

Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions

Friday, January 22, 2021
Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA
Tranquilo Golf Course

Annika Sorenstam

Quick Quotes

Q. Annika, thanks for joining us. Two rounds under your belt. Gorgeous day here at the course. What has overall this whole experience been like for you? I know you got a chance to play with Nelly today. That had to be a lot of fun.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it was a lot of fun. I been lucky to play with two players that played really good golf. I wish I could say it helped my game, but it hasn't.

No, it's been great to be here, and I think ever you thing about the my game has been fabulous. I'm enjoying every minute. Nice to play with Mike Flaskey today. I mean, he's been very generous and supportive of not just this tournament, but looking forward to the ANNIKA Foundation.

Great to be here.

Q. Nelly just gave you perhaps the greatest sharp-knife compliment ever. She said, To be able to continue to hit it - wait for it - at your age this way...

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I take that compliment. She played fabulous. She drove it beautifully today. Hit a lot of good iron shots. I actually felt like she probably could have been a few shots better. These how good she played.

I'll take that compliment. I mean, I had maybe a handful of good shots, but then probably the rest of whatever makes 70 was not something I'm going to carry with me.

Again, it's about the experience and being here, and like I said, it's fun to be out with these ladies. Considering, I mean, I've never really played against Nelly. Just watched her as she played in our tournaments, in foundation tournaments. To see her grow and play so beautifully, it was fun.

Q. Annika, you paved the way the way for players like Nelly.



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ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Uh-huh.

Q. When you're playing alongside someone like that, how do you feel? Do you take great pride in the fact that, Hey, this was my foundation?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I'm very proud of my foundation and the tournaments we have. As you know, we have seven tournaments now, and many of the players that are here have played in our events.

So, I mean, I guess I feel a little part of some of the success of growing the girls' golf. We know in the last 15, 16 years the participation rate has doubled. Nelly is part of the next generation as far as golfers coming up, and it's nice to see.

She's the best U.S. player. I think we all enjoy seeing her up there. She has a lot to be proud of, and I know she's going to do great this year and maybe this week, but future for sure. She has everything she needs to go out there and play.

Q. Piggybacking off Steve's question, what it's like to watch Angela Stanford kill it? She won VOA last year. What is that like?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I do follow the LPGA. I don't go out to a lot of tournaments anymore because of COVID. It's fun to see players that have been around a little bit that have experience, like to say they're more mature maybe. She's a very wise player, plays smart out there.

So for her to win that major is a dream come true and just got to keep on practicing and keep on going and believe that you can do it.

Q. Last question is yesterday Gaby Lopez was here talking about yourself and Lorena Ochoa. Have you been texting Lorena at all?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Not recently, but we do keep in touch here and there. We have done a few things, not the last year together, but I would say she's a friend for life. The things we've done together is more than just the golf course.

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Yeah, I'm a big fan of Lorena at the same time. It's nice to have friendships like that where you know you don't have to see each other every week. You know you pick it up when you see each other.

Q. A report came out yesterday that the Olympics won't be happening this year. What do you know?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: What do I know? I can tell you as of 6:12 this morning I got an e-mail from Antony Scanlon, who is the IGF executive director. The plan is that according to IGF, they're planning that the Games will take place.

Q. Oh. So you're optimistic?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I got this email before I came out here, so I guess the reports out of Tokyo they said they were not true. Interesting to see the development.

That's the information I got this morning.

Q. Thank you. Can you share a little bit about your texting back and forth with Danielle? She's playing very well this week. How did that start? What do you like to impart with her?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: She reached out, I don't remember exactly when. We only talk on occasion here and there. She works with Butch and she just said, Hey, I'm just working on -- it started with her wedge game. We know she can hit the ball. She is quite aggressive.

And then the conversation led more to her scoring. She felt like she was a slow starter and always played better in the end.

So we had little few chats how to get off to a better start. She's obviously doing well this week. She's very committed to her game and working hard. I think it helps to have Maverick, her boyfriend, in the same industry. I am sure they push each other quite well.

Yeah, we've kept touch and the McNealys are in the same neighbor as we are in Lake Tahoe, so we have that connection as well.

Q. Anything you noticed about Nelly's game since you saw it up close today? Any nuances that surprised you or that you appreciated?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I don't know if surprised me, but I appreciate her driving. I mean, I hit a few good ones and she was -- her ball was probably launching still when it

passed mine. She just -- I mean, she hits it beautifully. She hits a little lower than some of the other players, but she was totally, I mean, so straight, penetrating through the wind.

I thought that was really impressive. I've just seen her from outside the ropes. If you saw her play inside, it was fun to watch.

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