

Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 21, 2021
Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA
Tranquilo Golf Course

Annika Sorenstam

Quick Quotes

Q. Thanks for joining us, Annika. Tell us about your round.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it was very mixed. What can I say? I'm super excited to be here. Thank you to Diamond Resorts for giving me this opportunity. I was ready to go and just really just didn't play that well. I was quite nervous. Haven't been in this situation in quite a few years.

I felt so good about my game that I was maybe too excited to play and then just didn't play well at all. Just had a handful of good shots and scrambled a little bit coming in. Really fought really hard just to save my score somewhat.

But I'm smiling. It was fun. Great group of people that I played with, John and Gaby. Gaby played fabulous today. It was fun to be with her and see her play. And John is such a good guy and he can hit it for sure.

We shared some stories and had a great time.

Q. You played with John before and he said he too is usually a slow start to this tournament. Did you guys talk about that at all out there?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: No. This is my first time here so I don't really know what my record is. I don't mind being a slow starter if the future will be better. Hopefully get more comfortable just being out here and playing and keeping score. It's not often that I really put a score together. I can't remember the last time I filled out a scorecard.

So that's -- it's a little different than being at home driving in a golf cart playing with my son. Lots of putts are gimmes. It's nice to be back and seeing the players and this tournament is fabulous in so many ways.

Q. Speaking of this event, a lot of these LPGA players didn't get a chance to play with you if they're younger. Have you had a chance to talk to any of them and have



TOURNAMENT OF
CHAMPIONS[™]
DIAMOND RESORTS[®]

Presented by
IOA
INSURANCE OFFICE OF AMERICA

any wanted to meet you?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, no, I've had a chance to talk to some of them. It's interesting. I stepped away 13 years ago when we started the ANNIKA Foundation. Many of these girls have been playing in my junior events, whether it's ANNIKA Invitational or ANNIKA Intercollegiate.

Obviously I've been outside the ropes and they've been inside the ropes, so I know them from afar.

Some of them I did play against when I was out there. On No. 2 here I was talking to Gaby and she wanted some -- she goes, Tell me, how do you prepare and keep the focus for so long? I'm trying to think. I'm all over the place, but just trying to stay to what I remember.

And then just sharing stories. I been working a little bit here and there with Danielle Kang. We've had some conversations over the phone and just kind of get her mentally ready. So it was fun to see her play. No, it's fun to be back for sure.

Q. And obviously you've done a lot since you retired to grow the game of golf, and that's kind of what I think brought you to the relationship with Diamond as far as supporting your events. Tell us a little bit about what your plans are and how they'll be incorporated into the foundation work you're doing?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, so we just literally partnered a few months ago. One of the deals is that I play here, but moving forward they're a big supporter of the ANNIKA Foundation, and hoping to have our tournaments closer next year, around the same time, so the girls can participate in some of the events, if COVID permits, of course.

But to be able to be part of the festivities and see their role models and come out here and be part of it a lot more. So Diamond Resorts will play a big part in the foundation. And that's what they do. They do an excellent job promoting women's golf, and now they will get a chance to do it younger girls together with our initiative.

So we appreciate it and look forward to many great years together.

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.[®]

Q. Were there any kind of feelings or whatever standing on the first tee or standing over a putt that you just had not felt in 13 years? What was your reaction when that started coming up?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, no, a lot of feelings. Like I said, I felt like I practiced to come in here. Felt really good, and all of a sudden I got really tight. My backswing was short. I was moving sideways. Then I was hitting it in spots I really didn't want to be in.

And so I start putting pressure on myself and then I got nervous. When you do this for a living every week you can have a little bit more harmony, rhythm, tempo. I really didn't have that, and it's hard to find it when I haven't seen it in 13 years. I kept trying, and my husband said, Hang in there. Keep trying.

I was trying to find some swing thoughts, and as you know it's not good to have swing thoughts on the course. But I had to get something. And these greens, they're so true but really fast. I can't remember the last time I played on -- putted on like the speed, whatever it is, 12, 13 on some of these.

So you can't really be aggressive either. Yeah, there was a lot the tentative shots, a lot of hesitation, and to play well you just got to go out there, trust yourself, and release the club. Hoping to hit some shots and hopefully find that. Tomorrow is a new day and three more days to go.

Q. You mentioned piecing a round together here. Does it go back 13 years the last time you really had to think your way through that again?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah. I remember it being a lot easier. I remember it being a lot -- you know, not so stressful. It was stressful today, especially when you don't really know where it's going as much.

I mean, that's the thing. I used to just look at the target and swing and they would go there. Now it's like all of a sudden fairways are getting a little more narrow. So I have to go out there and release the club and feel good about my game again.

But, again, great to be here. I love it. I'm excited to be part of it. Just want to enjoy it and hopefully some birdies will roll in and then it will be a different story.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports /#