

The LPGA Drive On Championship presented by Volvik

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Ocala, Florida, USA

Golden Ocala

Anna Nordqvist

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the virtual media center for the LPGA Drive On Championship presented by Volvik at Golden Ocala.

We are joined by Anna Nordqvist, who recently shared her DriveOn story, yesterday in fact. Thank you for joining us, Anna.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Thank you for having me.

THE MODERATOR: Before we start with questions we're going to share your spot of your DriveOn story. (Video shown).

What a powerful message.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Never give up. When you watch this piece yourself, how does it make you feel to know you can be impacting even one person out there?

ANNA NORDQVIST: It means a lot. Looking back at it obviously I been on tour now since 2009. Just put the whole journey this perspective. I think a lot of people just see it as one uphill run, but there has been a lot of struggles in there.

When you're going through those and battle through them and came out on top, they just mean so much more. I think that's where my journey, you know, I've had quite a few downs but been able to battle through them and I found the strength.

Just that attitude, never giving up, I know it's a powerful attitude and something that's helped me so much, so if I can influence someone, that obviously would mean a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Well, you were part of the original This is For Every Girl film that launched the DriveOn



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campaign and brand a couple years ago.

What was it like to be part of that kind, have a voice in it but to be part of that and now to tell your story to an even greater audience and have that more distinct voice?

ANNA NORDQVIST: It meant a lot to be chosen for that. I think I'm a pretty private person and I'm pretty down to earth, so I feel like when people really see me for who I am and they get to know me, I think I have a lot of things I can share.

So just knowing that Roberta and the LPGA, they believe in me to be one of those four girls, that meant a lot to me.

THE MODERATOR: You've had some very influential people in your life, especially family. We saw the pictures in your feature. And then between your brothers that you talked about in your story, your younger brother Mattias coming out to caddie and help you rediscover that passion. At times maybe the flame wasn't as lit for you. To your grandpa who really introduced you to the sport and helped carve your mindset that has helped guided you to success.

Starting with your grandpa, how much of an impact did he make for you to get where you are today?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, my grandpa was an amazing guy. He's not with us anymore, which is hard, but he's always telling me -- like he wasn't a golfer. He loved sports. I just like really cherish those moments that I had with him, just like knowing his strength, because he didn't have an easy journey. He came from Hungary and he was meant to come to the United States with his sister and his mom, but while he was waiting on I think the visas he went to Sweden and met my grandma. His journey looks a little bit different than what was originally planned.

But it's been hard not having him there, and just been a lot of obviously good moments that I cherish that I had with him. When things get tough I always think of him and I feel like it helps me a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Strong man with many memories for you.



ANNA NORDQVIST: Yes, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Just looking at your brothers, what role did they play and what role do they still play?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I'm the only girl, middle girl, and both my brothers are amazing. They're a little bit different in the sense, but I feel like I can always turn to them. I probably wouldn't be playing golf if it wasn't for my younger brother coming out to caddy for me the summer of 2013. I really had the best summer ever.

You know, you're so far away from them and just having time to spend with them means a lot.

Q. Who were the golfers in your family, the people who introduced you and instilled the love of the game?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so we never grew up with golf. My dad played a little bit of mini golf; he competed at the European stage before my older brother was born. And then I think when my older brother was around ten one of his friends in school had gotten a golf club, so he joined him for practice, and all of a sudden my dad and him picked up the game and started playing one of those introductory courses.

Then me and my younger brother were going to come and do the same. Then I hated the game because it was so boring, so I think I was around ten at this time. Then I quit, so my mom eventually wanted to start. I think I was about 13 at the time, and then I just didn't want to be there. Only person in the family not playing golf. I didn't want to be the worst golfer in the family so I tried it again.

So, yeah, it just wasn't something we were born into. I feel like having two really supportive parents and having sports in the family and having two brothers, it wasn't really only golf but a lot of other sports. But definitely have a huge influence from my family.

Q. To do this for a career you really have to love it. At what point did you know you loved it?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I tried a lot of different sports. I was swimming probably six, seven times a week. I was a dedicated swimmer ever that I just had any success because I'm very slow. I don't have a lot explosive muscles in my body. Even if I'm tall I don't hit it very far. But I love sports, and probably just about finding the right sport for me.

I tried team sports, but the fact that like I kind of wanted the pressure and I wanted to be able to play whenever I wanted or practice as much as I wanted. So I think when I

start trying golf again and I got better instantly, then just felt like there was always something to work on. I really got the itch for it. By the time I was 15, 16, I was all in.

Q. And you talked about your brother coming out and caddying for you and that really saving your career. What was the lowest point for you?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think it was around that time, because I'd lost the motivation and I felt like I was -- it was a lot of pressure from the outside. It just wasn't on my terms. I felt like there was probably other things I would rather be doing because I wasn't enjoying it, I wasn't enjoying the environment I was in.

So having my brother come out and feel like -- just having someone on the bag that I really enjoyed spending time with, and he's so positive and he made me believe in myself when I didn't believe in myself there for a while.

Q. Your second major championship came in perhaps the most miserable conditions we've seen out here. How difficult was it to grind through that sleet basically and come out on top?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so at the end there, I mean, it got really cold really quickly. I didn't really warmup or anything because I was just trying to be inside and stay warm. It rained so much. I was soaked. I didn't have rain gear that really held up. And then it was hailing at a time when we were in the fairway, and I think me and Altomare, we were just kind of looking at each other over the fairway. I guess we're playing.

Couldn't feel my hands on that chip shot. It was just really tough times, but, again, it reminded me a lot of the times I used to play in the snow or during the winters with the guys back home in Sweden. A lot times I practice in bad conditions, so maybe it was meant to be there for me.

Q. You've been a Solheim Cup veteran for a lot of years now. How important is that event to you, and how much are you looking forward to it again?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I live for the Solheim Cups. It's the highlight of my career. I've been fortunate to win quite a few times on the LPGA Tour. When I look back, it's the moments in the Solheim Cup. You get to share those with your teammates. I still remember back in 2009 my rookie year when I'm teeing it up with Laura Davies and Helen Alfredsson, Suzann Patterson, all the players that I grew up watching, and all of a sudden -- I think playing with Suzann Petersen there in the best ball on the Saturday, that's still my highlight, and I think we won the last two holes to win the match.

Just being surrounded by childhood idols, it was such a special moment for me. I've done six now and I would like to do a couple more before I'm done. But it's just -- you can't really compare the feeling of walking up to the first tee box.

I got to hit the first tee shot in 2013 in Colorado and I think it was so much adrenaline pumping. I think hit it about another 20 yards, so it's just those moments that can't be described in words. When I have tough times going to practice and when that's bad weather, those are the moments I think of. There is just nowhere else I would rather be than playing in those moments.

Q. How often do you relive or get asked about the ace you made in Colorado?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Probably not so much from other players. Just more people like to remind me, or like, I was there, you know. Quite often. I think it's just such a cool memory because it was to win the match right there and then, but I obviously don't mind the questions.

Q. Best Solheim Cup memory, that ace or Suzann making the putt in Scotland?

ANNA NORDQVIST: What was hard about that Suzann moment was obviously seeing it. It was really cool, but I just never made it back because I finished my match against Morgan on I believe 15 green, and we were -- I think we made on a cart to the 18th tee box and then we heard she made the putt and we were sprinting up the fairway.

So I never really got to experience that, like sitting there. Obviously I've seen it on TV. But the ace was really cool.

But I think my first Solheim Cup just playing with everyone.

Q. Great.

THE MODERATOR: In your first-person piece on LPGA.com, you talked about how you associate your grandpa with water. Why is that?

ANNA NORDQVIST: So my grandpa's ashes was spread in water just outside a summer place we have in Sweden. It's just one of those places that he used to love going to, so I feel like I'm connected to my grandfather through water.

THE MODERATOR: You and Steve mentioned the 2017 Evian playoff when you got back in the winner's circle in pouring rain.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: What was that moment like and maybe a connection you felt to him then?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, the weather couldn't get any worse. The fact that there was water there right by the 18 green, just one of those moments you can't really explain. You know, I still think about it and I do believe in higher forces and that sometimes things are meant to be, but I definitely think he was a big part of it.

THE MODERATOR: In addition to "never give up" in your piece, I really found "follow your heart" to be an overarching theme in your story whether that was moving to America to pursue golf at a higher level, leaving college early to chase your dream of the LPGA. What has follow your heart meant to you and has it been almost as important a voice in your head as never give up?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Absolutely. I think I've always believed in going about things the way I think it works for me. Things just hasn't been easy. I had great grades both in like school back home and in college, but it wasn't because things were easy for me. I always had to work hard.

So I feel like I probably have worked a lot harder than a lot of people. Like I was never the most talented person and never the best golfer, but I felt like I had that dedication and the work ethic to beat a lot of players along the way.

But then what has always been important for me was to do things my way, whether that's been -- sometimes I think it takes me a lot longer to learn something, but I'll be out there practicing until I get it.

Yeah, requires a lot of dedication and time, but just going about things my way. I feel like that might have been hard like coming out on tour because I feel like a lot of people want to tell you how it's going to be made. When I wanted to leave college early I didn't really feel like -- that was what I wanted to do and that's what I needed to do to keep myself motivated and I got questioned about it.

But I never questioned myself for it because I knew what my heart told me to do or what I needed to do. I think some of the best decisions in my life I made when I truly listened to myself and decided to go about it the way I know works for me.

THE MODERATOR: 2017 you were diagnosed with mononucleosis and underwent a period that extended well beyond a year of extreme fatigue and symptoms. What

was that time like for and where did you go specifically for your inspiration to pull you from those challenging uncertain moments?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, looking back at it I probably would've done things a little bit different knowing how it affects you. It probably took me until last year to be fully healthy. I think COVID was a blessing and a curse, because in one way it kind of gave me the break that I probably should have taken straight after like getting mono.

But then also I won Evian three months after I had it. Didn't have any energy and ended up crashing completely going to Asia. I had no energy. And then I almost hit the wall there in April the following year because I had nothing and it was early in the year. I didn't recognize myself and I didn't -- I couldn't quite use that extra gear that I always had.

When it goes back it never giving up, I always felt like when things were tough I would always have that mental strength to push me through, but with mono all of a sudden I had nothing. I had nothing to fight back. I had nothing to push me through things.

So I think that was the hardest part, because I feel like that grind and that stubbornness, I just didn't recognize myself for a very long time. I felt like during COVID I got a little bit of a break and my mind wasn't going 100 miles an hour every single day.

It was definitely one of my harder times in my career. Your health, something you most likely take for granted, or you work out, but when the health is not there for different reasons, it's definitely hard.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. To see how the LPGA Tour DriveOn campaign has blossomed over the last two years to where sponsors like Volvik are wanting to associate with an LPGA Drive On Championship event and bring it to Golden Ocala, what's it like to see the meeting of the LPGA brand take off as it is, especially for you in telling your own story?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think it's amazing. We're going to see some good stories; going to see some touching stories, like Madelene Sagstrom's. But I always tell a lot of people when they ask about the tour, and I think there are a lot of great personalities and I don't think they're necessarily broadcasted in a way you can see some of the great personalities we have just watching the coverage.

There are a lot of good stories. I think there are a lot of good messages that are able to be told. I'm proud to be part of it and hopefully can influence someone. But I think

it's important to know that we're great golfers, but at the end of the day we're just normal people with struggles, with ups, with downs, with just everyday things you go through. I think that's easily forgotten.

THE MODERATOR: Last one I have for you. Little different path than DriveOn, but kind of relates. How cool was it play with I'm sure a childhood idol of yours in Annika Sorenstam when you played with her at Gainbridge last week?

ANNA NORDQVIST: It was amazing. It really was. I'm so grateful for the opportunity. Before last week I had never played one single round with Annika, so I had texted her asking if she wanted to play a practice round knowing that she probably would be asked by a lot of people.

So I played nine holes with her on the Monday, which, I mean, it was raining but I didn't care; I got to play with Annika. But then also getting the opportunity to tee it up with her over two rounds.

I followed her a lot. I started playing in 2000. That's kind of when her prime started. So I've seen her play a lot, but it's different being inside the ropes with her. I was still really impressed, and you can tell why, she was great. Just being able to ask her questions and seeing like coming down the stretch on like Friday her making a long putt on 3 and then making the chip shot on 7. That was amazing. Her fist pumps and I was out there like cheering for her because I wanted to see her do well.

She's been a very great role model for me over the years and it's nice to be able to have that experience that I can say that I played with her, too.

THE MODERATOR: You played with the GOAT.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: If no more questions, we will wish Anna good luck and thank you for spending your afternoon with us here in the virtual media center and sharing your DriveOn story with us. Thank you.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Thank you.

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