

Solheim Cup

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Gainesville, Virginia, USA

Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

Team USA

Captain Stacy Lewis

Press Conference



ROBERT TRENT JONES
GOLF CLUB
GAINESVILLE, VA

2024

THE MODERATOR: All right, everyone. Thank you so much for being here in the media center at the 2024 Solheim Cup.

I'm Christina Lance with the LPGA. Want to take an opportunity to say thank you to everybody for coming. Thank you to everyone who's joined us here in the media center, as well as virtually.

We are here with our 2024 Solheim Cup captain for the U.S. Team, Stacy Lewis.

Stacy, this journey, it began publicly. I know you were working on it before that, but publicly, February 9th, 2022, when we met at LPGA HQ in Daytona and you were announced as the '23 Solheim Cup captain.

And almost exactly a year later, February 13th, 2023, we were right here, and you announced you were taking the gig again and moving on to 2024.

How has your perspective on captaincy changed over the last 2 1/2 years since you came in and took this job?

STACY LEWIS: Well, I certainly didn't expect to be here and to be here this week doing this when I took that job the first time. Definitely thought it would be a one-time thing. Obviously it's turned into this.

I wouldn't say my perspective has changed. I've just really enjoyed the last, I guess, almost three years. It's been some of the most fun times I've had. It's been a lot of work. It's been sleepless nights at times, but it's been a lot of fun.

This is the final of all of the work. It's like getting ready for final exams and school. Hopefully there's a pretty good party on Sunday night.

THE MODERATOR: By virtue of it being in back-to-back years, your teams are pretty similar from '23 to '24, adding in Lauren Coughlin and Sarah Schmelzel this year, Brittany

Lincicome and Paula Creamer as your assistants. How is the transition going so quickly from 2023 into 2024?

STACY LEWIS: We have Alison Lee as well. I knew there was going to be some sort of changeover in the players. That's why I did the captains the way I did because I wanted the whole team to feel a little bit different.

I didn't want to try to be identical to what we did last year and then have one or two players coming into something that's already been established, which has been great.

You get a fresh perspective on things from Brittany and Paula, and then they're learning as well for the future. So I was really happy just with the decisions I've made as far as that goes. The energy's been awesome. To see the way the players have interacted with the captains has been really, really good.

Yeah, you change two or three people, but it kind of completely changes the vibe of the team. This group is relaxed and having a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Vibe is exactly where I was going with my last question. The vibes in the team room seem great. How hungry is this team to take back the Cup?

STACY LEWIS: This team is hungry, and they want to have fun doing it. You've probably seen a lot of it. We've made a push to try to get you guys behind the scenes to see what's going on and you've probably seen some of it.

But, yes, they're having a ton of fun, but when we're out on the golf course they're getting their work in. They're working on pairings for me and golf balls and all that kind of stuff. So there is some seriousness, I promise, to what they're doing.

Q. Stacy, at the last Solheim Cup on the 1st tee, we saw your daughter there. As a mother, how difficult is it to juggle childcare when you are working and all those emotions and dealing with a team as well? How supportive has the LPGA been behind the scenes with childcare?

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

STACY LEWIS: The LPGA is amazing. My daughter is here this week. We have childcare here with us. Brittany and Paula both have their kids here.

Because we want them to be a part of what we're doing. Mine is getting to the age where she's going to remember some of this stuff. You will see her at some point dancing around the 1st tee. Obviously it was a lot easier in Spain when you're staying on site.

The LPGA Tour does a tremendous amount of work to help us be great athletes but then allow us to have families and allow all of us, our daughters, I guess, to travel with us and be a part of what we're doing and be around these great people.

All of these girls are leaders in their sport. All of these women who are playing, they're leaders. Just for my daughter to see that, to be around them, to see how they carry themselves, she's learning a lot and not even really realizing it.

Q. In terms of being a captain, is there anything that you learned from 2023 and are going to take away from that week and apply it to this week? Without giving away anything from your strategy, is there anything you can share with us?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, we put a lot of emphasis last year on alternate shot, which you guys saw in the result. Looking back, was it maybe too much? Probably. So we're trying to find that balance this year of creating those great alternate shot pairings, but also making sure we have some great best ball pairings as well. So just trying to find that balance.

Then in picking the players, it was important to have the 12 that got along really well, 12 that really meshed, 12 that offered me a ton of pairing options. Just to be able to find who's playing the best and mix them up.

Q. In one of the social media videos that came out, I noticed that Megan Khang was pointing to something her family left her in the team room. What are those? Are they tributes from the family?

STACY LEWIS: After the team was announced -- I have to give credit to one of the interns at the LPGA for this idea. We sent these like cardboard postcards home to every player's family and asked them to write a message to the players and then mail it back to us. So we surprised them with that in the team room.

Megan's was something that her dad had actually drawn for her, but I didn't know if it was dad or boyfriend or mom,

so she was kind of able to pick out, via what was on that thing, that it was her dad who did it.

So each one was one in the team room. All families went to different extents with it. A little reminder, this week is hard and you don't get to see your family a lot, so we just wanted to bring them into the group.

Q. Now that the Solheim Cup is back on its traditional spot in the calendar opposite the Ryder Cup, as you look back at the last two years that kind of shared the spotlight with the Ryder Cup, what were the biggest pros and cons of sharing that spotlight of USA versus Europe team golf?

STACY LEWIS: I think the biggest con is that we didn't do more together last year, to be honest. I don't think we took advantage of two weeks in Europe, two weeks of going to get the Cups. I talked about it last year too, but I think looking back, that was probably the biggest miss on both sides. I felt like it could have helped both events, could have helped golf in general.

But definitely getting opposite allows us to have the spotlight a little bit more this year. I guess I'm kind of indifferent on whether we play the same year or whether we play opposite.

Q. Do you think there could still be collaboration, better collaboration between the two groups moving forward even on opposite years?

STACY LEWIS: I don't know if there's a way to do it in opposite years. To be honest, I'd love to see the Presidents Cup become mixed. It's the perfect way to blend the two Tours. The international team will get better very quickly.

I think it would be amazing to have the two Tours together that way.

Q. Stacy, you were making adjustments up to the last minute last time around. Is that going to happen again this year, or do you feel like everything's pretty set?

STACY LEWIS: As of this afternoon, I feel pretty good for Friday morning. So past that, the rest of the pairings kind of happen as the matches are going on. We'll get a good -- we'll work on -- we'll probably work on Friday afternoon, tonight, and tomorrow, but I feel really good about where we're at for Friday morning. Players know where we stand.

So, yeah, I feel like I'm in a good spot.

Q. Have adjustments for Friday morning been going

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

on throughout the week already?

STACY LEWIS: Yes. I mean, I -- I mean, this is a good problem to have. I had my kitchen counter last week was just covered with papers of pairings and potentials, and I was just kind of lost for a while. Justin really helped me kind of narrow things down because we literally have so many pairing options it's crazy.

He really kind of helped narrow things down for me, and then seeing some things play out throughout the practice rounds with people working on golf balls. Golf balls has been our biggest thing that's been holding us back because we have some that play pretty soft golf balls and we have others at the other end of the spectrum. So that's honestly been the biggest struggle more than personalities or anything like that.

Q. Then I know the motto is kind of unfinished business. How do you strike a balance between wanting to push to get that long awaited victory but then also not trying too hard?

STACY LEWIS: These girls, they want that trophy, and they want to win. They'll talk about it occasionally, but I just think they need to enjoy themselves and they need to have fun and they need to be relaxed.

From what I've seen out of Solheim Cups and teams that I've been on, the ones that are more relaxed, the ones that are having fun behind the scenes, those are the ones that I've been on winning teams.

So we put a lot of emphasis in what's going on in the team room, what's going on in the bus. They asked for a karaoke machine; I'll get you a karaoke machine. I don't care.

Just whatever they need to do to help them stay relaxed. We've got beds in the cottage there if they need to take a nap. Literally, I'll get whatever they need to help them play good golf. But the motivation is there. They're working hard, and they want to win this thing.

Q. On today the anniversary of 9/11, how much more do you reflect on being captain of Team USA and representing the United States so close to D.C. and The Pentagon?

STACY LEWIS: That was one of the first things I noticed actually when I saw the dates of this event and that I was going to be captain, and it's really what has steered my direction with what I've done with the team this week.

We put an emphasis on being appreciative of what we get

to do because we live in this great country. That was part of what we did on Monday, going to The Pentagon, getting around D.C. I met a lot of three- and four-star generals in the last two days, which has been amazing. And the insights they offered to my team, even down to the uniforms this week for us were inspired by the uniforms of the six branches of our military.

Their bag has tons of history from the script of the Constitution to the stars and the stripes. Everything I've done this week has been because of 9/11 this week.

We get to do this because of the first responders, because of the military, and I wanted these players to know that, and I wanted them to be able to thank those people that protect us.

Q. The team has had the unfinished business slogan. When did you come up with that for this year's team? I know you touched on this a little bit, but what pressure does the team have to come away with a victory this week?

STACY LEWIS: I don't know. I don't feel any pressure when I'm in that team room or when I'm around the girls. I don't think they feel pressure. I don't feel pressure.

The unfinished business just kind of came to me naturally. I just felt like the way things ended in Spain, like it just -- like that was it? Like that's it? That's the way this thing is going to end? It just kind of naturally came to me.

I gave all the girls T-shirts at the British once the team was announced just to get it in their head, it's business, we've got work to do. But pressure-wise, I don't know. If we win or we lose -- if we win, we stop the streak. If we lose, the streak keeps going. I don't know.

I mean, I would love to stop it, don't get me wrong, but I don't see it as pressure. I don't think they feel pressure. They don't, trust me. They're having lots of fun.

Q. And this might be Lexi's last Solheim. If this is it, what do you view as her Solheim legacy?

STACY LEWIS: I think it is her legacy, is her and the Solheim Cup. Just the way she is with the crowd and the fans, this event is Lexi to a T. She's just the kind of player that gets -- she plays better golf here. She gets more excited to play golf here at these events.

She's one of those like you could literally pair with anybody, and she's like I'll figure it out. She was testing a golf ball the other day that was going like seven or eight yards shorter with the wedge. She's like, it's okay, I'm just



going to get my numbers, it's good. Where anybody else would just be freaking out that a wedge is going that much shorter, she's like, it's fine. I'll just get my numbers.

She's that kind of person. She's going to do whatever it takes to win, and I wish I had 12 of them.

Q. What's going to be the challenge to replace her if this is it?

STACY LEWIS: It's a massive void. Whoever is the next captain, they need to get her on as an assistant, that's all I can say. Lexi needs to be there in the team room. She needs to be around these girls. She's just great energy to have around.

So whoever's next, get Lexi around.

Q. We talk about Lexi, we talk about Nelly as people, players who you would obviously expect to be leaders in the team room. Is there somebody that maybe surprised you and is a little quieter that stepped up in that leadership position, and what do you look for from that person this week?

STACY LEWIS: They've led in different ways.

I mean, Ally is kind of more your quiet leader. She'll go to people individually if things need to get taken care of.

Megan is your leader as far as getting everybody hyped up, getting everybody singing and dancing.

Lexi and Nelly are leading by the way they're preparing and the way they go about their work.

I wouldn't say like one person has taken control. It's kind of been everybody helping out each other. It's been cool to watch to see how my old rookies have kind of blended in with these younger ones and how they are.

Even though Rose is ten years younger, they're still watching what Rose does and they're learning from her. They're kind of throwing age out the window and just all helping each other.

Q. Those two rookies, Sarah and Lauren, what are you looking for from them this week? What have you been impressed by thus far in this process?

STACY LEWIS: Just the way they've kind of naturally come into everything and just been rolling with the punches. Not that I didn't expect it, but that's kind of who they are as people. They're loving every moment of this.

I think for this to happen at this point of their careers and to play in -- they're kind of the late bloomers, like they're playing the best golf of their careers as well, but for it to happen at this point, I think it's just the appreciation level is a lot higher of I get to do this and they're excited about doing everything.

Where some of the ones, you've done a lot of these, the gala and all that stuff, it kind of drags on and on and on. But these rookies, they're excited about everything. They just want to be a part of everything. They want to be around for every dinner. They're just soaking it all in. They just don't want to go to bed.

Q. The team rooms are actually houses right next to one another. Is that unique, and is there any kind of awkwardness being right next to the Europeans?

STACY LEWIS: The house part, no. The house part is actually quite nice because we have eight bathrooms, eight showers, so if people want to shower and change, it's actually quite nice.

The closeness is a little bit awkward with the driving range and everything being right there, but we've worked through a few things. We've worked through a few issues. But we're in a good spot now.

Q. Europe has eight players on their team who have won a Solheim Cup. You have just two. Is that a concern at all?

STACY LEWIS: It was a concern last year, so yes. That's the one thing we have going against us, but at some point they're going to win one and at some point they're going to get over the hump, just the odds of it.

They've been on winning teams before, or most of them. I guess Lauren and Sarah haven't. But the other ones, they've been on winning teams, whether it's at the junior level or the amateur level. So they know what it's like.

And that's part of why I brought Paula and Brittany in because they've also -- they've been a part of a lot of winning teams. So just to bring in their energy and the confidence that they have and what they've seen in past Solheim Cups.

I've tried to bring a lot of experience in with my assistants for that reason.

Q. Most of your team was quite young on 9/11. What do you remember about that day? And then a follow-up would be what's something that a general said earlier in the week that really stuck with you?

STACY LEWIS: So we figured out Rose wasn't even born yet. I was in high school, and I remember we were trying to rig up a TV in our school, trying to figure out what was going on.

I wasn't quite at the age where I understood what it meant, but I have a brother-in-law that's an ex-Navy S.E.A.L., and to see the sacrifices that are made by our military that came, the aftermath of 9/11, it's hit me more as I've gotten older.

So it's just I thought we did a really good job today of being able to honor those people, honor the people we lost on 9/11, but also honor those that continue to fight for us.

What was your second part?

Q. The general.

STACY LEWIS: The general, yes. We talked to three while we were at The Pentagon. We had one walking around with us the other day.

They talked about -- one was a female, and she talked about being a female in the Army and kind of what that means and that the players are role models and kind of bringing it back to them, that they are role models in their sport, they are leaders in their sport, and kind of took that perspective.

Then the men, they talked about representing your country, kind of what that means, what an honor it is. They're all golfers. And it's pretty cool, we were just going for a tour, and they heard we were coming and asked if they could meet the team. So it's just really cool that they reached out to us and wanted to meet us.

They talked about how inspiring we were, and we're just like, we just play golf. We don't do anything compared to what you guys do.

But just for those players to hear it in a different way that's not me all the time, to hear it from someone else in a different job -- they were trying to recruit some females for the Army, but I don't think any of my players are jumping in any time soon.

Q. I'm sorry, was there something you did this morning specifically? I missed that.

STACY LEWIS: We did a moment of silence at the 1st tee at 8:46 for when the first plane hit the tower in New York. Then just the ServePro Day, just making this a first responder day of celebrating all those first responders, and

the ServePro event that's going on right now has been really cool to see the celebrities and our first responders interacting out there.

This week for me is all about saying thank you to our veterans and those who are currently serving.

Q. Could you talk about the connection with USO Stuttgart?

STACY LEWIS: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that. We have a lot going on. We also partnered with the USO this week. They have a military outpost here for our military members to be able to come out and watch the event.

But this morning we did a Zoom with a base in Germany and had -- it was high school students, and I think most of them play golf, so they actually had some golf related questions for us. But a lot of golfers; obviously their parents are stationed there. The kids are American, but the parents are stationed there.

So they Zoomed in with us and they got to watch -- they actually got to watch everybody tee off, and then we kind of interacted and do that.

Then through the USO we've got -- we did some things with the kids yesterday. There was a driving contest going on today with some kids from the USO. So we've tried to do some events around it just to give back a little bit.

Q. Just come back to the housing situation. You referred to a couple of issues. There's been suggestions the European team had maybe done a couple of things that you didn't think they were allowed to do. Is that correct?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, their team room kind of exploded onto the driving range a little bit, but we reeled it in. It's all good.

We adjusted the way the range was set up a little bit and moved the U.S. Team further down so Europe could do what they wanted basically.

Q. Was it just like playing music, or what was the specifics?

STACY LEWIS: The inside of their cottage doesn't have a lot of room for tables, so their tables have to be outside. It was just our players were warming up, and they're there eating breakfast and talking. We were just trying to get everybody some space so they didn't have to listen to them eating breakfast. That's all.



There's no bad beef. It's just trying to, instead of having to listen to breakfast conversations.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

