

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

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Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, good afternoon, thank you Annika for coming to the media center at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions.

Obviously home course. You've had a lot of success here in the past. Is this the year that you win it?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Is this the year? That would be great obviously. I keep trying. I don't give up. As you know I'm not known for being a quitter. On the contrary, just keep fighting away.

No, I mean, I'm very thankful to be here with my partner Hilton Grand Vacations. Aaron was just around the corner. I really appreciate being part of this event. Brings a lot of fun to the community. The members love it. I think the players love it. The course is in great shape.

So it's got a lot of benefit to having the LPGA here to kickstart the season. With family and friends around it's just kind of something we look forward to every year.

Q. Will Will and Ava be out? Is Will going to give you some more tips?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I'm sure I'm going to get a lot of tips. This year Will will actually caddie a few rounds, so we'll see how that goes. He is going to caddie on Thursday and Friday.

So I look forward to that. I think he's looking forward to getting away from school. Then he wants to hang out with his friends on the weekend, so Mike will come in. So I'm lucky I got two of my boys on the bag this weekend.

Yeah, I'm sure I will get some pointers, some really close-up pointers this time. No, it's always fun. As you know it's a family sport for us, and just glad they're going to be and want to be a part of it.

Q. Yeah. So has Will caddied for you before? What



kind of caddie in a competitive situation is he?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I don't know. The answer to the second question is to be -- we'll find out. Obviously we play a lot together, and the last, I would say the last six months or so he's been really helping me around the greens. He reads the putts very well.

I keep telling everybody he has young eyes; I got old eyes. I just don't see it anymore and he sees it, and it's been really, really helpful.

Yeah, he needs to know when to say what, right? That's kind of the thing here. Hopefully he can inspire me and not be too critical on the golf course. He knows I'm doing my best, but I'll be caddieing for him sometime, so maybe then I can get back at him if he doesn't behave. I think he knows the rules.

Q. The competitor in you, it's still there.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Uh-huh.

Q. I see it. So what emphasis do you put on this event? I'm sure you're tired of the question, when are you going to win this thing, right?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I keep asking myself that. What does it take? What do I need to do? I feel like I would have one good round and mess up another one. Just not consistent enough to be able to finish at the top.

So I think I need to do that. In the past we've had good weather, we have cold weather. It's always this time of year, so the conditions have been quite tough for me when the course is longer and it's colder, which looks like we'll have this year. So, yeah, exactly.

I mean, of course I would love to be as ready as I can. I have been practicing. I'm doing what I can. It's just not really much more I can do in the sense I don't have more time to put in and more time and energy to get my game to a different level.

I am just going to do the best I can and it's good enough or

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not. I'll be as focused as I can and prepare as much as possible and we'll go from there.

Q. Has Will been asking for a long time to caddie?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: We've had this conversation in the household for, what, maybe a year or two. It's always been we know that you know the game. Are you big enough to carry the bag? That's been the thing.

Now you've seen him. He's slightly taller than I am so I would say he is ready to carry the bag. I'm sure it's going to be a light bag in the sense I'm not going to load up a ton of balls a lot of rain gear.

We'll see how we can do it in this weather. Be interesting to see. The varsity he has a push cart, so here we'll be carrying the bag. I hope he can focus on my game and not take the clubs and start swinging around the corner, which he always does. He always swings and it's like, well, okay. It's my turn to hit, so I need the bag.

So if he can stay focused on what he's there to do. He did ask me, first question was, am I going to get paid, so that's kind of covered. I'm sure there will be some other questions that will come through the next few days.

Q. What was the answer?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I said sure, yeah. I really want to say, buddy, I pay you every day something. I mean, I've been paying for you for 14 years. But I don't think he would've accepted the bag then. Yeah, no, I mean, whatever the little piece will be, he will get.

Q. I saw you had a social media post that he played in a tournament in some tough weather.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah.

Q. Proud mom moment. Since the weather will be challenging this week, what are some tips you've given him about playing in tough conditions?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, first of all, you got to be patient. You have to beat patience. You don't want patience to beat you. When it's cool you have to just kind of have to accept that the scores will be not as low. It's going to play longer. Go for the middle of the fairway, middle of the green. Play for the safer part versus being too aggressive.

So I think he did that on Sunday. It was really gusty up at Gainsville where he played. I wasn't caddieing, but just you go out there and be supportive and talk about hitting

one shot at a time. You can see some of the kids when they get frustrated when the ball is kind of taking off in the wind or you feel like it's swirling or cold. You can see that -- these are the learning lessons we all do as juniors, and that's what I've been telling him the last few years when he's playing.

Every day is different. You got to learn how to adjust. These are things I got to tell myself this weekend for sure.

Q. How have you enjoyed playing in the colder conditions throughout your career?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You know, it's funny. I really don't enjoy it because it's a lot more difficult. A lot of layers. It's tougher. It's just more grinding.

But if you look at how I played and obviously growing up in Sweden this is something I'm probably used to. Mike always tells me I'm a mudder meaning I play well in tough conditions. I don't give up, keep grinding. Bad shots doesn't really affect me too much. I just keep on going.

For some reason I score versus others better in cold weather, so you think I would enjoy it. I do prefer warmer if I may say.

But whatever it takes, I'm going to do the best and go out there and accept. My dad told me a long time ago there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothes. Everything you own, put it on and keep going; no complaining.

Q. How has Will been training and preparing for this caddie opportunity?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Not much. I just texted him, where are you? He goes, I'm fishing. So, yeah, that's -- not going through the yardage book, not checking out the hole locations. Yeah, a little different approach.

What can I say? (Laughing.)

Q. What do you think will be the biggest asset he brings as a caddie?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I mean, number one is just it warms my heart that he's there. To have your child with you and walking with you and share the passion for the sport, I mean, this is really something I think in a that we looked forward to, that one of them would want to do it. My heart will be warm in that sense.

Again, he knows the game very well. I like the way he's talks. Like today he was out there -- was there all day but not really focused. He was in and out it felt like, when he

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felt like. When it was cold he was laying in the cart with a blanket and I was over there, I was like, I need a club.

And then he would say, okay, 105; you need to play it 115. So he gets my language. Hopefully he can get my language 18 holes and we can keep that going.

But then, the greens, he's really good with the greens. I think he is going to help me there. He needs to be positive. He can't be mad that I disappointment hit it where he was visualizing it.

So it's really going to test both of us I think. You know, who knows. We'll have great memories once this week is over.

Q. First round pairings I see are with Lydia Ko and Charles Woodson.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Okay, I did not know that. Okay. I love it.

Q. Locals obviously.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, neighbors.

Q. Talk to me now that you know.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, neighbors. I see Lydia here all the time when I'm out there. She's always working on something. Probably one of the sweetest players on Tour. She's out here with her dog, Kai. I feel like we got a friendly bond there.

And then Charles, I've seen him for years. Has two sons same age as our kids, so they played together early on just around the corner, elementary school, a little bit at the middle school.

So I know Charles quite well. Been seeing him hitting some balls here and there, but never really played with him in competition, so I look forward to that.

He's a cool guy in a lot of the ways. Obviously very successful in what he's -- not just done in football but also afterwards. I love my pairing. Yeah, I really do. That's cool.

Q. I was going to ask, is Will getting paid in money or like in relieving chores for a certain period of time?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, we haven't really defined that and he didn't ask any more. I think it's up in the air a little bit.

He's taking a few days off and he's put an effort in, so I think a little compensation doesn't hurt. I want to inspire him to be able to do chores and help out, and that's it worth the effort.

Q. Also, just if you do well the first two days, are you going to be asking him to abandon his friends?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, Mike told him if you're doing well he's willing to step away for the weekend, right?

MIKE McGEE: Yeah.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: So we'll see. A lot of "we'll see" in this week.

Q. You touched on this, they're about to have a check presentation to your foundation. Talk about that relationship and a little bit about how that gives back to your foundation.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, no, thank you for bringing that up. Yes we are having a nice check presentation. Hilton Grand, they been great with us for the foundation. So very supportive. I do several things personally and then also with the foundation. They understand the importance of giving back and helping young girls pursue their dream. What we do with our mission is to empower young women, so we are thankful for that. We've been able to put tournaments together and really put it back into girls golf. In the past, as you know, we've had our ANNIKA Invitational around the corner and we've always had the winner play in this tournament. This year we made a change, but they continue to support us, so very thankful for that. It's going to be great to be able to continue our mission.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for being here.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.

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