

# Fortinet Founders Cup

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Menlo Park, California, USA

Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club

## Meg Mallon

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Meg Mallon being honored this week at the Fortinet Founders Cup as one of our LPGA Pioneers. Yes, you absolutely are that. I'm going to start out we are here celebrating our 13 Founders.

Over the length of your career and time out here, I'm sure you had the opportunity to get to meet some of them and get to know them. Tell us your memories of those 13 incredible women, the ones you got to spend time with.

MEG MALLON: Yeah, so many wonderful memories of the Founders. I love the era I played in because I did get to know some the Founders and then played right into the Seri/Karrie/Annika/Lorena era.

So I got to see the best of our Tour.

Knowing the Founders, basically they made sure you knew who they were. They made sure that you knew what their legacy was what and what our responsibility was. I appreciated that. When I came on Tour I wasn't necessarily an LPGA follower. I was an athlete that played all these different sports.

I had read every book about Babe Didrickson as a little kid, so she was my hero who happened to play golf. I always thought it was going to be the Olympics because that was the only avenue for girls to play was in the Olympics.

And then when the LPGA opportunity came along and I knew Babe was a part of the founding and legacy of that, it was really special. Unfortunately didn't get to know her but got to hear stories about through my friendships with Patty Berg her Louise Suggs, and they were fabulous people that I got to know and told wonderful stories about the beginnings and what they went through and all the things that they did.

It was incredible. Incredible women. Strong women. They didn't necessarily get along, and that was kind of their extra power because they all were so competitive, but they all had a common goal of making sure that this LPGA experiment was going to continue and thrive and happen;

they sure did it.

**Q. They were the Founders. We continue to Act Like a Founder. You came on Tour in the '80s; you said played through the '80s '90s, early 2000s.**

MEG MALLON: Yeah.

**Q. You see the Tour now in the time since you retired; how is it possible to explain how it has grown in leaps and bounds over the last few years?**

MEG MALLON: I have to say this is what they had hoped, what they expected, what we had hoped as a legacy to continue on. We felt like we maybe left the Tour in a better playing for them, this generation, to do what they're doing.

For me I wouldn't give up the time I played. I love the time I played. But I'm also so happy for this group of players that they get to have this accelerated version of the LPGA and what they get to do in the time they're in.

It's really awesome to watch and see, and it's just gratifying to know that women's golf is in a really good place.

**Q. As you look at this current generation of players, what stands out to you, be it a player or aspect of how they play? What stands out about the current crop of players on Tour right now?**

MEG MALLON: Yeah, I think it's not necessarily the golf. The golf is great. They're great athletes. It's just so different. The Tour is so different from when we were out there. The players would actually travel together because we would be in these groups and bunches traveling in our cars following each other.

It's just such a different way of life now than it was even -- 2010 was my last year and we were playing some international events, but nothing like it is now. It's a completely different model I guess than we had.

I really admire their fortitude and endurance to make it through these, because I was a terrible traveler. I couldn't every sleep on an airplane and so I was behind, and when



we went to Australia and Japan it was always tough on me.

The fact that they have to go through to get their bodies ready and their minds to play in all these fabulous different places and how much more international it's become, which I think is fabulous.

The fact that women all around the world are playing professional golf from some of the countries you would never believe would be able to put out a female professional golfer, it's really gratifying to see.

**Q. I think we talk about the Founders, all in reverence, but it was really the women of '60s, '70s, and '80s that carried us through some of those early seasons.**

MEG MALLON: Right.

**Q. How proud are you to see this organization not only grow but transform the women's landscape in its 75 years?**

MEG MALLON: Right. Just the fact that we endured those years. I can't imagine what they faced in 1950 when they decided to charter this women's professional golf league. There was nothing else like it.

Where it's come to today and what they developed. So what they did in the '50s and '60s developed Mickey Wright and then you got the Carol Manns and Joanne Carners and Judy Rankins, and that era, and then what I call fed into the greatest generation to date, what I call the Alcott/Bradley/Daniel/King/Lopez/Sheehan, the six. Just go look at their records and you'll see what I'm talking about. That group was incredible.

I don't think players understand what we played -- like I started my career with them. We would have galleries six, seven deep of people watching that group of players. That's what they did, how many people they brought to the women's game, starting with the Nancy Lopez era in 1978 through the '90s.

We had tremendous galleries, tremendous fans, loyal followers. It was just really a fun time to be out there. You're right, then kick started the next era of Karrie and Annika and Seri and Lorena, and then we got more of an international flair and it just really grew the game of women's golf.

One generation helped the next to be ready for that success to come forward, and so it's been really fun to watch. It's really a fabulous success story for women's sports, no doubt.

**Q. When you look at the women before you that have been named Pioneers, so many of them are your friends. You were here with Beth a few years ago.**

MEG MALLON: Yeah.

**Q. How much did this honor mean to you when you got call that you were going to be recognized for everything you've done for the LPGA?**

MEG MALLON: It's funny because Juli and I talk to each other, I guess we're old now. That's what it meant to us. We feel like we're still in touch with the young players and the Tour and so much a part of it, so to get that call to be recognized is really an honor and really flattering.

You know, it's just fun. It keeps us in touch with the Tour. Keeps us in touch with the players. It's nice. I mean, you know, both Juli and I are not people that need fluffy recognition, so we're going to have fun with each other on the 18th hole.

Actually the over/under is how long Juli is going to last in the chair on the 18th. I say half hour. So we're going to have to place bets and see how long Juli lasts out there, because she's not going to sit out there, I can tell you that. She's going to leave me alone out there.

**Q. Pretty cool, significant anniversary on Monday with Annika's 59; it's been 25 years.**

MEG MALLON: Uh-huh.

**Q. Listening to the video I think I think you can hear you say, yeah, baby, when that putt goes in.**

MEG MALLON: On 18 she almost made it for 58. I know, yeah.

**Q. What do you remember from that day? Take me through that day playing alongside her, playing alongside Charlotta.**

MEG MALLON: Well, they're sisters so she was playing with her sister. We started on the back nine and birdies the first hole, birdies the second, birdies the third.

Now, I played all of her career with her so that's not unusual to have her have a start like that. When it got to be like the fifth birdie and then the sixth birdie and then the seventh birdie and then the eighth birdie, I can't tell you the amount of tension there was. Like everyone was so uptight. No one was saying a word.

It was like watching a player with a no-hitter. No one sits

next to the guy. You didn't want to mess with what was going on. That tells you a lot about the camaraderie of golf. Like other sports people may want to, you know, try and mess it up or whatever. We were just like watching history here and we're going to be a part of this.

Now, I mean, you feel like you're -- I was 1- or 2-under and felt like the worst golfer in the world watching this perfect round basically take place. So when she made par on 9, everyone just took a collective, like whew, okay.

Then it was like -- it was a long walk from 18 to 1, and I remember thinking, all right, let's go. It was -- you were a part of it. Let's start the birdies again. She started up again. Then it just really became -- the gallery started growing and people figured out what was going on.

It was really something to watch, to be a part of. I feel honored that I have my name on that scorecard.

It's funny because that tells what you golf is all about. So two years later I shot 60 and it was the first 60 in LPGA history. I did have a putt for 59. So everyone came out, last hole, watch me putt. I left it two and a half feet short and everybody groans and walks away.

I'm thinking, I've just been the first person in history to shoot 60 and everyone is really upset about it.

That's how crazy golf is. So I had that feeling what she felt like having that opportunity to make history like that. It's just really cool feeling. Really cool to be a part of that history with her and have her sister there of course alongside her was pretty special.

Everything came together for that moment, so it was very special to be a part of.

**Q. I know you're from the Midwest. I look at you as Meg Mallon is the ultimate girls' girl. Everybody that had any significant moment, you're --**

MEG MALLON: I feel like I'm Waldo. I've been a part of every -- I was there with Karrie when she won the grand slam and InKster when she won her grand slam. Yeah, I feel like I've been in the back seat of a lot of that; also the front seat of a couple moments, too.

**Q. What does it mean to be able to have been that kind of bolster over the years? Do you feel like you set an example?**

MEG MALLON: At the end of the day it's how you were raised. I was raised in a great family with great parents who were huge sports fans. I was surrounded by a lot of

famous professional athletes growing up. I think I had a perspective on things of basically appreciate when you see greatness and you can be a part of it.

I mean, envy and jealousy never crossed my mind in any of those situations. I think that's why I got to enjoy it so much more and be a part of it. Credit my parents and family for that, just being raised that way.

It is a lot more fun being that way than it is any other way, except to be happy for someone when they show such great success and skill and be a part of history. It's pretty awesome to be able to witness that.

**Q. Yesterday we had Angela Stanford in here. She talked about how you and Beth were one of her first calls when she was named captain.**

MEG MALLON: So happy for her.

**Q. How much you have meant to her over her career. What are your thoughts on her as she takes on the next challenge?**

MEG MALLON: I'm so excited for her. The legacy of being a past captain is really an honor. Having that opportunity to do it and no one loves the Solheim Cup as much as Angela does. I was her first partner in Solheim Cup. You know, it's really neat to see her come to this point to be a leader of women for the Solheim Cup and the American women.

She'll be fabulous at it. She'll put her whole heart into it. They know how much she loves it. I'm excited for her. I'm going to be there and cheering her on.

Hopefully bring a win over there. That would be awesome.

**Q. She talked about how much she learned about being a captain and team leader. I think she realized how much she does not like uniforms, things along those lines.**

MEG MALLON: Exactly.

**Q. What are some of your takeaways as a player and as a captain from the Solheim Cup during your --**

MEG MALLON: Gosh, well, you're talking playing in eight Solheim Cups. So I was in the second Solheim Cup which was in Scotland. We were huge favorites and we lost on my match. It's a moment I'll never forget. It's probably one of the hardest moments I've ever had in golf.

You had all of Europe celebrating on top of you and you



feel like you let your country down and your teammates and your captains, and that's where you grow to appreciate what a captain does and a team does. All eight teams I never was a pick. I made the team. I always wanted to make sure I made the team. I never wanted to be a pick.

So it just was really always on your mind throughout the year when you're playing. So every part of it was a part of your being was the Solheim Cup. How you played throughout the year, who your captain was, how hard you wanted to play.

I had so many captains and I loved every one of them and all the different roles. They were all different and had different approaches.

That's what we said to Angela. Be you. You're not going to be any other captain. Be you and that will be enough for your team. So just it's -- because I grew up in team sports it's by far the most fun and what I always want to be a part of was the Solheim Cup.

THE MODERATOR: You said you don't know how long Jules will last on the perch. For as long as you're there, of this group of players we have out here now, of any of the players on Tour right now, any that have particularly caught your eye through the beginning of the year or any you're excited to get to see finally?

MEG MALLON: Let's see. Girl I finally met today that I heard about, Gurleen.

**Q. Kaur.**

MEG MALLON: Yeah. Excited to see her play. Looks like a really good young player. I love watching all of them. Yealimi who won last year, I got to know her when she made the Solheim Cup in Toledo, and I am so glad to see her playing this type of golf that we think she should be playing.

Obviously it's a hard game and you go through things. It's nice to see her finding her game.

I love watching all the players out here. Jeeno, Nelly of course. I'm in touch with Nelly. Get to text with her every once in a while. Happy for her on and off the golf course which is nice to see.

So we hear from the players a lot. I get phone calls for encouragement if they're having a hard time, hard time with things outside of golf. I like being a part of their lives that way, helping them guide their way. It's a hard life out here and sometimes an outside -- these guys are so insulated with their teams that sometimes an outside voice is nice to

hear and someone that's been through it knows what they're going through.

I don't lecture them. I just listen and try to give some guidance and help them. That's what I love to do.

THE MODERATOR: And that's everyone appreciates you. Thank you?

MEG MALLON: Thank you, I appreciate that.

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