

The Chevron Championship

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

The Woodlands, Texas, USA

The Club at Carlton Woods

Angela Stanford

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: I'm here in the media center at the The Chevron Championship. Joined by Angela Stanford. Welcome. Let's get things kicked off. Talk about The Club at Carlton Woods and how you've seen the course and how you adjust when you come here.

ANGELA STANFORD: Well, I think I learned a lot the first year. You know, I think the first time you see a golf course, especially a course like this, you need to see it multiple times.

I can already tell -- I've only played the back nine. Played it yesterday, and I saw things, subtleties that I didn't pick up on last year.

So I think it looks -- I said this to -- I'm actually staying ^ START with Katie Futch's parents in town. I said this to her parents last night. It looks like it's a simple golf course, but it's not.

So it looks like it's wide in areas, but it's not. And the greens, I love what they've done with the greens. They seem to have widened them out a little bit, maybe flattened out some edges; roll offs aren't as extreme as I felt they were last year.

They've done a great job. It's beautiful. It's in great shape. The greens are firm, but that's expected. But they've done a great job.

Q. This is your 98th start in a major. What does that mean, to hear that as well?

ANGELA STANFORD: You know, it kind of seems like a dream sometimes. I feel very blessed. I haven't had -- I've had one major injury and it came at the end of 2018.

This is where I'm going to plug my trainer. He's been with me since 2004. Actually, his father worked for Chevron forever. My trainer, Dan, was a recipient of one of the scholarships that Chevron gives to their employees' children.

My trainer told me that I was like, no way. He's like, yeah. It's kind of cool, because without him I don't think my body would've held up. So I've been very blessed.

Again, one big injury at the end of 2018, but other than that, yeah, feels like a dream sometimes.

Q. You just talked a little bit about Chevron. They just announced a purse increase to 7.9 million. Not sure if you heard that yet. How can you speak to Chevron's sportsmanship and partnership as well?

ANGELA STANFORD: Probably should have started with that. One big thank you. You know, I feel like in the 24 years I've been out here I've seen a lot of change.

You see different sponsors, different venues, different tournaments. There is always hesitation. There is always people are nervous with change and Chevron has exceeded any expectations any of us would've had.

It's not just about the golf tournament. It's about everything that surrounds it. I think it's really cool. Having the perspective of 24 years out here, I think it's really cool to watch Chevron not only embrace the golf part of it, but the community part of it.

They're so involved, and every little thing matters. I think when you have a sponsor and a partner that cares about the small things and they care about the details, the big things are going to be even better.

So very grateful for Chevron. They took on one event that has the most tradition on our tour. They have surpassed any expectation that I've had.

And I don't want to speak for others, but they've turned -- they're turning it into their own. I love how they kept some of the little pieces of tradition. I'm so grateful and thankful for them. It's just amazing what they've done.

Q. I know 99 is not confirmed yet; 98, we talk about unbreakable records in golf, and your name will go down as one the unbreakable records in golf. How do you feel when you hear that?



ANGELA STANFORD: You know, I thought about it. You sometimes think that you would see things once in a generation or once in a lifetime. You know, even if it wasn't me, I would still want one of our players to cross the line. Like I wouldn't care who it was. I would want an LPGA player to get to 100, because I think it is going to be a historical once-in-a-lifetime kind of deal.

Obviously because Jack Nicklaus is the only human to ever do this. So regardless if it was me or somebody else, I hope I get there. I appreciate Chevron helping me in this step, the 98th step.

I have my U.S. Open qualifier next week, so I've been thinking about that quite a bit. But I don't want it to stop at 98.

Q. I don't think we do either. For you to be here in a major championship in the state of Texas, very proud Fort Worth area resident, what does it mean to have a major in your home state and play in front of a home state crowd?

ANGELA STANFORD: You know, again, going back to the beginning of my year, I just never dreamed -- I remember message winning at Colonial. Every time I would get on an airplane to leave the state to go to a major I thought it would never happen.

To get to play The Open at Champions and now have Chevron here for the foreseeable future, it's pretty special. And even if I came in on the tail end of it, I got to at least play here a couple years. It's hard to ask for more than that.

I have kind of said if this is my last Chevron, which I'm 99% sure this it is, and I'm so content and at peace with it.

Q. Let's hope it's not. You've been playing some good golf recently. What's been clicking for you? Seems like the putter has been getting hot for you recently.

ANGELA STANFORD: Yeah, so this is going to be a long-winded answer. I hope that's okay. The thing about trying to get to 100 and maybe needing some help, the sponsor invite, if I don't qualify for The Open, if the USGA extends a special exemption, I didn't just want to show up.

This off-season I really, really went back to work. My friends kind of gave me a hard time because I gave up all my ski trips. It was literally work. I was in with my trainer as much as I could.

The thing I found out, it's easier to work on your short

game when your body doesn't recover as fast, so really went to work my putting. These courses are longer. I'm going to have to get up and down more. My chipping has got a ton better.

So I think the thing that was really important for me going into this year is that I needed to prove that I am playing well and I'm trying to play well. Because out of respect for a sponsor and out of respect for competitors, I'm not just going to show up and take up a spot.

Q. As you know, there aren't very many players over 40 week to week. We're saying goodbye to one player who's 33 in So Yeon. What impact do you hope this road to 100 has on the future generations?

ANGELA STANFORD: You know, I think all along I hope players see it as, one, growth, and I hope they see it as opportunity.

It's funny. When I hear she's 33 -- and sometimes I catch myself, I'm like oh, I'm only 40. Oh, no, I'm not 40. I forget how old I am out here because being around all these youngsters I don't feel as old.

I hope the players now and the younger players realize they're going to have a choice. Like they get -- and I think that was the big thing for me in my career. When we kind of struggled in 2009 and 2010, I say this all the time. I remember sitting in a player meeting thinking, I'm going to have to go find another job of.

Like what happens in the LPGA Tour goes away? So I hope they see this streak as growth and their opportunity. If you look at where we came from in 2001 to today, I mean, just the total purse money, and not just money, like the events and the courses we play, the venues.

So I hope they just take a second to think about, okay, I can play as long as I want. I'm not sure this generation will because, you know, I'm not sure anybody will ever play past -- won't be many past 40.

I think that speaks to your Tour, too. I mean, these players are so good. I'm going to kind of throw my trainer under the bus this time. I got home and he said, what's the difference between -- what does Nelly have that you don't have? I looked at him like, okay, a foot at least, and like 20 years.

But he was joking and we were joking about it. I think that I hope this generation understands that this tour has come a long way. I hope they see the growth. I hope they see the opportunity. I hope they take care of this tour.

Q. What is your trainer's name? And lastly, how is he preparing you for a 36-hole qualifier?

ANGELA STANFORD: His name is Dan Riley. His father's name is Paul Riley who worked for Chevron for so long.

We've played -- we started long time ago preparing. My legs have been a point of -- you know, your legs have to be strong, but it's been a lot on the recovery side. Like how do you get up and feel good enough the next day to keep going.

At least I know that when I get off the plane Monday morning in California, I know exactly what I need to do that day and night to be ready to go Tuesday morning.

So not necessarily talked about that day, but in all of this off-season it's been leading up to it I guess.

Q. Speaking of Nelly, what's it been like to watch her run? Where would you rank this streak over your 24 years out on Tour?

ANGELA STANFORD: You know, I don't like comparing generations. I don't like comparing different players with different times.

Like I'm always going to tell you Lorena Ochoa is the best ever. Period. Like that's just my opinion. There was a time -- I remember that in 2008 -- where I remember thinking, is anybody ever going to win again. Like nobody is ever going to beat Lorena again.

Obviously Annika was great, but Lorena had something. Lorena had something that nobody did. I think Nelly is as close to Lorena right now as anybody. She just kind of has this -- doesn't matter what comes at her. The final rounds have been weather issues and been terrible weather and it doesn't seem it faze her.

So I think she's the closest thing to Lorena speaking of those streaks. That's what I think right now.

Q. Talking about the golf course, you mentioned this is a venue you need to learn. They underwent renovations since last time Chevron was here. How different is the course playing now versus last year?

ANGELA STANFORD: It's really not that much different. Hole No. 8 is the hole they keep talking about. Only seen it once. Just changes where I aim off the tee. Doesn't change other people's target line.

For the most part, hasn't changed. Greens are a little bit

bigger, but I've yet to feel like it's a different course yet.

Q. Why? Why put yourself through this mentally and physically to pursue this goal?

ANGELA STANFORD: So I had to make that decision this off-season. I loved doing TV last year. I love the people. I think I could do that for however many coming years. I would love it. I would love to still be a part of the Tour.

But I realized it was so close. I was three -- I'm three majors away from crossing that line. I at least had to try. I got to try. I think I would regret it forever if I just said I'm good at 97.

Again, only one human has ever done this. There has been a lot of different -- like my faith is involved in this. I've had those moments. And I wrote for a sponsor invite to Singapore and didn't get it, and I remember thinking, this isn't going to be as -- this isn't my plan. My plan isn't going to go as I thought.

But I just had to try. I've always been the type that I'm going to give it everything I have until I'm finished. I think this is it. I think 100 is my finish line.

But now at least I have some peace about it, and I struggled with that the last couple years. When do you walk away? Like I watched my friends do it. It's hard.

So it's actually been a blessing that I have this finish line that's pretty obvious.

Q. So if you reach that goal this year, is that it? Will you walk away at that point?

ANGELA STANFORD: It's been pretty interesting. I don't really want to talk about it, which I think is weird. I'm one of those people I'll answer any question. I've always been that way. I'm an open book when it comes to media.

It's been weird. It's like I don't want to really talk about it. If I can get to 100 -- I want to go to Evian and then I'll play my favorites this fall. I think that's it honestly.

The time I've put in this off-season and getting to the point where it takes so much just to get up and play, you know, again, I've been really healthy and my body is just -- it just takes so much more to recover.

Again, it goes back to respecting the competition and the game. If I can't give it 110%, it's time to go do something else.

Q. What's the hardest part for you physically to be

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

able to get out there now?

ANGELA STANFORD: I think just the next day. Mentally I feel fine. Mentally I can -- I can't wait to get out there.

But like Phoenix I had something with my knee; Vegas my back the last day when it dropped 30 degrees didn't want to turn; this week I have something going on back here.

All I did was go to sleep. (Smiling.)

So I think just that. It's just mileage and swings. I've asked a bunch of older players, and it's so funny. They all say you know when you know.

The one that really stuck out was Dottie. I got to talk to Dottie for a minute and she said, you know, when I found myself rehabbing my body more than practicing, knew it was time to go.

I thought, you know, I'm spending a lot of time trying to recover. I think that's when you know, too. Like there is so much more to life coming, and so I'm not using the R word and not giving a define.

If I get to 100 that's going to be pretty satisfying. For me, that's pretty special. That would be good.

Q. With running your own foundation and having a career in golf, how or what characteristics overlap between the two, if any?

ANGELA STANFORD: Well, I mean, for me with the foundation, integrity, honesty, giving back. The thing about playing on Tour for 24 years is I hope I walk away leaving it better; same thing with the foundation. I hope I'm making somebody's life better.

But I think being very honest with people and having some integrity, because you're raising people's money and taking their money to use it to help others. You have to be honest and up front.

So I think that's same with golf. Integrity on the golf course and respecting the game.

So, yeah, I think there is a bunch of overlap there.

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