

# The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Sunday, November 12, 2023

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

## Lilia Vu

## Annika Sorenstam

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, we're joined by 2023 The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican champion Lilia Vu, and Annika herself.

Start with Lilia. You had to chase a little bit coming into today. What was the mindset entering your round? And if there was one, what was the shift in mindset once you took the lead?

LILIA VU: I think usually when I go into a Sunday I feel like I haven't won the tournament yet, so, I mean, there is really nothing to lose and I was just going to go out there and try and make a bunch of birdies.

Today was a little harder so I just tried to do the best with what I had.

THE MODERATOR: For Annika, for Lilia to be on Annika alum and win in your first year as namesake of this tournament, just how special is that?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, we could not have asked for a better ending and a better winner, No. 1 player in the world, Rolex Rankings.

So we're super pleased with the week. It's been fantastic in so many ways. If I could just thank Gainbridge for the sponsorships and obviously the Pelican Golf Club, the membership, the Doyle family. I'm super proud to sit here. It's been such a fantastic week and golf course, et cetera.

So great start to the tournament, and I'm sure that we're going to continue setting the standard here and just moving up from here.

THE MODERATOR: Lilia, you said earlier this week it would be the dream to end this dream season to win here. How special is it?

LILIA VU: Yeah, I can't even put into words. I think I didn't really expect this to happen. I think I just wanted to have a good week going into CME next week and just try to be in contention, and then turned out the way it did.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to throw a stat at both of you. Lilia, you became the first player since 2005 to win two major championships and compete in the Solheim Cup. I'm going to let you guess who did that in 2005. Miss Annika here. How special is it to share that connection and then to win in her namesake event?

LILIA VU: Oh, my gosh, it's so special. Annika has done so much for women's golf. Every single level of golf, junior golf, The ANNIKA Junior, and then the ANNIKA Award in college. I was really bummed out when I didn't get that when I played in college, so I'm finally super excited to win something your name on it.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and open it up.

**Q. On the back nine, what do you feel in the end kind of separated you from the rest?**

LILIA VU: I think the wheels were kind of falling off early in this the back nine and my caddie said to me, hey, it doesn't matter where you hit it on the green; you can make a putt from anywhere.

I think that really flipped my mindset. I was getting negative and then just flipped a switch and just thought positive thoughts, and then it just all worked itself out.

**Q. And as you look year over year and look at what a phenomenal year you've had this year, what do you feel is the biggest difference?**

LILIA VU: It's mindset. I think it's all been mindset for me. I'm not a technical player. I just try and play the course the way it's given to me and then just go from there.

**Q. Congratulations.**



LILIA VU: Thank you.

**Q. How are you a different player closing the deal on Sunday now than rewinding to the beginning of the year I guess? What have you learned about the back nine on Sunday?**

LILIA VU: Just playing one shot at a time, not getting ahead of yourself. It's not over until the 18th hole, so just play every shot the way you intend it. The next shot could be the best shot you ever hit. And that's a mindset I think about all the time. I think that helps with calming the nerves and doing what's in front of me and being where my feet are.

**Q. Did you go to Texas Roadhouse last night?**

LILIA VU: I sure did.

**Q. Will you be back?**

LILIA VU: Maybe not tonight, but, yeah.

**Q. But steak?**

LILIA VU: Win brought to you by Texas steakhouse.

**Q. But steak tonight?**

LILIA VU: Probably. Most likely.

**Q. Annika, you achieved everything in this game it seems like possible. To have this event, to have the first one down, where does that rank in the rest of your achievements?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, this is a dream come true and a different chapter in my life. It's still a little bit surreal to see my name on the tournament, on the signage. It's been everywhere.

But I'm very thankful for that.

My passion to give back to the game has not got any less or any smaller. I love giving back to the game, hanging out with some of the juniors, especially the ones that were here yesterday, the ones that are a little younger than us.

Then so see where they are going after that, someone like Lilia Vu and whoever is up there, it's just fun to see there is so many possibilities.

I think women's golf has come a long way, but there is still more to go and more to do. So if we can help out, it just warms my heart to see they're getting a chance to live their

dream like I'm living my dream.

Just like saw from some other people that are here this week, just putting ladies golf on the map. I think Jeremy, are you still here? Jeremy Friedman, I want to say thank you. He has worked so hard for this tournament to just give the tournament the exposure and the publicity that it needs.

Yeah, I'm proud, but doesn't mean that we're settled. You know us. We keep going. We keep going forward and higher and better hopefully.

**Q. Lilia, you learned to win on the Epson Tour. I think that was a big thing for you. But out here, learning to win, what maybe did you learn earlier in the season where you can get to that point and you're trying and put the pedal down and go win a golf tournament?**

LILIA VU: I think just as I said before, playing one shot at a time. Some people play really well the first day. I try not to focus too hard on that. I just say, hey, if we get better every day, that's all I can do. That's the best I can do.

**Q. Annika, you have been everywhere this week, doing all the radio ask television and everything.**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah.

**Q. Get to see any golf?**

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I try to. I've been watching the highlights when I get back and put my feet up. I want to take this role seriously and I'm proud to be here. It's been fun.

Like you said, I was here Mondays; we did some things. Tuesday we did some more things; we had the Women's Summit and then I played in the program.

Yeah, it's been a lot of things. I think I was more active this week than I maybe when I played because I'm kind of everywhere talking to the partners, volunteers, and just kind of get a good feel for the whole tournament.

So, yeah, it's been great. I think we're driving back to Orlando tonight. I'm sure I'll take a snooze on the way. Yeah, it's going to be sweet dreams for sure.

**Q. When we spoke earlier in the week you said you were going to be making lists. How long is the list now?**

LILIA VU: Actually not as long. I think it's been really successful. I do have my feelers out there with some of

players. I am waiting to hear from them to really get a feel for what they think.

I think we talked about that in the press conference. I want to hear how they experienced it, how they feel, whether it's the parking, the food, the practice. In the end of the day, I mean, we want to create an amazing tournament and we want the players and the partners to feel good about it. The best way to improve it is to hear from them, what do they like to see.

I've spoken to several members and they love it, so that's a good start. That means we can continue to be here and we can hopefully continue to provide an amazing experience.

**Q. Lilia, how would you assess the tournament other than winning obviously in terms of all the things Annika just mentioned?**

LILIA VU: Yeah, this tournament has been world class from the golf course, the members, fans, volunteers. The whole setup has phenomenal, and I feel like it's been really great.

**Q. Lilia, the conversation you had with your caddie, where did that take place? Coming off what hole?**

LILIA VU: That was the 13th hole.

**Q. And what kind of gave you the impression, because I don't think you had made a bogey or just made a bogey.**

LILIA VU: I made a bogey on 12.

**Q. 12, okay.**

LILIA VU: I missed a little four-footer and tee'd off on 13, miss-hit my drive. I was 40 yards behind everyone, and then didn't like my approach shot on and I was a little soggy diapers about that.

He definitely knew that and hates it when I get like that, so he said the right things and it worked out.

**Q. So it was a kind of that two-hole stretch, or did you feel something coming on?**

LILIA VU: I felt just like a slow decline, and then it was just a flip of a switch and the positive mindset and went from there.

**Q. How much more difficult was the course out there today? There were no 61s or 62s. I think you had the**

**second-best round out there. How much more difficult was it?**

LILIA VU: Oh, a lot more difficult today. I think I didn't realize that. I think that's why I was getting a little upset, because, yeah, it definitely wasn't easy out there. You could tell with the pin placements, like on 17, that was a little dicey. Just kind of tucked over the bunker. All of us had a long downhill putt that just went forever.

So, yeah, the pins were difficult. Conditions were difficult with the wind and everything.

**Q. Did you pay much attention -- obviously you're got your playing partners on Sunday right next to you -- Aza played well, Alison played well. Were you aware of them at least coming into range?**

LILIA VU: I looked at the leaderboard for maybe a couple minutes, but I'm not scared of looking at it either. I don't let it control me.

I knew where I was at, but I knew I had to do things on each hole with my goal as trying birdie every hole, so I just stuck to my guns.

**Q. Annika had her caddie by her side for a very long time. He was an integral part her career. How important has your caddie been this year?**

LILIA VU: Oh, huge. I think we just found the formula that works. He says the right things when I get in my own way, and I think we have a really good time out there. He knows my game really well. He makes it easy for me. If I hit it 85% of where he tells me to it usually works out.

**Q. How long have you guys been together?**

LILIA VU: Since Portland last year, yeah.

**Q. One more from me. Obviously winning two majors this year, it's hard to rank your wins, but where does this one rank for you?**

LILIA VU: I think second best, just after the Open. This one, yeah, I think this one. I thought about it a lot. I think I want more wins in America, and to add this one to my results has been really great. And to be Annika's event is just amazing.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.

LILIA VU: Thank you.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

