

# Solheim Cup

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Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

## Team Europe

Linn Grant

Maja Stark

Esther Henseleit

Press Conference



ROBERT TRENT JONES  
GOLF CLUB  
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**THE MODERATOR:** Hello and welcome to the media center of the 2024 Solheim Cup hosted at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club. Thank you to all the media here in person and also those on the zoom.

I'll start with a couple of questions for the players before opening it up to media in the room. Esther, we'll start with you as the rookie. What a whirlwind of a summer it's been with an Olympic medal and now making the Solheim Cup debut. What does it mean to be here representing team Europe. And how's the week been so far?

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** It means a lot. It's amazing to be here, to be part of this European team. It's definitely been a wild summer. Played some good golf, so it's nice to really have qualified for this team and didn't need a pick.

Yeah, the last two days have been great. Already played nine holes. Yeah, I can't wait to get started.

**THE MODERATOR:** Linn, this is your second Solheim Cup. You played all five matches last time out in Spain. What did you learn from that experience that you can bring here in the U.S.?

**LINN GRANT:** Just experience overall, being part of the European team. Just playing so many rounds, I mean, showing up in Spain that week, I was like I'll do whatever you need me to do, and it was really fun. So just have good memories from playing all those rounds.

Experience-wise, it's just a little bit more comfortable going into this week, I suppose, but I think also it's going to be a lot different than Spain -- different crowd, different team. Yeah, I think it will be great.

**THE MODERATOR:** Maja, you were also a rookie last time out in Spain. How excited are you to be back

representing Europe but doing it in the States this time?

**MAJA STARK:** It's really cool. It's nice to hear what the people that have been doing this for longer say about playing in the U.S., about how it kind of brings the European team together even more.

I feel like we're feeling it already a little bit. I'm really excited to see this side of it.

**THE MODERATOR:** As you're all part of the Junior Solheim Cup team together and now you're all on the Solheim Cup team, what are your memories of that tournament and how great is it that you're all here now?

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** It was pretty good for us because it was in the U.S. as well, and we got to watch the big Solheim after. So I feel like we already have an idea of what the atmosphere is going to be like. I feel like that definitely prepared us for this week.

It's great to have us all here. We played so much junior golf together, and it's really fun to share this week as well.

**LINN GRANT:** Yeah, I mean, not only Junior Solheim Cup, but we played European teams together for so many years. I still remember this match we had against you and Aline. It was ridiculous. A lot of good memories. I guess we're all just very happy to be here together, and it's a nice full circle moment.

**Q. For Esther, it's been a wild couple of months for you, winning silver in Paris and now making this team. Can you just put into words what the last couple of months have been like and where your confidence level is at with all this success and now making your first Solheim Cup?**

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** It's been a lot of fun. I felt like my hard work over the last few years kind of paid off and everything came together a little bit. It's been great to see some good results coming in. It definitely helps my confidence.

As I said earlier, it's great to have qualified for this team, to



... when all is said, we're done.®

have earned my spot, and I'm really looking forward to this week as well.

**Q. For Maja and Linn, obviously it's a big experience being a rookie and both of you are still pretty young. What did you all learn about yourselves in Spain that maybe you apply to this season on both the LET and the LPGA or that you're going to apply to this Solheim Cup?**

**LINN GRANT:** After playing in Spain last year, like the end of the season got a little bit boring just because like this week is so much fun. There's so much adrenaline. It's really hard to like have the same experience as that because this is like the top of what we're doing.

In the back of my head, I wish that every week was like this because it's so surreal and all the feelings that you feel while you're playing -- you're nervous, you're scared, you're happy, the adrenaline. It's like a whole nother level of golf that you have to think about.

So I think for me, just having this fan experience in the back of my head, knowing that I will be nervous on the 1st tee, like I will be in situations where I'm not always very comfortable, and it's just very nice to have that with me going into this week.

**MAJA STARK:** I feel the same way, that going into Spain there were so many question marks about how will I react to this? How am I going to feel on the 1st tee? Like I never really do big gestures and stuff when I make a putt, and then all of a sudden at Solheim, I just started screaming and fist pumps and everything. I had no idea that was going to come out. So I know that that might happen this week.

It's just nice to know a little bit more about what to expect. It takes a little bit less energy this time because there's -- yeah, you don't go around thinking about it all the time.

**Q. Linn, you spoke about 1st tee, and you know you're going to have those nerves, you all will. For youngsters around the world looking up to you and watching you and playing in their own competitive golf games, what are you focusing on when you're on that 1st tee? Obviously you can't control what's going on in your mind, but are you looking at anything in particular, or do you have any management skills?**

**LINN GRANT:** I think to me, like the 1st tee, depending on the week, it's like you're less or more nervous. Like this week the nervousness is very high. I always try to tell myself that I love those moments and that's why I play professional golf, to find those feelings and learn how to

behave in those situations or handle myself.

So I guess more of like just pumping myself up in a very calm way, like you love this, you're just going to go out and do what you do every time and have a good routine of what I'm doing. Just try to do the same thing as I always do.

Yeah, but just really ease into it and tell myself that I love being nervous helps.

**Q. Maja, just really quickly. I know you two girls have played together in the last Cup. What is that relationship like between the both of you? Are you good friends? I'm hoping.**

**MAJA STARK:** Yes, we don't hate each other (laughter).

**Q. What's the team room like right now? How has Suzann set it up? I know it's early in the week, but what's the atmosphere like in there?**

**MAJA STARK:** It's so much fun. I feel like everyone is not taking everything too seriously. Not taking themselves too seriously is one of the big things that I think we're having so much fun already.

I think it's going to keep going like this because we have such a good group of people. It's like the perfect mix.

**Q. Esther, finally, you've got your boyfriend on the bag caddieing this week. What is it like to have that support of someone so close to you on the bag and have family and friends here? But in general, having a support network when you're out playing golf.**

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** Yeah, it's really important for everyone. It's great to have Reece on my bag. He just obviously knows me so well and knows what to say when I get a bit nervous or when I get a bit quick or down on myself. Yeah, he just knows me so well, so he knows what to say in which moment.

It's just great to have someone with you all the time who really has your back.

**Q. Does he ever annoy you?**

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** I mean, of course we are up-and-down, but we're both pretty easygoing. So most of the time, it's pretty good.

**Q. Esther, with this being your first Solheim Cup, what's the best advice that you've received from some of your teammates about competing this week?**

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** There's a few definitely. I think one really good one is just to come here prepared. Don't expect to get loads of time to practice when you get here. So just come to this tournament prepared and then take it pretty easy on the practice days so you're ready to go on Friday.

**Q. What are you most looking forward to in having this experience?**

**ESTHER HENSELEIT:** Probably being part of a team. We play so much just for ourselves, so it's great to have 11 or 15, with the captains and everything, people behind you and you're really a team and to experience that.

As Maja said, the emotions are just so much higher this week, so I'm really looking forward to that.

**Q. Linn and Maja, can you two compare Finca Cortesin to this course, and what part of your game might get tested more here versus there?**

**MAJA STARK:** This is easier to walk, so that's great. I think this is a little bit softer to the greens. It feels like it's playing a little bit shorter than Finca. We've only played the front nine so far, so maybe that's why.

You get some really long bunker shots here. There's a lot of bunkers on the back nine which are very strategically placed. So that's something we didn't really have to worry about last time, I think.

**LINN GRANT:** I think this week too, just playing yesterday and today, like Maja said, the course is playing quite soft, but the conditions of the place is so nice. Like you get a -- at least I get a really nice feeling when I'm playing. You feel like you can play really well here.

For the production and the matches and everything, I feel like it's going to be a really good week for everyone. There's going to be a lot of birdies. Like at the end of the day, we just want to go out and play really good golf, and I think that's very possible here.

I think it was a little bit more -- like this is more target golf than Finca was, to me at least.

**Q. Can you two compare or discuss how it's been having Suzann as your captain and if she's made any changes in her approach from this year versus last year?**

**LINN GRANT:** I think it's great. She's very -- always very straightforward. Like you know when you get with her. You don't ever have to wonder if what she says is actually

what she means, which is great in a coach, I think.

I think that she was maybe a bit easier last year in the way that she kind of went in and wanted to be buddies with everyone. She still is, but in a very different way this year. I think she's taking the role as a captain like more now. She's putting herself, in a good way, above the players, like she really wants to guide us and show the way.

**MAJA STARK:** Last time she was very democratic, and she kind of told us -- was it on the Monday or the Tuesday? She told us -- I think it was the Monday. She told us like who we were going to play with. Then it got a little bit switched around, and we didn't really know what was going on sometimes.

So I think it's a lot better now. She knows when to say it. She knows what's appropriate. Yeah, she seems more comfortable this year.

**LINN GRANT:** Yeah, I think that she really like took the lesson and kind of went through what she could have done better last year, and there is a difference to it this year, which I think as a player feels very nice, like that everyone is doing all they can to have a great week.

**Q. Outside of more concise communication, what else is there for Suzann to improve upon as a captain?**

**MAJA STARK:** There's a bit with the helpers now that is a bit more structured. We have a ton of helpers for -- and then each helper gets two players and two caddies, so we know who to go to. We don't have to talk to four people because maybe they know what's going on. We just have to tell one person. So it's a bit more efficient like that.

**LINN GRANT:** I think just in general, like the feedback we gave her, she's really listened to that. Like for every player that's obviously an individual thing, but I think everyone is feeling a bit more comfortable this year going into this week with everyone.

Everyone knows each other a little bit more this time around, and it already feels like it's Friday, but it's just Tuesday, which is nice.

**Q. Even though you've raised the Cup through three straight cycles, is there an underdog mindset, especially when you look at the Americans on paper? What's the approach for Europe going into this?**

**LINN GRANT:** I think there might be. Obviously when you look on paper, the U.S. Team is very strong, and I don't think it's bad going into this week knowing that we have to give up like a good fight to keep the Cup.

So I think we're all very excited to go out and be aggressive from the start this time. We were a slow last year. And just give it our all. Is that what you say (laughter)?

**Q. For Linn and Maja, this is a team that has so many Swedish players and last year did as well. What does it mean to you to kind of represent your country as well as the continent and also be a part of that kind of Swedish domination that's taken over the last couple years on this team?**

**MAJA STARK:** It's kind of weird to say that it feels like we're used to it because it's been like this for as long as we've been alive kind of.

Well, you had the -- like kind of around when we were born, you had Helen Alfredsson, Annika Sorenstam, Charlotta Sorenstam, Carin Koch. You had so many people that it doesn't feel like it's that uncommon for so many Swedes to be here.

Yeah, I don't know. We're just -- we are the best. We've always been. We're always going to be.

**LINN GRANT:** To me, it feels nice to have other Swedes on the team, just to chat with, to be a bit closer with. Like you have things in common. You know what to talk about. You don't always have to say every detail. You have each other. It's just nice, I guess.

**MAJA STARK:** I feel like that's kind of what makes a team better. Not everyone has to be best buddies, but we know each other so well, and that's what kind of brings the team spirit, I feel, because we just know where we've got each other.

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