

Solheim Cup

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Andalucía, Spain

Finca Cortesin

Team Europe

Celine Boutier

Leona Maguire

Press Conference



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ANDALUCÍA, SPAIN

2023

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. I'm here for the first European press conference, joined by Ireland's Leona Maguire and France's Celine Boutier.

Leona, let's start with you. Back here in Spain. I know you were here a few months ago. What's the course looking like this week?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, it's really good. Played 18 this morning. Nice to see them all. Yeah, there's some really good variety. I think the par-3s are really strong. It's just an exciting first hole to start off with, with the percentage for people driving the green. The greens are tricky. They're pretty sloped in places. They're getting faster, they're grainy, so I think with any Solheim Cup, putting will be the key this week.

THE MODERATOR: Celine, same with you. I know you played this morning. How was the course out there?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes, played the front nine. It was very good to be able to see the course. I think it's very much about placement out here. A little bit long, longer than I would have wanted, but I think it's going to be a good challenge and a very good match play course.

THE MODERATOR: Celine, you've had such a great summer. I know you've been looking forward to this Solheim Cup. How excited are you to be playing on European soil? Obviously it's been four years since you made your debut in Gleneagles.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, it's always so much fun and to be able to come back in European soil with the fans is definitely something I'm looking forward to. Already today seeing a few faces, and the encouragement on the course was already pretty nice feeling, so very looking forward to the rest of the week.

THE MODERATOR: Leona, obviously first time out last

time in the States where you only had your sister with you, whereas I know everyone's coming this week. How excited are you for your first Solheim Cup on European soil?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, really excited. There was quite a lot of Irish people heading over on my flight, even on Sunday, and then today there was quite a few tricolors out there, a few people dressed up already today, which is pretty impressive for a Tuesday. So yeah, really excited and nice to have the fans cheering along and everybody so excited for us to be here. Hopefully we can give them some things to cheer about.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to open the floor up to questions.

Q. The U.S. team is not using the pod system this year. We in the media try to kind of read into who comes in together and sits together in the press conferences to figure out who could possibly be playing together. Is there anything we should read into with you two sitting up here together?

LEONA MAGUIRE: No. We spent two years at Duke together. Celine's just missed me so much this summer she wanted to do her press conference with me. She said she's going to say a lot of nice things.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, no comment. (Laughing.)

Q. Could you speak to your involvement in talking with Suzann to determine who you will or won't be playing with this week?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think we have a fantastic team this week. I think there's lots of options of who can play with who. It's obviously a new team and you'll see some familiar pairings and some new pairings. She's done a lot of these, she's done nine herself, so she knows what she's doing. So I think both myself and Celine are pretty flexible. We'll play with just about anybody, so we're going to do whatever Suzann needs us to do this week.

Q. Leona, you had such a fantastic Solheim last time. I'm wondering how you use that as fuel for this week



and also on the other side of it, how do you temper your expectations coming into a week like this?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, obviously last time went about as well as it possibly could have, but it's a brand-new event this time, it's a brand-new venue, a brand-new team, both on the Europe and the U.S. side. I think the U.S. have a fantastic team this time. I think they have a young team that's ready to go.

Yeah, ultimately, I'll try and win as many points as I can, but we'll just prepare as well as we can and go in with very little expectations like the last time, the same way as I approach any other event. Just because it's worked well in the past doesn't really make much difference for this time.

It almost feels a little bit like a rookie again playing on home soil. This is all still a new experience for me, so just try and enjoy the week as much as I can and feed off the energy of the crowd as much as I can.

Q. Your former Duke teammate there beside you, Celine, now you have a chance to say some nice things about Leona. How would you define Leona Maguire, how would you describe her as a player, and what did you think of her performance in the last Solheim when you were watching?

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, her last performance was essentially flawless, so, yeah, very impressive. I think she's a very steady and consistent player, great around the greens, definitely a very good putter, so I feel like it's going to be definitely a weapon for match play. Her performance from the last edition of the Solheim Cup definitely shows that. So, yeah, I definitely would not want to be paired against Leona.

Q. A couple of things you two have in common is you haven't lost a Solheim Cup and you have one of the best records throughout the Solheim Cup. So do you feel there's going to be a lot of expectations of you this week of, like, win and everything again with having a record like that?

LEONA MAGUIRE: We're going to try our best. It's all we can do. I think me and Celine like to just stick to our own routines. We're pretty sort of quiet and just go about our business very quietly and very efficiently, same way as we do for any other week, any other major or big tournament. So, yeah, we'll have hopefully a lot of people cheering us on and hoping we do well and then, yeah, try and do as best we can.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I don't think we really are worrying about the expectations right now. We're just

trying to prepare the best that we can. Obviously, trying to figure out the pairings and do the best with what we have with what we're being paired with and against, and I think just worry about the results later. I think we just can only give our best and I feel like we should be pretty satisfied if everything goes according to the plan.

Q. About the endurance this week. It's a tough golf course, it's going to be a tough walk, so how have you prepared physically and also will you take some weight off the bag for your caddies?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, we'll have to -- I mean, it's nice that the good weather, so no umbrellas and no extra waterproofs and everything. Any water out there, I think, as well, it's going to be hot. But, yeah, it's going to be just as much of a physical test this week as a mental test. Managing energy, I think, is going to be big. We have a lot of practice, a lot of media, a lot of things this week, a lot of dinners, so managing energy throughout the week is going to be key to make sure we still have plenty in the tank for Sunday.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yes, I've been, you know, trying to rest as much as I could. I feel like everyone kind of prepared us ahead of time saying that it was going to be a very physical course, so I think just trying to prepare the best you can and at the same time save some energy for the actual tournament.

I feel like just being able to just play, like, once or a few times, just get the hang of it and then just going to rest for the tournament is going to be pretty important.

Q. You had such a stellar debut at Gleneagles. How are you a different player this year as a major champion and how has your role on the team changed since 2019?

CELINE BOUTIER: I don't feel like as a player I've evolved that much. I feel like my game is very much similar. I feel like I was playing very well in Gleneagles, and I feel like being able to experience everything for the first time and the energy and being partnered with Georgia was also ended up being such a good pairing that everything just worked out in our favor.

But as a player and as a person I don't feel too different. I don't feel like my role in particular has changed much. I feel like I'm just trying to do my best out there and bring as many points as I can, and then the rest is really not up to us. So I'm just really trying to do my best and try to not let my teammates down.

Q. How would you describe Suzann's leadership style

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so far?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, she's obviously very competitive, she has an unbelievable record, so we really want to win for her.

But she's been great, she's been very open, she's been very transparent with everything this week, she's been communicating a lot with what she's thinking about pairings and different things. So, yeah, she's trying to get all of our inputs and really wants what's best for the team. Ultimately we have to hit the shots, so it's a little bit out of her control, but she's been really good so far.

CELINE BOUTIER: Yeah, I definitely feel like it's been nice to be able to voice our opinions and our thoughts on the pairings. I feel like it's not always been the case in the past, but I feel like it's very important that we feel comfortable with the choices that she ultimately decides to make. So I think it's been nice to be kind of feeling a little bit more involved. I feel like, yeah, she's definitely so competitive that I feel like she's probably going to be more pumped up than us (laughing).

It's going to be really cool to be able to play for her and play for the team.

Q. Regarding the victories you had this year, incredible victories, has it changed the way you see success in golf with the victories you had this year? Do you change the way you see victories in golf? For example, is it different for you?

CELINE BOUTIER: I think each victory is a little bit different. There's no one way to think about it. Obviously this week as a team the victory is very different than what it is on a normal tournament week. But it's all good. I feel like just because we have 12 players and the captains and the vice captains this week it just makes the emotions so much stronger. That is definitely a different feel for victory. It's definitely something that's incredibly rewarding. So I feel like I definitely want to experience that again this year. Hopefully we'll have a great week and great memories.

Q. If you had to choose between a gold medal and a Solheim Cup, which would you choose?

CELINE BOUTIER: I'm not going to choose. I will take either one.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Ladies, thank you very much and best of luck this week.

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