

# The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Monday, October 20, 2025

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

**Dan Doyle Jr.**

**Danny Doyle III**

**Ryan Dever**

**Todd Lewis**

**Annika Sorenstam**

**Lauryn Nguyen**

**Elizabeth Szokol**

Media Day Press Conference

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Good morning, everybody. First off, thank everybody for being here. I'm Jeremy Friedman. I'm the media director for the ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican, vice president of PR for Outlyr, so thank you to everybody for taking the time to come this morning.

Before we get started, I wanted to say a quick thank you to the Doyle family, Justin and Natalie and the staff at Pelican Golf Club for the breakfast and the hospitality this morning, so thank you for the hospitality and everything for this morning.

[Applause].

We've got a great couple of roundtable sessions that are coming up, so we'll get to that in a second. I want to also say a big thank you to hall-of-famer Annika Sorenstam for being with us today; PGA Tour winner and proud Tampa Bay resident and Pelican Golf Club member Elizabeth Szokol; and a young lady that you guys will get to know shortly, she is back in the back, she is all-American from Northwestern, recently graduated, she was a member of the 2025 national championship team that won the NCAA championships, Lauryn Nguyen. Then last but not least, I want to say thank you to my emcee tag team partner from Golf Channel, Todd Lewis. Thank you for being here today.

We've got a tremendous field for the tournament, shaping



up to be fantastic. You guys saw the early commitments from last week headlined by three-time champion Nelly Korda. She's going for her fourth win here. The last player to record four victories at the same tournament, Annika Sorenstam in 2005. Nelly would be going after No. 4.

Elizabeth Szokol in the field, also we have major champions and fan favorites Brooke Henderson, Lexi Thompson will be here this year, Lilia Vu, our 2023 champion, major champion Hannah Green, Charley Hull, runner-up last year, and our inaugural champion from 2020, Sei Young Kim, who won her 13th LPGA Tour win this weekend in South Korea at the BMW Ladies Championship. Tremendous field that's shaping up.

A 108-player field is going to be in this championship this year, competing for an elevated \$3.25 million purse, one of the largest on the LPGA Tour.

As you guys walked in, you saw all the easels with all the different signs. We have a tremendous amount of programming that's going to be taking place in a few weeks here. We'll talk a little bit more about that in the panel sessions.

We're going to start it with Sunday, November 9, with we call it the Pelly Pro-Am, and it will conclude Sunday, November 16, with the final round and the trophy ceremony.

During the week, as it happens every year, Veterans Day will be during tournament week. Veterans Day is actually going to be on Tuesday. We're going to celebrate that on Friday. It's going to be Folds of Honor Friday in partnership with Folds of Honor. Many of you are familiar with Folds of Honor. We will have a celebration at the flagpole similar to what we had last year.

Also, as kind of a token of thank you for everything that they have done for us, especially here in this community over the past year, all military and all first responders and medical personnel will get complimentary admission to the tournament, and also we have two exclusive hospitality venues on the course, one on the 12th hole and one on the 16th, courtesy of our friends at FedData and Servpro.



We all have gone through a lot with the hurricanes last year. Last year we didn't have media day because media day was the day that Hurricane Milton hit, so we did not have one last year.

That's kind of a small token of thank you from us for everything that they do. Chief, you and your staff in particular here in the town, thank you for everything that you do for us.

Throughout the week you will see these pillars and you will see signage throughout the week and you'll see a familiar tag line. It's called #leadwithlegacy. You'll hear about that a little bit more, as well, as we go through today and tournament week.

A small personal thing for me before we continue, we have a member who is not here today, Jeff Babineau. Many of you know Jeff. Annika and Mike, you know Jeff. He's covered us for years. I've known him for 25 years. His birthday was last week.

Jeff's final event -- he's longtime managing editor of Golfweek magazine, USA Today, Orlando Sentinel, was here at the Tampa Bay Times, legendary golf writer. Last year this was his last championship that he covered. He passed away about a week later.

We are going to be doing a special tribute for him during tournament week kind of as a small token of thank you. Thanks for letting me just do a little personal piece for Babs.

Before we get to our first panel, let's take a look back at a tremendous year in 2024. Take a look at the screen.

[Video shown.]

That's from 2024. There's a lot of great things and even more coming in 2025. I'd like to welcome up to the stage Pelican Golf Club's Dan Doyle Jr., Danny Doyle III, and our tournament director for The ANNIKA, Ryan Dever. Come on up to the stage.

As they're making their way to the stage, this is a celebratory year this year on several fronts. We'll get to this in just a second. Pelican Golf Club is celebrating its centennial this year, originally founded in 1925. The town of Belleair also is celebrating its centennial, as Dan mentioned. We have chief, we have mayor, we have town commissioners here, so celebrating its centennial.

The LPGA Tour is celebrating 75 years. The LPGA Tour was founded right here in Tampa Bay.

Mayor Mike, Chief, town commissioners, thank you for being here today.

Dan, I'd like to start with you on the celebratory theme here. You've shared your story and history here at Pelican Golf Club. You grew up playing this course, your home course here, to the renovation process to kind of where we are now, and helping to put the Belleair community on the worldwide map, not only with this championship but with the match and a lot of events here, you guys are celebrating your centennial here. Give us an update on the club and how you and your son and your dad are continuing to strengthen your family's vision for this facility.

DAN DOYLE JR.: Okay. So pretty simple, this is a passion project that went awry because, just like restoring a car, you start peeling things back, and all of a sudden you realize let's replace that and let's replace this, and it turned into a giant remodel, which is not what I promised my dad when we kicked this project off.

However, he was a sucker just like I was and he said, let's make this an incredible golf club. Behind the incredible golf club, we have incredible people. So our first person that we brought, Justin Sheehan, who's here today, kind of came up with this idea, hey, we're going to be a family-focused club, but how do we focus golf -- there's men's tournaments all over, but how can we make this really special, and we kind of said, let's make it really focused on women's golf, and then we actually went down a step and said youth golf, as well. That's what kind of triggered the kickoff of this.

So Justin pitched me literally in the car. I was on a phone call with him and he said, hey, I've got this great idea, and that's what led to this, and one thing led to another, and if you look at this golf tournament now, we've got Annika's name on it, and Annika and Mike have become good friends of ours, and we've created this tournament that has kind of bred other things, not only -- so we brought women's golf, and I think we brought it to a different level. That was our number one initiative. I think Elizabeth will vouch for that.

Then it was, all right, what else can we do as a family to help generate interest in golf, not just women's golf but golf, so we then hosted the American Conference -- men's American Conference Championship, which was great. My kids went to SMU so they were in there, so kind of had a little bit of a tie. But it was fun to watch our members and watch the town kind of go, hey, this is kinda neat, this college event.

So we brought that in, which then we've upgraded now --

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

men will probably be annoyed that I say it that way, but we upgraded now to the women's SEC Championship, which is great to watch. We've got it here for the next couple of years, so we've kind of elevated that, as well.

In the middle of all this, we got hit multiple times with hurricanes in the state of Florida, we decided to host The Match, which was kind of a neat event. We turned it into a nighttime golf course and brought Tiger Woods and a few of his friends and had this concert on the driving range and created this, and I think we raised about \$2 million for hurricane relief for Fort Myers, so we've kind of used this as a steppingstone or a platform to help not only women's golf, but we find other charities to help support this.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Danny, following up on your dad's responses here, looking ahead to this year, as you said, tremendous partner in Annika Sorenstam and Gainbridge, you have been along for the ride with your dad and your grandfather on this ride here, so how proud are you of your family's vision and execution so far where this tournament has come in this past five years?

DANNY DOYLE III: I know, and number one, it's crazy it's already been five years. This is the sixth tournament, right? 2019, or 2020 rather.

Yeah, proud would probably be an understatement as to how far we've come. I mean, the LPGA took a chance on us when we were out here with just a pile of dirt, and we said we wanted this tournament, and they allowed us to do so.

It's been fun each year kind of seeing how we take what we've learned from the past and kind of build forward. We wouldn't be able to do it without a great team at Pelican. Everybody at Outlyr has been great. I'm sure -- I see Nicole Cote, Katie Williams, Ryan Dever, they're probably tired of my 12:00 a.m., 1:00 a.m. texts because I'm always up thinking of crazy ideas to do for this tournament. But they take my crazy and put it to make it reality.

It's been great to be able to see what they've done as a team for Outlyr. It's been pretty great to see how far this tournament has come in just six years.

The LPGA -- I personally think that they think it's one of the best tournaments. I personally think it's one of the best tournaments. Each year we just try to strive to be better and set ourselves to reach another pinnacle every year.

DAN DOYLE JR.: To confirm, by the way, I asked Annika. She said this is the best tournament.

DANNY DOYLE III: Yeah, I'd hope so.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Dan and Danny, the golf course. Let's go back to last year at this time. I think we were all like, oh, my gosh, are we going to be able to have a championship last year.

DANNY DOYLE III: We thought the same thing.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Talk about that last year. You have several LPGA Tour players that come and practice here, including Elizabeth. Talk about last year and just everything that Justin and Chris Corr and the staff went through to get this course in championship conditions for last year.

DAN DOYLE JR.: So the players, the LPGA, they were in Hawai'i, so they had no idea what had happened. Danny lives on the 5th hole, and about 2:30, 3:00 in the morning, I think we walked out, it looked like the bayou. We kept on looking for alligator eyes because the entire place was under water.

We showed up the next day. Justin was here. He wasn't quite ready to cry, but he was really close, and Justin really doesn't cry.

We kind of cruised around the golf course. The entire place was under water, and we kind of went, ooh, what's going to happen. And I'll tell you, we had members, we had neighbors here in Belleair show up, chainsaws, the whole shooting match. Everybody went to work.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: When we actually hosted the championship, the feedback from the players and the sponsors and everybody, what was the feedback like? It was almost like there was -- that there wasn't two hurricanes that came here just a month prior.

DANNY DOYLE III: Yeah, it was unbelievable. I think it's a testament to Justin, to Chris Corr, to everybody at Pelican. We just put our boots on the ground and went to work. I remember I walked out here with Dad -- I think the hurricane came through on a Wednesday night. He came out here on Thursday morning, and I think I was my dad's security blanket. I don't think he was prepared to see what had happened to the golf course.

It was shell shock. All the trees down, the water. You looked at 10 fairway, it looked like the pond here on 18 covered the entire fairway. It looked like we were a water park rather than a golf course.

I mean, once the tournament was finished and the feedback came in, they said it was the best the course has been. That's a testament to who we have here at the club,



not just us, not just the staff but our members putting their boots on the ground and getting to work and helping us put forward another tournament.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Fast forward to this year, what's the course conditions like? How is the course out there currently?

DAN DOYLE JR.: I think the course is probably in the best shape it's ever been in.

Chris Corr and the whole agronomy team, they had a great shutdown. We did a longer shutdown this summer. We hosted our member-member, we kicked off golf season here at the beginning of October. The greens were probably in the best shape they've ever been in.

They're going to be quick. The course is going to be challenging. The rough now, even though the ladies don't hit into the rough, but the rough is a true penalty, whereas before it was just kind of a fluffy lie, so I think the golf course is going to play tougher than it has in the past.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Ryan, as tournament director here, you've had a front row seat to all this. We were talking earlier about the initial press conference here in 2019, which was over in the bistro and it was just all under construction. From your vantage point, from operations to now as tournament director, just talk about working with the family, working with Annika, working with Gainbridge and just sharing that same vision and growth to make this one of the premier events on the LPGA Tour.

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, I recall back to the first site visit here at Pelican Golf Club and the Doyle family and Justin took us around for a tour. This very room we're sitting in here today was a concrete slab with no roof.

But they were quick to teach me the vision, the energy, the passion behind what this championship could eventually become, and since then, our team has joined forces with not only the Doyle family, Pelican Golf Club, Annika and Gainbridge to put on a best-in-class event each and every year. It's our goal to strive for not only the players but the spectators, volunteers, media members, and our partners to be excited for that next tournament day or that next tournament year. Every time they leave, they leave property.

Joining forces with Gainbridge and Annika in 2023 has just excelled that momentum since then. Gainbridge is deeply rooted in empowering women's sports. 40 percent of Gainbridge's partnership dollars in sport actually get dedicated to women's athletics, and Annika, one of the greatest golfers of all time, her and her foundation, the

mission, it just all fits so well together.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Then looking ahead to this year, Dan and Danny talked a little bit about the course. Talk about some of these initiatives out here that are on the signs. What are some of these key initiatives for the championship this year?

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, the list grows longer and longer. We're excited to work with one of our longstanding partner in Bay Care for a charitable initiative called Bay Care Birdies For Babies. Birdies For Babies is a pledge to donate \$50 for every birdie and \$100 for every eagle that's scored during the competition rounds of tournament week. Since 2020 the Bay Care Birdies For Babies program has raised over \$360,000 for the Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation right here in our area.

So we're excited about that with Bay Care. A new initiative this year, in partnership with Bay Care and Gainbridge getting involved, eight different pediatric patients from within Bay Care healthcare facilities have designed custom golf shoes for the Gainbridge athletes and ambassadors to wear during our Wednesday pro-am. The first pair is right here to my left, actually, just hot off the press, designed by 5-year-old Hazel B, a patient at Bay Care. Annika, these will be your shoes on Wednesday during the pro-am, so they look pretty snazzy.

These will be auctioned off for the Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation post round on Wednesday. But little things like that. The families from Bay Care will be welcomed out to the tournament to not only partake in the golf but also meet the Gainbridge ambassadors and athletes. It's things like that, the signs outside, you saw the recap video beforehand, the list goes on and on.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Hazel's design on the shoes, feel free after the press conference to come up and take a look. It's inspired by the doctors and nurses at St. Joseph's Children's Hospitals featuring happy hearts. There's happy hearts all over these shoes. Annika, we're excited for you to wear those shoes at the pro-am.

That's not the only new initiative for Gainbridge this year. Ryan, we've done in the past -- the tournament has been, we call it a parity week where it's kind of fallen along the same timeline as the Billie Jean King Cup and a NASCAR event. There are different events this year, so Gainbridge has done a new initiative this year called the Gainbridge Assist powered by Parity. Do you want to chat about that for a little bit?

RYAN DEVER: Yeah. Gainbridge Assist powered by Parity is an annual grant program this year donating



\$222,000 to 32 different organizations around the country, and all those organizations and the grant funding from Gainbridge are going to organizations that are propelling not only women and young girls through sport and education, and one of those organizations is actually going to weave into the tournament week here at Pelican Golf Club.

The I Got This Foundation will join us on Thursday of tournament week for a special golf clinic. The I Got This Foundation was founded by Amy Bockerstette. You guys may know that name. Amy is known for a viral moment at the Phoenix Open on the 16th hole where he she played with Gary Woodland. Amy is an adaptive golfer, and the I Got This Foundation is all on promoting and putting golf clubs in the hands of folks with Downs Syndrome and intellectual disabilities. We're excited to have those adaptive athletes out here on Thursday of tournament week and the I Got This Foundation all through the introduction from the Gainbridge Assist program. So another cool new initiative for 2025.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: I think we all saw Amy say that when she was making that putt on 16 of the Waste Management Phoenix Open, saying, "I got this," hence the I Got This Foundation. So we're excited to have her with us and the foundation during tournament week.

Speaking of viral moments, last year on the Wednesday pro-am was Caitlyn Clark's first LPGA event. I think we all saw on the first hole just the fans and the signs and the little girls that were all there. Ryan, talk about that last year and then looking ahead to this year as we announced last week that Caitlyn Clark will be returning again this year.

RYAN DEVER: Yeah, I think we all know what it feels like to catch the golf bug. At least I know what it feels like to hit a shot like she did off the third tee box. We are excited to have Caitlyn back in our Wednesday pro-am. What she does for women's sports, the invitation from Gainbridge, there should be a ton of buzz.

I feel like the crowds that were following that Caitlyn group on Wednesday last year reminded me of the group following Tiger and The Match. We're excited to have all those fans out here again to support her on Wednesday and obviously throughout tournament week.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Dan and Danny, you've said at the top that we're all about elevating women's sports, elevating women's golf. When the tournament -- you've mentioned this to us. The second that the putt drops, we're looking ahead to next year, right?

Talk about how much joy and excitement the past couple

years it has been to be working alongside arguably the greatest of all time in Annika Sorenstam in helping to elevate this great championship to where it is today.

DAN DOYLE JR.: So as you stated, we started this tournament back in 2019, 2020 the first year, and we had no idea what we were really doing. Tim and his team came in, they assisted us, and obviously we got some notoriety and we started building up but we still had this bigger vision, and when we added Annika to it, obviously that excelled it to the top there.

It's funny because Annika has got a very similar vision to us. She wants to make it better and continue to make it better year after year. Quite frankly, she actually pushes us, which I'm surprised because I think we're pretty tough on ourselves, the three Dans, but she actually gets in there and starts pushing it as well, on hey, what can we do here, what can we do there. We upped it by picking up the hotel rooms for the girls. For these ladies, it's difficult for them to make ends meet, and you start looking compared to the PGA, what do we need to do to help these women excel in their sport, and that's what we've really been focusing on.

She challenges us at least once or twice throughout the tournament week, and it's always a lot of fun. Then we've become friends, which is actually an added benefit to this whole thing. Talking to Mike or talking to Annika, it's a lot of fun. She's no longer just the GOAT to me. Now it's a buddy of mine, so it makes it even more fun. What else do you have to say?

DANNY DOYLE III: Annika has a brand she wants to represent, and so do we at Pelican. So that's why, like my dad said, we strive every year to make it better, whether that be -- we can't really control what's going on on the golf course. Yes, we have great names, but how do we make this a good experience for everybody that comes, all the patrons that pay, whether that be realizing where the bottlenecks are on the golf course and making sure that nobody is waiting in line for let's say longer than five minutes; what are the experiences like on hole 12 for the people that are coming out; what are the elevated experiences like in the Champions Club and the Trophy Club and how do those people want to experience that.

To make sure that we have the best, we have to dream pretty big. Annika pushes us to do that with the brand that she has. We want to dream big with our brand. So it's kind of been a great relationship and just pushing each other to make everything the best it can be.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Love that, and as Dan mentioned, this is the second year of this. He mentioned this when he was speaking, that the entire tournament field will receive



complimentary hotel throughout the entire week, courtesy of the Pelican Golf Club and the Doyle family.

It's one of those, just as Elizabeth can attest and as Lauryn will attest as she starts her LPGA Tour career, playing week in and week out is hard and there's a lot of expenses that they have to incur. On behalf of the LPGA Tour and all of us, thank you for everything that you're doing to shining a spotlight on the LPGA Tour and elevating women's sports.

Dan, Danny and Ryan, thank you for joining us today.

Speaking of elevating women's sports, our next panel will be Annika Sorenstam and Todd Lewis. As we transition to the next panel, want you guys to pay attention to the video for a special award that Annika Sorenstam is super proud about that is new this year. Turn your attention to the screen.

[Video shown.]

Annika and Todd, if you can come up to the stage. We will talk about the ANNIKA Inspiration Award and Rachel Heck, which we all know that she's a rock star. You guys will chat about this. Todd Lewis, Annika Sorenstam.

TODD LEWIS: First off, it's an honor to share any kind of space with Annika, who I have known professionally and personally for 25 years now. Her record speaks for itself. She's in multiple halls of fame. She's done so much to inspire women and girls who want to play the game, for all who want to play the game for that matter, but you've created a beautiful foundation, as well, and now you have this new award, the ANNIKA Inspiration Award, and Rachel will be here on-site to accept that award.

How impactful is this award in the mindset of leading with legacy?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, we hope it will be. As you just said, this is the first time. This award has been discussed within the foundation for quite some time, and just a little quick summary what the foundation is about, empowering and advancing young women through the sport and just in life.

We have over 1,300 girls that participate in one or more events throughout the year, so 18 years ago you could not have imagined how many young women have gone through our initiatives and our programs and our tournaments.

We know that not all of them are going to be professional golfers, and we wanted to highlight someone that has kind

of gone on this path but now decided to do something different, as you saw here.

Obviously we have a perfect recipient that stands for everything that we stand for. She's a badass, right? She really is. She is. She has won tournaments and she has won our award. It's just everything. I think she's an incredible inspiration for a lot of people.

Again, it's about the sport, highlighting what we can do as humans and then go on and empower other things. So we're super proud of Rachel, and to have her continue to be part of the family, and for us to be able to celebrate her this week with all the things that's going on that you heard from the Doyle family, from Jeremy, it is so fitting.

So we're super excited and we hope that this award is going to inspire others to not just take golf to make more birdies, et cetera, but really do something else. I think at the end of the day we all know what you do for the community, what you do for the country and other people, really that's what you -- leading with legacy.

TODD LEWIS: Golf can obviously be a catalyst for so many things or for so many different people.

I just like calling it "The ANNIKA." How great is that? It's a crown jewel event on the LPGA Tour schedule. You have been aligned -- a great alliance with some partners in Gainbridge and obviously Pelican. How important has that alliance been to see this tournament grow and the stature that it is right now?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I'm super proud. I know Mike, too. We were driving down from Orlando today, and it warms our heart to know that yeah, my name is on the tournament, but it's the partnerships, the people that you work with. We're at a time in our life now where we can choose who we want to be with, and we couldn't choose any better than the Doyle family. The club is fantastic. Gainbridge does such a fantastic job and Outlyr, et cetera, and of course to be able to continue the partnership with LPGA and hopefully inspire young ladies to play, have a wonderful tournament to look forward to and to participate in and all the initiatives that we have with the foundation, I know we'll talk about some of the other invites, et cetera, but it's all about giving back to women and empowering them.

I don't know, it's just really cool. We talk about it warms our heart every year, and you're like, wow, this place just gets better, the tournament gets bigger. It's just really cool, and I'm very proud, so thank you.

TODD LEWIS: Well said. Well said.



It is an elite tournament, but I know you being an elite player and an elite achiever, you're not resting on your laurels. You would like to see this go maybe even bigger. What is your vision for this tournament as we move forward?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, it's all teamwork, as you know. We have a great team and we couldn't do it without the partners in Gainbridge and the Pelican Club and the vision together. I think we want to be recognized as obviously a top tournament but also a club and a tournament that gives back to the community, inspires people, a place where people want to come, have a good time, watch some great golf, be able to socialize, be able to have -- the food -- breakfast was wonderful, by the way. Everything is just top-notch. I just think people want to be associated with that. They want to be part of this week.

There's always things we can do. Every year there's a little bit of improvement to entice players to come, entice partners to join and the members to be associated with.

I don't necessarily have any ideas to share with because I think we're really at the top already, so we're just going to continue to make sure that we are the pillar of the LPGA and we will continue to be so.

TODD LEWIS: To make a great tournament, you know you've got to have a great field, great sponsor, great golf course. You have that foundationally already set, so this looks like it's going to be another great week and another great year.

You're going to be busy the week of the tournament shockingly, doing a lot of things. One of the things you're going to be doing is a clinic, your Share Your Passion clinic. Can you talk a little bit about that and how important that event is to, again, leading with legacy here at Pelican?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, so that's one of the initiatives in the foundation. We do four or five, maybe six I think a year throughout the country where we invite younger girls to come and get introduced to the game, get a chance to hit some shots. We do little fitness stations. But when they come here, they also get to see behind the scenes of a tournament. Of course they get to see all the ladies, the pros here hopefully that inspire them to want to play a little bit more but also to be part of the tournament. They get a chance to come out and watch the tournament.

But yeah, that's one of the initiatives of the foundation, just getting more kids and especially young girls into the sport. Normally what they do is they write a letter why they enjoy golf or sometimes it's why they want to spend it with other

young girls. We've had 40 in the past, and I would say it's one of my grass-roots level programs. It could be different participants, but mostly from this area.

TODD LEWIS: I want to go back to last year, Caitlyn Clark. We at the Golf Channel had a meeting up there in Connecticut and we were talking about Caitlyn playing in the pro-am. We had already sent crews. We had designated crews to come to the tournament, but we decided to send a crew just to cover the pro-am, and that was a wise choice by us.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Very much so, yeah. I hope you do it again.

TODD LEWIS: Because it was phenomenal. I don't know what your expectations were when Caitlyn showed up here for the pro-am, but when you took a moment to look at all the people here and what that meant for the game and women's sports, what did that do -- how emotionally impactful was that to you?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think when we heard it was going to happen we were super excited and I'm sure the tournament organizers were a little extra busy. I really didn't know what to expect, but I got here before the start. She teed off at 7:00 a.m., I believe, on No. 1, and there were so many people, and I'm like, wow, there's something special. I'm not the only one; there was so many people for the pro-am tee time. She was teeing off with Nelly, and we took photos, we did all that.

But the amount of people on the first tee and the swarm of people coming in for a pro-am, I haven't seen that in a long time. It was really cool to see obviously her fans come out, but also it brings more people to the sport. It brings more people to the LPGA.

Now we were standing on the tee, and it was just -- she said it, sports bring people together. It really did.

Again, it goes back to what Gainbridge is doing for women and just elevating it, and it was cool.

I had about a two-hour break because I was switching with Nelly, so Nelly finished after nine and then I got to play with Caitlyn on the back nine, which was really special, and as any athlete or any person, you like to pick the brain of somebody who's been very successful, so we walked down there, and I got to ask some questions.

But it's really at the end of the day --

TODD LEWIS: Hang on, what does Annika Sorenstam --



ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I just want to know -- she's a little younger than I am. So I wanted to -- she lives in a different media world than I did, and still do, so just talking to her -- I like to know her practice routine, her gym, what she does in the gym, but then also the correlation with golf and her sport and kind of her -- some of her thoughts on girls and women's sport and some of the things that she wants to do.

But I think number one is just, she loves golf. She really does. Again, we had that in common, just talking about the sport.

But it was fun, and we came down the 16th hole maybe, and she had been traveling quite a bit, but she goes, I'm so tired. I'm thinking, you can run that court 100 times back and forth, but this is different type of physics, right.

She was mentally tired, and she goes, how do you guys do this for four days in a row. It's just a different type of endurance. But just listening to a top athlete and get her to be inside the ropes with us was really fun.

So I'm glad she's coming back. It means she had a good time. We're going to elevate it a little bit more, and hopefully you guys will cover it more. That's what I've been reading; everybody wants to see more of her, so please keep those cameras out here for the week.

TODD LEWIS: We'll be here for sure. To borrow a term that Annika used, she is a badass, so we're looking forward to having her here. And she was influential in shaping a bit of the field here, right, Jeremy? We want to step aside and show how that came about.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Before we play the video, a couple of us posed as reporters for the ANNIKA Foundation, and we did a Zoom call with Lauryn and her coach, Emily Fletcher, talking about her year, talking about her summer, looking forward to the LPGA Tour. This is the video that happened.

[Video shown.]

After that, Coach Fletcher looked at Lauryn and said, what just happened? So during the course of the rest of the interview, they were high fiving each other, and it was finally sinking in that Lauryn was going to be playing her first LPGA Tour event here with Caitlyn Clark in the pro-am.

I'd like to introduce our next panel. Ms. Lauryn Nguyen and LPGA Tour winner Elizabeth Szokol, come on up to the stage. Annika, you can stay up there, also.

TODD LEWIS: First let's recap what Lauryn has done at Northwestern. She contributed, of course, to Northwestern's first ever NCAA women's golf Team Championship. In her career at Northwestern, a two-time all-American, a four-time academic all-American, four-time all-Big Ten selection. During the 2024-25 season, she led the team with six top-10 finishes, including a victory at the Silverado Showdown, and like I mentioned, helped lead the team to a team national championship. Lowest scoring average in the history at Northwestern, as well, so she seems primed and ready to make her debut on the LPGA Tour, and welcome to the show, Lauryn. Congratulations.

LAURYN NGUYEN: Thank you. Thank you.

TODD LEWIS: Can you tell me how emotionally impactful it is for you to be teeing it up and making your LPGA Tour event debut at The ANNIKA?

LAURYN NGUYEN: It's really hard to put into words. What an event to make your debut at. Having it under Annika's name is so, so special, just to be able to be part of a movement for women, for sports, for golfers, for juniors, it's so special.

I'm so thankful for Gainbridge, for Outlyr, for Annika. It couldn't be better. I don't know how you'd want to make your LPGA debut, but it's nothing I could have imagined.

TODD LEWIS: Let's go back to that video moment we just saw. What were your emotions to not only get the invitation but to get it from someone who is a leader in women's sports in Caitlyn Clark?

LAURYN NGUYEN: So, so special. Caitlyn does so much for women's sports, not just basketball, but being here last year, I think she really elevated this event, elevated women's sports. Being able to tee it up with her, I mean, it's -- you can't even fathom it. I never really thought I'd cross paths with Caitlyn Clark. But what a way to do it.

TODD LEWIS: Do you remember your LPGA Tour debut?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it was so long ago, '93 was my first.

TODD LEWIS: Do you have any advice for Lauryn? Were you nervous?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Of course I was, yeah. It wasn't as good of an event as this, of course (laughter), but no, you're off to a good start, so keep going.

TODD LEWIS: Elizabeth, let's bring you into the mix. This is your turf. This is your part of the planet. This is your



club. You have seen this event rise on the LPGA Tour schedule becoming a crown gem. How special is it to tee it up here at your place?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: It's amazing. It's so special to be close to friends and family and just seeing how much Pelican, the golf course, has grown, I think I came here for the first time in 2019 to work with Justin Sheehan here, and there was not this building and I think he opened the range for me and it wasn't quite open yet. So just amazing how much it's developed and grown and how much the event has grown over the last five, six years.

Like Jeremy and Ryan had mentioned, the hotel for LPGA players makes such a big difference, and this is definitely one of the top events that everyone on tour looks forward to and one of the biggest non-major purses of the year, so it's definitely one of the best events we play.

TODD LEWIS: Considering where it is on the LPGA Tour calendar, it's important, as well, as you're trying to obviously make your way to the CME, right?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: It is, yes, so it's our last event before the Tour Championship, so either trying to make your way to the Tour Championship or trying to keep your job, your LPGA Tour card for the following year. I think everyone wants to be here. Everyone wants to be playing well, so it brings in the best field, and everyone is really excited for it.

TODD LEWIS: Annika, we'll close it out with you. You've got an elite field, a great sponsor, a great golf course, great support here, too, and to have these two in the field along with some of the world's best, what are you most looking forward to in a few weeks as the third ANNIKA gets going?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, just being here, being part of it and hanging with our friends. I don't know, everything is first class, and seeing the players, the younger ones, the older ones. I've gotten to know some of the members the last few years. The staff here is fantastic. Just different partnerships, and we get a chance to stay here on property, so we're using the facilities because they're amazing.

Just being here and playing the pro-am and literally I'll be here Monday through Sunday, so wake up in the morning, I open the blind, I see the women are chipping and putting. It makes me a little bit like I want to do it, but then I realize, no, maybe not, they're younger.

Then you come here, and it's just been a fantastic week. Yeah, I enjoy it very much and get a chance to just spend it with the family, as well. Our parents come up, our kids

come up, and it's a big week for us, as well, and just thankful to be here and again, hopefully make a difference, like Elizabeth said here.

The generosity of the tournament and the Doyle family is incredible, and to be part of it and really continue to inspire the next generation of women, that's really what the goal is.

TODD LEWIS: Lauryn, you're already doing that a bit in your hometown of Seattle, right?

LAURYN NGUYEN: I am, yeah. So my family and I, we founded the -- named after my grandfather, the Duc Foundation. We kind of had this organization where we wanted to mentor kids and high school progressing to college to be able to get those chances that a lot of us aren't fortunate enough to get.

We host our annual junior am fundraising event, and I think that if I have a platform, I should be able to speak on it.

Just being able to play that event, raise some money for those in need, I think, why not.

TODD LEWIS: She's already getting it at a young age out here on the LPGA Tour.

Good luck. Hit up Elizabeth for any recommendations as far as restaurants go; she knows the area. I know you guys are going to have a lot of fun playing. I know you're going to have a wonderful time hosting. I'm going to have a wonderful time being on the grounds, as well. Jeremy, we'll turn it over to you.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: A couple more quick things. Lauryn, I don't know if Coach Fletcher has told you this - she may have - but if she hasn't, so her entire team from Northwestern, the 2024-2025 national championship team, they'll also be here. They will be here supporting Lauryn throughout the week.

Annika, one last one for you. The ANNIKA Intercollegiate, it's a super passionate event for you. Anne-Sterre den Dunnen from Wake Forest, she's also making her LPGA Tour debut. We've had Louise Rydqvist for the past couple of years. Talk about that event and that exemption or invitation that you present for here.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, so as you know, we've heard it all morning, it's this tournament that raises a lot of money for great causes and one of them is for the ANNIKA Foundation. We're all about young women, so the last few years we've been able to give a tournament invite to the young -- well, to a team, whoever wins their collegiate tournament in Minnesota in September and then the team



picks a player to go here.

We did it last year, and we're doing it this year again. Just providing playing opportunities for those young ladies to live their dream.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: That's what Lauryn is going to be doing. That's what Elizabeth is doing. Everybody, thank you for being here today. We will have individual interviews and photos and breakout interviews over here to the left.

Everybody, thank you for being here. They will be available for interviews on the side. We'll do photos first.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports