

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Annika Sorenstam

Quick Quotes

Q. Annika, you're in the lead now. Tell me about your round. Do you feel like you left a few out there maybe?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I do. You know, I didn't finish very strong. You know, it always makes you feel a little bit sour when you finish the way I did.

But, you know, it was a great day out there. I really enjoyed playing with Jessica. She played really well.

And then John, he's always such a nice guy. Good chats and nice crowd. A lot of members from Lake Nona here, my family is out, so it was a great day.

Just the beginning of it just got to be a little bit more patient. I got a little bit antsy out there, just feeling -- I felt better than it really should have been.

But, you know, new day tomorrow, and hopefully some better shots and some birdies.

Q. How did the course compare to like when you played as a member?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, well, I mean, first of all, it's playing longer. I don't play these tees on my own. I go to the forward tees a little bit.

But it's in amazing shape. So nice. Greens are rolling beautifully, obviously faster than normal. The rough is thicker. Seems like the fairways are a little more narrow, too.

So they really -- I think the superintendent, Brandon, has done an excellent job. Some of pin locations is not member's pins, so I'm seeing more like the professional pins, which I kind of like.

Q. And you touched on this playing with Jessica. She was very excited to play with you.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Uh-huh.

Q. Talk a little bit more about your round together.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, like I said, she's a great ambassador for the game, one of the best players in the world right now. She drove it beautifully. She just played very, very solid. It's fun, fun to play with people that play well, and I was hoping some of her mojo would rub off.

You know, it's fun to be kind of front seat and watch the best in the game right now.

Q. Speaking of front seat, you're giving a cool opportunity for the future of the game with your ANNIKA Foundation. I know you had a junior golfer win and now they're getting to play alongside some of the best of the best.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Uh-huh.

Q. Why are you so passionate about that foundation and giving a young player that opportunity?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I enjoy giving back. I enjoy spending time with these girls. I enjoy just being able to share my passion and my knowledge and my experience to the next generation.

I remember what it was like to be at that age. You know, I think it's my way to say thank you. I mean, I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for golf, so how can I give the next generation the same opportunities that I'm having, living my dreams?

So I enjoy spending time with them. I've gotten to know many of them a bit more personally, especially because they go to all the tournaments.

And I don't know if you know the story with Jana Wilson. She came to one of our Share My Passion days, which is a clinic, I believe in 2018 in Las Vegas. She was there. She had just earned a spot into the Drive, Chip and Putt, and I gave her the certificate to go there.

We go back a little bit. And now to see her play in the ANNIKA Invitational and win and come here, I mean, it's just such a fun story, great for everybody. I'm happy for

her.

It's nice to see that girls' golf and women's golf is in a good place.

Q. What's some advice that you would give her right now? Obviously this is probably a little nerve wracking playing alongside these pros.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I really don't think she needs a lot of advice. Maybe I should ask her. But enjoy the moment. I told her, Go there. This is a fun opportunity. You're going to get a chance to play with some LPGA players, maybe even your role model.

Just enjoy the experience, learn something, and just kind of have fun along the way. Of course she's playing well. I don't know about her score today, but she's coming in with great momentum and a lot of confidence. So I hope she's making the most out of this week.

Obviously thank you to Hilton Grand Vacations forgiving her this opportunity. Mike Laskey has spearheaded this, so we're super excited that everything kind of came together and she can be here.

Who knows, maybe I'll play with her later in the week.

Q. You know the member setup typically.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Uh-huh.

Q. You know the championship setup from last year.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah.

Q. Where did today fall on that spectrum?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I mean, it's more of a championship setup. For me, I mean, the tees were a little bit more forward than I had played in the practice rounds because I was playing all the way back. I was expecting it to be at the tip.

So every time I got up there and I saw that it was a few steps from the dot, you know, that made me happy, because the course is quite long for me from back there.

We're getting a little roll, but the greens are superb. You know, it's a fun place to play. It's a fun course to play. It's always different with the wind picking up. I mean, either downwind, all of a sudden you're like, I can't reach this one and this one you can reach.

I enjoy playing here even though I play quite a bit with Will,

so it's nice to be here and see the course in the top shape it is and be able to play with John. He said it was the best shape course he's ever seen. He plays a lot of golf, so...

But I thought he played quite well. When you hit it that far -- I told him, I'm seeing lines I haven't seen before because they were like hitting it that way and I'm over here.

Q. Last question: Does Will give you any advice out here?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, we talked about it last night. He was mad that he had to go to school today, but I told him you can be out there tomorrow. He said, well give me the website where I can get the scores so I can sneak all day.

So I was happy I got off to a good start because I know he was watching. But I'm sure when I get home he's going to say, What happened on No. 3, mommy? And then what happened on 18?

So I will have to report to him when we get back.

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