

# Fortinet Founders Cup

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Menlo Park, California, USA

Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club

## Angela Stanford

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here at the Fortinet Founders Cup media center for our last press conference of Tuesday here with our 2026 U.S. Solheim Cup captain, Angela Stanford. It's good to have you. It's been a busy couple days. Tell us what you've been doing with your team over the last few days since you got here on Saturday.

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, so the assistants and I flew in Saturday morning, got to -- I think that was the first soccer match for all of us. We stopped by the Bay FC. Went and saw a little bit of the game. Brandi Chastain hooked us up with the tickets and the swag and all that, so went to the game, then went back to Juli's house and had our first kind of team dinner together, and then Brandi showed up at night and kind of talked to everybody. So it was really cool.

Played golf Sunday morning at Los Altos Golf and Country Club, and we've been doing our fittings the last couple days. It's been really busy.

I was thinking about something Saturday morning. When we first got here and sat down and got something to eat, I was like, man that, feels like a week ago now. It's been great, though.

**Q. You talk about Bay FC and Brandi. For a lot of us, that '99er group is what Title IX did. For women of our generation, that's the women we look to, that picture of Brandi there ripping her shirt off. What was that experience like, as I'm sure someone who watched that and thought that was awesome? I was talking to Juli, she said that was one of the best teams she's ever seen. What did you hope to glean from Brandi?**

ANGELA STANFORD: I thought it was really cool. She kind of walked through, and it's always nice because I told the team, I'm like, she played on an American team from 1988 to 2004, so she represented our country for a long time, and she just kind of walked through the World Cup.

I thought one of the things that I've kind of stressed to this team is that when we play in Europe, there's a lot of

unknowns, and we're going to be really uncomfortable a lot, and there are things that we can't control.

Brandi told an amazing story of they had to warm up in the tunnels at the Rose Bowl because the game before them had run long. So like their entire warmup was completely messed up, basically, the timing of it, and she's like, you know, you just do what you can to get ready. Yeah, it's not what you planned, but then we still had to adjust and we were all happy -- we wanted to be there. We wanted to compete.

I was like, man, I didn't actually tell Brandi what to say, and then she hit on a couple of other things that I was like, man, to have a high-level female athlete sit and talk to your team and to kind of hit on the things that I was hoping she would, it was really special.

To kind of watch the team, listen to her, because you've got to think that 1999, a lot of those ladies sitting up there may not have been born. They still knew who she was, and I told them their homework was to go find that goal that she scored if they don't really know who she is.

Yeah, Brandi was awesome.

**Q. You took everyone out to Los Altos the next day, did a couple matches around the course. What was that experience like? It's always fun to see them out of competition mode on the golf course.**

ANGELA STANFORD: Well, first of all, it was a beautiful day, and Los Altos, they were awesome. We got there, the assistants and I got there at 8:00 am, and we were trying to figure out where things were and where we were going to eat breakfast, and I asked the lady working, do you want us in this room, and she's like, yeah, we opened it specifically for all of you. I was just like, wow. Their hospitality was awesome, and it was just amazing. It felt like they rolled out the red carpet for us.

We got teed off in time. Everybody seemed to have a good time. I thought it was fun because the bag guys that were standing there, the cart guys, they're like, what tees are they playing from. I'm like, well, I kind of mixed it up on



them. The whole thing about Sunday was to be off balance and to be off key. I'm trying to make you focus in an uncomfortable situation. So they would play a drivable par-4 and then they would play something really long. I tried to keep them off balance in that respect.

Then when we turned, we were going to play alternate shot, so when you're playing in carts and playing in alternate shot it's going to be fast. So I checked it with the staff there, and they allowed basically -- eight went down. So it ended up just being four groups turned into two, and that made this a lot of fun on the backside, and then we had some members out there watching. It was great.

**Q. Bringing it back to the competition, we're now on the first week back here, full field domestic. You've had four weeks already to see the U.S., to see a good chunk of the Europeans at least on paper. How are these first few weeks panning out for what you looking for?**

ANGELA STANFORD: It's fun to see Auston Kim play well and to see her -- she's fourth in points now. So that's been fun to watch. It'll be fun to see how she transitions into the rest of the schedule because it always felt like the beginning of the year you just kind of get your feet under you. Especially being in Thailand, Singapore and China, you feel a little disconnected from -- it always felt like it was easier to be in my own world over there. It was easier to stay focused.

Now she's playing well and she's fourth in points, and there's a little more attention around her. So that's good for us to see, too.

Yeah, lots of good around our team right now.

**Q. We spoke about it a year ago when you found out you were going to be captain. Since that point, what sorts of things have you started to do to prepare those players who are looking like they're going to make this team for an away Solheim Cup? I know we saw what the Ryder Cup team did this year to prepare for an away Ryder Cup. Are there certain things you are starting to engrain in some of your girls to get them prepared for the environment over there?**

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, you know, Saturday night I kind of gave them our theme, and I kind of talked to them about why it's important to -- I want them to be themselves and I want them to focus on themselves.

We talked a lot about theme, and I talked about -- for me, it's very much about being in an uncomfortable environment and figuring out how to hit a shot and stay

focused, and part of Sunday was also, you need to communicate. When I paired them, I just drew their names out of a hat. Like, there was no rhyme or reason. It was, I hope you're playing with somebody you've never talked to before because now you guys got to figure it out. I didn't tell them on the back nine who to play even, odds, whatever. I said, you guys figure it out. Figure out which ball you want to hit. I don't care. You have to communicate.

That's the whole concept of Sunday was how uncomfortable can I make you, and how focused can you be. So things like that.

**Q. For some of the players who are going to be kind of on the bubble throughout the rest of the season, vying to get their spot, as a former Solheim Cup player yourself, how does it feel to have to go out there and make the team? How does that impact you mentally when you're playing for yourself week to week but also knowing this is in the back of your head coming up?**

ANGELA STANFORD: I've given them the example, the ones that are kind of -- I know sometimes I tend to overshare, but I've said it to everybody, I want to say it to. I always tell them, my example is the Super Bowl. Like guys go and they play the Super Bowl, and every day leading up to it, they love it, and they're practicing hard, and they come together. The moment the one team loses, they'll tell you, yeah, that was great, but I'm over it. They don't want to lose.

So I tell them, look, I want you to make the team, and I learned this a couple of teams that I played, I was just trying to make it. I think sometimes you're just happy to be there.

So I've told them, look, I need you to try to help us win. I don't want you to try to make the team. I need you to prepare yourself to help us win. That's when I played well in all of my Solheims, I wasn't just trying to make the team because the times I made the team, I didn't really help the team.

That's kind of been my thought process and comments to some of the ones that have never -- like the rookies that have never done it, because you can. You get so caught up in watching the points list, I just want to make it, am I going to be a pick. Well, if your game is trending and we're watching the numbers, then I know that your mentality is I'm trying to win. I'm trying to help us win. So yeah.

**Q. You spoke about Auston Kim, and funny enough, Juli did earlier, as well. She's had a couple close calls in the last few weeks and some tough golf. Have you**

**said anything to her? Has she picked your brain how to deal with those tough moments, or what do you see in her resilience that gives you a lot of enthusiasm for her as a potential U.S. Team pick or team qualifier?**

ANGELA STANFORD: I was always a big believer in you have to learn how to win, so to see her bounce back after Singapore and play well in China, that's a good sign.

Winning at different levels is different. I know winning is winning, but winning in college and winning on this tour, two very different things. We haven't talked about it. She is coming in to do her fitting soon, but she seemed just as chill and happy to be there this weekend, and she just never mentioned it.

I'm not really worried about it because I think she's learning. So that's all I kind of need right now is just kind of keep going upwards and keep learning, keep getting in that position.

**Q. We look at 2025 and we're still a year away. We're now in a Solheim Cup year. Does it get more exciting and titillating for you to really be now in the process of trying to build the team out, get the uniforms done and all the little details shored up?**

ANGELA STANFORD: I literally am living a dream. I am having a blast. I cannot explain the adrenaline around a Solheim, whether I was playing, an assistant captain, even this weekend. I'm like, as soon as I finally get to go to sleep, I'm out. But when I wake up in the morning, ready to go. I've been up at 3:30, 4:30. I'm ready to go.

So it's a completely different type of adrenaline, and I love it. I am living a dream.

Paula and I, the other two assistants went home Monday afternoon. Paula and I were sitting at dinner last night, and she was like, we're five months away from naming the team, and I was like, what? Like how did that happen so fast?

Yeah, it's getting exciting.

**Q. Juli is obviously being honored this week. When you look back on Juli the captain and seeing her with the team over the week, what are some of the things that you're inspired by her that you're going to try to emulate?**

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, y'all have two really good ones here that I wish I could stay in town for this week between Meg and Juli. When I asked Juli initially if she would host us, I knew she would say yes just because it's

Juli. But I think just having those players around Juli, it's hard to explain. There's an ease about Juli. She likes to have a good time. But then when Brandi starts talking and Brandi says something about the USA, Juli is the first to start going, yeah, let's go.

Juli's energy. I know how much she loves Solheim and she loves these players. It was the perfect atmosphere because it was -- we sat in her backyard. I got to talk to them. Brandi got to talk to them. They got to be around each other. Juli made that happen. Juli helped us with the golf Sunday morning.

I can't thank her enough because it would be really easy for her to just kind of move on and not be involved with this team or with future teams, and Juli loves it so much.

**Q. Will you have another gathering at some point?**

ANGELA STANFORD: No, probably not. I hope to do another fitting at Grand Rapids and Boston. Once the team is -- the 12 are together, we'll do something in Boston.

**Q. I know obviously a big fan of Meg Mallon, as well. Speak to what she's meant to you as an American role model and how she's brought you up over the years.**

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, Meg was my favorite. Meg, when she won at Colonial for the U.S. Open, I guess I'd gone out there and I had a visor -- y'all probably know this, but she signed it. I kept it forever. No, she didn't sign it. When I came out here on Tour she signed it for me.

Meg, she's always been my favorite. Before I even knew her. There have been a couple of times where I've had some things really kind of bother me that I had to kind of figure out in this Solheim process and which direction I wanted to go. Meg is one of my first calls. Meg, Beth, they're my first calls.

I love their perspective. Meg has just always been my favorite.

**Q. You're a person that I know has implored your fellow athletes to act like a founder. One time you said, be a brick, which I love. When you see women like that, women like yourself, why is it so important you continue acting like a founder, in a lot of ways pioneering things yourself on the American front?**

ANGELA STANFORD: Well, because I think for a ton of reasons, but if I don't keep trying to do the things that Meg and Juli and all of those women that came before me, I'm letting them down. I'm not doing my part to give the next

generation a chance. I always just thought that was our responsibility.

Playing women's sports, at any moment it can be taken away. That's how I always felt growing up. I never felt entitled to anything in sports because I just thought, it could easily go away.

I think we have a responsibility to -- that's one of the ways we can honor the ladies of the past is to continue to grow and do the things to help this younger generation continue to give back.

**Q. I know you spent a lot of time with Sandra Haynie. Maybe not a lot of time but some time with her recently. You were surprised to hear she would go out and mark golf courses and go play them later. Can you elaborate on that or give us the color on that?**

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, to listen to Sandra tell stories, to me it's just gold. The things that they had to go through to make this tour go. I have these moments where I'm like, how, and she did talk about she had to go out and mark the course and if somebody didn't play good or if she won, then they're like, well, you set the golf course up.

They had to deal with so many things that we didn't. So yeah, listening to the veteran players is pretty cool.

**Q. What was it that you admired in Meg Mallon before you met her?**

ANGELA STANFORD: It's funny because she always seemed to look like she was, I guess, happy out there. Like, she just kind of -- to me, watching from a distance, it looked like she had a bubbly -- she loved it. I guess I was the opposite of that. I got in trouble a lot because my head was down. I don't know, she just seemed so competitive and very fiery but in a positive way.

I don't know, for some reason I gravitated towards Meg. I don't know if it's because she would have said hi to me at Colonial maybe. I don't know. For some reason I just gravitated towards Meg.

**Q. Two very random questions. The first, just all the Solheim Cup talk, I'm wondering what is the most nervous you've ever felt on a golf course?**

ANGELA STANFORD: 2015 against Suzann because I knew we all had to win. I hadn't had a very good track record to that point, and that's kind of where that story with Paula came from Saturday night in the hotel. I was really nervous because I thought, I feel like I'm the last person that should be playing Suzann right now, and Paula literally

-- she just literally stopped me and basically grabbed me, and she said, what is wrong, like tell me why you have these thoughts. Tell me why you don't believe in yourself. I was just kind of like, Paula has never done anything like that to me.

I kind of went to bed thinking, well, why not me. Like, I'm not bad. So I remember walking out on the putting green that morning and I looked at my caddie, and I said, it's my turn today. So yeah. But that whole round I was nervous.

**Q. I'm curious, what do the nerves actually feel like for you? Do you remember what the sensations were? Kind of take us into that moment a little bit.**

ANGELA STANFORD: Everything just kind of moves faster. Your adrenaline, again, the rush. I never had to worry about hitting the ball solid or far. It was more, I've got to make sure I don't hit it too far.

You're actually more worried about that than anything else, so it kind of flips. Usually you're worried about not hitting it solid when you're nervous. But Solheim is different. Everything flips.

I had a headache by the fifth tee in that match because everything was just like -- everything had a fist pump and everything was so intense. We walked to the fifth tee box, and I said, I've got to calm down. I actually took some Advil on the tee, and I'm like, I've really got to calm down.

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