA: Super important. I think it's great that we're doing that. I think that, again, I think that grows the game more. I think that makes people more aware of a tournament and brings different crowds in.

And it also honors the legends of our game that have done so much for the game. So I think it just checks all the boxes and I think we had the Lorena Ochoa one in the match play event in Mexico and that was an amazing event.

Whenever we get to honor the legends that have done so much for the game, I think that's really good.

Q. Who would you nominate for?

NELLY KORDA: Probably Inbee, Inbee Park. That would be a good one.

Q. Last year you were talking about building your

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

home here in Florida.

NELLY KORDA: Yep.

Q. And then you said that was taking a lot of energy to get that completed.

NELLY KORDA: Uh-huh.

Q. Did that happen?

NELLY KORDA: I don't know about a lot of the energy. It was just a very fun process, something that I'm very lucky to do.

But, yeah it's completed and I love it. It's very, very rewarding, too.

Q. One thing I've been trying to find out from a few people, because transgender people getting in girls' sports has been quite a topic on TV in swimming and track. I don't know, there was another sport yesterday where somebody got punched in in the face. Just trying to figure out where is the LPGA? The only thing I did is I went to social media and found out they don't have a card-carrying transgender in the sport. Do you feel that's coming or not, or are the girls against it? How do you feel?

NELLY KORDA: I don't really, to be honest, know much about it. I don't really have a comment about that.

Q. That's okay.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

Q. Nelly, what was the process of choosing Eric? Did you have a connection there?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, actually the people at TaylorMade kind of set us up through just connections. And then obviously Jamie knew him and then everyone just clicked as well.

Q. Got you. Do you remember the first time you met Annika?

NELLY KORDA: Gosh, when I played her junior event on the AJGA. A long time ago. I don't even know what year. I just remember her hitting balls during one of the clinics and I thought -- I don't even know. At Celebration maybe. Like a long time ago. I don't even know if they hold it there anymore.

Q. Lastly, when I was coming in, I saw a Titleist truck

and TaylorMade truck, Ping. They're all here. Was striking to me. What does that mean to you as a player?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, the fact that they're coming out here to an event, you know, on the women's side -- we mainly just get them at majors, so for them to come out to a regular season event, I think that they're definitely putting more into women's golf. I think that they're just investing and it's nice to see it.

Q. You mentioned you changed putters; 6is that right?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, went to a mallet, P5.

Q. Have you used a mallet?

NELLY KORDA: No. I started using it in Korea and that's when I switched putters, I switched grips. I was over my first putt in the first round and I was like, okay, here we go. (Smiling.)

So, yeah, since Korea.

Q. Can sometimes just a fresh look be something that sparks a player?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, honestly, I haven't been putting bad. I've been in contention a bunch this year. It's just I want to improve. I want to improve in every part of my game, and I just thought this was a necessary change to that.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you for your time, Nelly.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

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