

# Solheim Cup

Friday, September 13, 2024

Gainesville, Virginia, USA

Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

## Team USA

### Captain Stacy Lewis

### Nelly Korda

### Sarah Schmelzel

### Lauren Coughlin

## Press Conference



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GAINESVILLE, VA

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**THE MODERATOR:** We're here to close out the day with our U.S. Team, captain Stacy Lewis, Nelly Korda, Sarah Schmelzel, and Lauren Coughlin, all of whom went 2-0 for the USA.

Stacy, I'll start with you. Is it safe to say you're happy right now?

**STACY LEWIS:** Yeah, things went according to plan today. It was a really good day. The energy was awesome out there amongst our team and amongst the players.

I think the highlight of my day was seeing this one next to me skipping out of that tunnel on the 1st hole. It's just they were enjoying themselves and playing great golf, and that was the goal of the week.

**THE MODERATOR:** Nelly, you're the first American player to win two matches on day one, each by at least three holes. That was maybe the most excited I've ever seen you. What got into you out there today?

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, I got to play with one of my best friends, Megan, in the afternoon, and then got to play with Allisen in the morning, and that was a lot of fun.

There's nothing like teaming up with one of your good friends and just vibing out there and having so much fun.

Overall, the crowds were so amazing in the afternoon, and it was hard not to have fun, especially with Megan by your side.

**THE MODERATOR:** Sarah, 2-0 as a rookie, going out there the first two matches, winning them both. What was the feeling on the 1st tee, and how do you feel now 2-0

after your first day at the Solheim Cup?

**SARAH SCHMELZEL:** Stacy was nice and had Lilia hit the first shot this morning, so I didn't really feel the nerves until I was over that 6-iron in the fairway. Luckily hit that one well.

Nerves weren't too bad in the afternoon, just having the crowd noise going on teeing off, and you've got another partner there.

But it was just such an amazing atmosphere, more than I expected really, and I expected a lot. It was amazing.

**THE MODERATOR:** Lauren, also 2-0. Even more special that we're so close to home. What was the feeling out there, having this great success right off the top, a couple of amazing shots, but also doing it with so many friends and family out there?

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** Yeah, it was amazing. My parents, my husband, my college coach, her husband who is my swing coach. It was amazing.

Yeah, I echo Sarah. I was pretty jacked up on the 1st tee, but not as much as I thought I was, and I hit it right down the middle and that kind of made it easier for the rest of the day.

**Q. Nelly, how much does it uplift the entire team when you see rookies like the two next to you play lights out in the first Solheim Cup?**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, it's amazing to see. Everyone played so well today, and it was so fun to see everyone just kind of vibing off the crowd and vibing off of each other.

Even in the team room, our caddies are all getting along, and we're all getting along, and we're all hanging out and having fun. That's what this week's about. We're all making amazing memories, and it's just day one.

**Q. Lauren, Nelly goes out first match, both morning and afternoon, and steam rolls. How much do you**



**guys feed off of that in back of her?**

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** Yeah, you could hear the cheers kind of echoing in front of you. So that's always a good sign.

But, yeah, I think everybody was playing really well today. Just echoing what she said, I feel like everybody was just having a good time and enjoying being out there. I think, when you can do that, you can play really great golf.

**Q. Stacy, how important was Nelly's play for your team today? Not only leading off both sessions with a win, but doing so in such dominant fashion?**

**STACY LEWIS:** We've got world No. 1, and it's very helpful when she plays well. Even Nelly playing poor golf, she can usually probably win some matches.

But when you have big leads like that, for me as a captain it's nice because I can just kind of let them go and go do their thing. I just think it was even better just for the crowds and for the energy. That afternoon was just rocking when they teed off, and that's what we needed.

I thought Ally and Jen in the morning did an awesome job of keeping that match going, and I thought it helped get the crowds ready for the afternoon. That's what I told them, to keep fighting through it. So it was everybody really. But it certainly doesn't hurt when Nelly plays really good like she did today.

Can I give you guys a crazy stat? Because you guys know I'm a stat person. Nelly gained a total of 7 1/2 strokes this afternoon on the field, and they said -- the stats guys we work with, they've worked Ryder Cups now and Solheim Cups. It's the highest they've ever seen a single session that they have worked. Pretty impressive this afternoon.

**Q. Just for the two rookies, Sarah, Lauren, I know there's always question marks with how rookies are going to handle the pressure of a Solheim Cup, and you all put the questioners to bed today. How good did it feel for both of you to put up some red points and kind of get this party started in the way that you did?**

**SARAH SCHMELZEL:** We're obviously rookies on the Solheim team, but we've both been on Tour for six years now. You don't necessarily feel like a rookie in that sense. We're 30 and 31 years old. We're borderline oldest on the team.

It was just really validating, I think, for both of us to go out there and play like we did today. Walking into the tunnel

for that afternoon match, you know we kind of had that underdog mentality of let's show them what we've got, let's show them who we are kind of thing, and we just tried to roll with that all day.

Lauren played amazing, and it was easy to feed off of.

**Q. Any thoughts on that, Lauren?**

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** Yeah, I'll echo everything. No, it was -- I think we've been playing really, really good golf, both Sarah and I have all year. So I don't think, at least to me, it was a surprise that we played really well because we've been doing it all year.

Also just it was pretty special to get to do it together. And I think also we've been on Tour for quite a long time. So like, yes, we're a rookie in the sense of playing in front of this maybe amount of people, but we're not rookies in every other aspect of it.

**Q. For anybody that wants to answer, there was a celebration going on out there that looked like a tribute to Kobe. Can someone explain what that is? If that's something we can share and what that means to the team. How cool it was to do it out there that many times today.**

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** This is Terry, my caddie's, 10th Solheim. He's done eight of them for Europe. Olly Brett was tired of seeing Terry do that all the time on the European side.

So this morning me and Rose, we were all kind of getting everybody to do Terry for the team match point, which was just like a count. He flicks the wrist. He'll go like that all the time. We just wanted him to do it on the U.S. side for once.

**Q. Nelly, I think you did a lot of those today with all the putts and things that you made. How good does it feel to be putting as well as you are right now?**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, whenever the ball hits the bottom of the cup, it's an amazing feeling. I had such an amazing partner in Allisen this morning and such an amazing partner in Megan this afternoon.

To kind of get the crowd going in the afternoon was so, so fun and something that I'll remember for the rest of my life. It just puts like a little bit of an exclamation point getting to do it with Megan too in the afternoon.

**Q. Stacy, sending Nelly out in the afternoon, really quick turnaround, only about 90 minutes or so, did you**

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kind of think Suzann was going to send Leona out, and you wanted to match good with good even though it was such a short turnaround there?

**STACY LEWIS:** No, I just -- if you spend any time around Megan Khang you know how much energy she has, and I kind of had a feeling she would pull this one along. It was more the energy aspect.

We saw it in Spain last year, when I sent her out first, Megan out first in singles, she gets the crowd going, and she absolutely loves the environment, probably more than anybody on this team. So she's just the perfect person for that position, and she just happened to be paired up with Nelly.

**Q. I have to ask about that, Nelly. Megan seems like the biggest hype woman on the women's tour. Your morning demeanor is super calm and composed. In the afternoon, you're like let's go, let's party, we're doing Suite Life of Zack & Cody celebrations. What does she bring out in you that gets that reaction?**

**NELLY KORDA:** I've known Megan a really long time. We've been really good friends since the age of 14. Obviously I've known her a little bit longer than Allisen.

Allisen and I have similar demeanors on the golf course. We're very calm, cool, and collected. Megan just brings out something different in me. I'm very comfortable with her. And we played Junior Solheim Cup together and that's where we really grew close. We were paired up there in alternate shot actually.

We were just so pumped to be paired together, and that was actually a handshake that we had during Junior Solheim Cup, so we brought it back.

**Q. Nelly, if I could ask about your shot on 15, I think it was. You were 8 for 8 on par-5s today, and that second shot that gets you up within a foot of the cup was kind of a signature of that. Just why so good on those par-5s today, which were kind of difficult for the Europeans to match you?**

**NELLY KORDA:** I think Megan is so solid that I was just so free out there. Even with my drives, I was actually hitting it really well. I knew that having a partner that's so solid, I can just kind of go after the pin. So I was very aggressive.

I had a 5-iron in, and I just -- I hit a baby draw in, and those are the types of shots that you'll back at forever, but I was just really loose and aggressive today in the afternoon.

**Q. And just a quick one for Lauren and Sarah. Looked like your 10th Solheim Cup and not your first Solheim Cup. Was there any nerves? You two were just vibing the whole day, especially when you got paired up in the afternoon. Was there any point the nerves went away or just we're going to be loose, we're going to be free all afternoon?**

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** For me, I was doing my stretching that I always do, and I was definitely feeling it then. But once I got into my normal pre-round routine I was feeling pretty good. I had my husband, my coach Terry there, and I feel like I was pretty much my normal self once I was getting into the part that I really love to do, which is play golf.

**SARAH SCHMELZEL:** I was pretty nervous this morning. Really after I got that first shot on 1 that I was saying, I kind of loosened up a little bit, and I was like, okay, it's just another day of golf.

I was probably more nervous or had so much anticipation yesterday. So once I could get it started today, settled in pretty quickly. And then this afternoon I felt like the both of us were pretty settled in ready to just fire away.

**Q. Stacy, was it the plan to send Lauren and Sarah out together in the afternoon?**

**STACY LEWIS:** Yeah, it kind of came together earlier. It was a pairing I was looking at earlier this week. I really -- I just wanted to talk to their caddies first and see how they felt about sending the two of them out, just being rookies, and they both looked at me and were like, they'll be fine. So it really was pretty easy.

I knew they got along. I knew they were friends. I knew they would be really good energy together, and the computer said it was good. There were lots of things that said it was good.

You just never know with -- they are technically rookies, but as soon as their caddies were like they're fine, it was a go for me.

**Q. Was there anything in particular you saw from them this morning that gave you confidence they'd succeed together in the afternoon?**

**STACY LEWIS:** I mean, they've been playing great all week, and they were playing great coming into this week.

The afternoon pairings, you have to make them before those matches are done. So we are able to track how they're playing. So it was kind of we had -- I had my

pairings last night for the afternoon, and you just kind of check and make sure people are playing okay.

If they're playing okay, I'm going to go with the plan that we had. So that was basically it.

**Q. Nelly, this is a big first step towards your first Solheim win. What would that mean for you to get it?**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, there's still a lot of matches ahead.

**STACY LEWIS:** Two more days.

**NELLY KORDA:** Exactly. Still a lot of golf to be played. But I think it's a step in the right direction. I'll let you know how I feel on Sunday hopefully.

**Q. Obama was on there, President Obama was on the 1st tee. Did any of you have any conversations with him before teeing off. What did it mean to have them there?**

**NELLY KORDA:** I met him briefly in the tunnel. Obviously we met him Monday night during the dinner, but pretty much he was just very ecstatic to be here and just said, let's go Team USA. Very simple.

**Q. When you get off to this kind of dream start, what's the message tonight about what to expect from Europe tomorrow?**

**STACY LEWIS:** I think it's 0-0. Today was great, but I want to go put as many points on the board as we can tomorrow because you never know, you look at Lexi's match today, kind of ran into a buzz saw. So you never know when that's going to happen, and they could be firing on all cylinders tomorrow.

So we've got to go out there like it's 0-0 and go put as many points as we can on the board.

**Q. You obviously rely a lot on the analytics. Is there anything you've done so far that was more gut in terms of pairings?**

**STACY LEWIS:** No. I think given -- I wanted Jen, and giving Jen and Ally another shot tomorrow morning. I think it would have been easy to pull them, but I also think that they did -- they started to get more in sync as the day went on and actually played okay.

So I just, I don't know, I kind of had a good feeling there and just wanted to keep them both in sync because they got things rolling as the day went on.

No, we're going according to plan as of the moment.

**Q. Lauren, could you just take us through that putt there on 16 to close out the match.**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, baby.

**Q. What kind of surge did it give you to actually close out that match and end the day like that?**

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** Yeah, I just think my caddie and I were seeing the line really well and we knew it was going to be pretty quick, so I just trusted everything that I've been doing in terms of my work with my putting and was super free and just did what I did.

**SARAH SCHMELZEL:** She was clutch.

**LAUREN COUGHLIN:** Again, just did my routine, did my process. If it goes in, it goes in. But that's all I can do is do what I do, which is my routine, and I did that, and it just happened to go in.

**NELLY KORDA:** Right in the center.

**THE MODERATOR:** It will be an early alarm for all of us. Go home, get some rest, and see you on the 1st tee tomorrow.

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