

# Aramco Championship

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Shadow Creek

**Anna Nordqvist**

**Anne Van Dam**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, second press conference at the PIF Global Series Aramco Championship here at Shadow Creek.

Delighted to be joined by the European captain, Anna Nordqvist, and one of her vice captains, Anne Van Dam.

Anna, start with you. Five months until the Solheim Cup. How much are you looking forward to the event and what does it feel like now heading into the last few months before it?

ANNA NORDQVIST: It's very exciting. It's been a lot of work and it's a lot of Solheim Cup on my mind, whether it's me going out for a walk or being on Tour or, yeah, there is always something going on each day, which is exciting.

I think now as we get closer you kind of get the excitement from the players, they're qualifying, the caddies, the helpers. Yeah, it's really like a huge team effort to make this happen. Obviously so much going on behind the scenes that I can't really tell everyone about now, but just very, very excited.

It's such a privilege to be in this role and kind of taking all the experience that I got to experience through my years in the Solheim Cup and kind of making it my own with this captaincy.

**Q. Can tell us what's been your favorite bit so far?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think my favorite part has been putting the team together as far as in the helpers, the captains, and like everyone in the closest team around the players. It's been tough too because I've had so many people reach out wanting to be part of it. Unfortunately I only have so many spots.

Just kind of hand picking the people that I feel is going to be a good asset to me and the team, that's been fun. But I



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love graphic design, so me and Mel, we designed the team outfits.

I think that's been my favorite task so far and I think everyone will be quite excited because I think both me and Mel, we like fashion, so we'll be seeing a lot of stuff for sure.

THE MODERATOR: You're sat next to one of your vice captains. Just talk us through why you wanted Anne on your team and your other vice captains as well?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, early on I knew -- well, Caroline Hedwall was going to be one that I wanted on my side. She's been I feel like my ride or die Solheim Cup partner over the years and over so many fun matches.

She brings so much to the table, and so I knew she would be one. She was very excited when I got the chance to call her.

And Mel, I've known Mel for what, over 20 years; same with Caroline. We grow up playing junior golf together. Me and Mel were on the same Junior Solheim Cup together in 2005 in the U.S.

So I feel like we've done the whole journey together, so Mel and I are like quite different personalities, so I feel like Mel is a personality you want to have in the team room and she brings a lot to the table. Also now in her job as a commentator I think she gets to see more golf than any of us, so I think she's going to be a huge asset.

I only announced two captains early on because I was saving a spot for Anne. Obviously being played in Netherlands, I couldn't think of a better honor to be a vice captain in your own home country. Obviously I was hoping to maybe have the decision to pick her for my team, but with her pregnancy and everything going on there, like it was quite a no-brainer to ask her to be part of the team.

So she's going to have to teach me a little bit of Dutch. It's been so great. We had a captain's call a couple weeks ago now and it's just fun to be able to like pick each other's brain.



Everyone has so many great ideas and we had a lot of great thoughts from just being out on Tour and playing on the LET.

Yeah, so I'm quieted excited with the set setup.

THE MODERATOR: Anne, how proud are you to be appointed Ping Junior Solheim captain and also be a vice captain under Anna as well?

ANNE VAN DAM: Yeah, for sure to start with the Junior Solheim Cup, it started off a little bit as a joke between me and Eva-Lotta who always has been helping the Junior Solheim Cup over the past I don't even know how many years, 10, 15, 20 years, I don't know.

Because I was on the team in 2015 I want to say, and then, yeah, at some point we started talking and said, well, if I ever get the chance to be a captain of this that would be amazing and like full circle, because I played in the juniors, played in the real Solheim Cup, so to then give back.

I think the juniors is always about giving back. It's about them having a great week and getting that confidence, and, yeah, that excitement for the next chapter for their career.

For me to be able to hopefully help them inspire them, especially doing it together with Bronte, who is the same age as me, I feel like we're quite close to these girl. It's a huge honor, and I actually didn't think it was possible that it was an opportunity.

I just asked some point we were joking and Ava-Lotta was like, well, would you want to do it? I was like, yes. Is it possible? So it started off as maybe a joke, but became reality.

It's been super cool already. I will probably go out in July to the team championships in Europe to have a look, and I think that's just something so different. You're out at a tournament, it's not about you, you're watching these girls and seeing them play. It's super fun.

THE MODERATOR: In terms of being a vice captain, having played alongside Anna, what leadership qualities do you admire in her that she's going to bring to this role?

ANNE VAN DAM: She has so much experience. How many Solheim Cups have you played in?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Nine.

ANNE VAN DAM: Well, this will be the tenth overall. I think that says it for itself. She's seen it all, the good, the

bad. I've only been to one which was already such a huge week. So I can't imagine being to nine, and I think that speaks for itself.

Yeah, I don't have anything to add in that perspective. I'm going to let her do her thing, which so far she's been amazing.

It's also nice to sit back a little bit and just learn. It's a new role for me. Yeah, just to see how Mel and Caro are in their role and how I can fit in. That's basically what that week is for me. See where my qualities fit in, where I can help, and let the rest do their job and let their experience come out.

Yeah, doing it together with Anna has been fun. We met each other probably at Lake Nona quite a few years back. She's one of those players you look up to your whole life. I remember watching you guys when I was playing the juniors in 2015.

To then play together in Gleneagles and have this also come full circle and being able to help her out and see her in this amazing role that she deserves.

So it's super fun. From now on it's only going to get more busy and we are going to have more chats, and slowly it's going to come real close. That's the most exciting part.

THE MODERATOR: Apart from teaching Anna and the team some Dutch, how else will you bring your Dutch culture to the team?

ANNE VAN DAM: Yeah, that's the only thing I've been talking about, just bring as many youth players out there, families. Golf is not a big sport in the Netherlands and I really I hope this event will inspire a lot of kids. That is what inspired me when I was young, to watch the Dutch Open. Back then it was in Eindhoven. Watching them play I was like, I want to play here.

If you don't have that experience you also don't know if it's something you might be interested in, so also with the juniors I just hope, and that's what I've been trying to promote, is as many parents bring your kids out to come watch the juniors and come, stay, and watch the real Solheim Cup.

And hopefully just inspire a lot of youth. I think that's what the Netherlands needs. Hopefully that week will kickstart that.

THE MODERATOR: Anna, how important are weeks such as the Aramco Championship which is co-sanctioned between the LET and LPGA Tour. You're getting to see a

lot of players this week, whether that's just seeing them in player dining or on the golf course; how useful is that for you this year?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, first of all I'm very grateful to tee it up this week. I received a sponsor invite to be here. I've gone through a lot this last couple years and my play hasn't been up to my potential maybe. I think I received my second sponsor invite of my career this week. Very grateful for the support.

And having this opportunity to be here, like you said, there a lot of the girls from the LET or the best on the LET that now also play on the LPGA. Just being around everyone I think has been beneficial for me in this role.

Kind of having those day-to-day interactions with players and the caddies and everyone who potentially can be involved. It's going to be very exciting qualifying race, so certainly like being able to see most of the players tee off in an event together, kind of see how their game compares to each other is obviously very helpful.

Yeah, just not having to basically feel like you're really putting them on the spot by showing up and when they can see me each week. I think that's why I said why I wanted to do this captaincy when I did, because I wanted to do this journey with them and I wanted to feel like I was approachable and kind of just being there and being supportive.

Having done nine, like I understand what they're going through, the stress of trying to qualify. At the end of the day I just want them to be themselves and play the best they can. If you play well you're going to be on that team. Ultimately weeks like this when we see them all, it's just very helpful.

Now having Anne this week, too, I think it's just very easy and very smooth and just feels like a natural part of the process. It's also an exciting part, because you see how much this tournament means to not only us, but all the players trying to make the team this year.

THE MODERATOR: Anne, congratulations on your newest arrival. Just how will you be balancing your schedule this year now with newborn baby, a captaincy, captaincy?

ANNE VAN DAM: Yeah, we'll see how it plays out. I'm not quite sure yet. This is the first week and so far it's been great. Like Anna said, it's so nice to be on the ground and talk to all the girls then. I think that's the most important thing. You can only do so much through text message.

So seeing everyone I think is great. Some of the players I haven't met yet, so it's nice to walk up to them and introduce me to them. Yeah, I think that's great and that's what I want to keep on doing.

I am not going to plan on playing too much this year because my priorities have switched a little bit. So taking care of my daughter, Josephine, is definitely number one priority, and then my commitment to Junior and the real Solheim Cup comes second, and then playing a little bit comes definitely third.

Yeah, no, I take it super serious so I want to be there at the moments where it matters, like a team practice and stuff like that to really, yeah, show up for the role that I asked to do. I think that's very, very exciting.

And it's nice to have a little bit of a different perspective and goals as well where it's not just about me. I'm out there, yeah, cheering on other players which is also very cool. That's kind of how I see it balance this year. We'll see how it goes. It's all very, very new.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Congratulations on the birth of baby daughter Jo.**

ANNE VAN DAM: Thank you.

**Q. You are a five-time winner on the Ladies European tour. Talk to us about the difference between celebrating your first ever LET win and celebrating the birth of baby daughter Jo?**

ANNE VAN DAM: I'm going to make it funny. My first win I got very drunk, which that's a night I will never, never forget. That was, yeah, pure joy and I was very young. We were in China and it was one big madhouse. That was some, moment I will never forget.

Yeah, I thought my achievements on the golf course were always very important to me until I have a daughter. That all was placed on spot ten in importance. Being with her and seeing her smile, nothing makes me more happy.

So, yeah, that moment is definitely the best moment so far of my life. It puts golf in perspective where I always thought that made me happy or not happy, but I think, yeah, those days are definitely over, which is also very nice.

**Q. And given the time you've had away from the game, what are your expectations of yourself coming into this week?**

ANNE VAN DAM: Zero percent. No, golf is a very weird game. Until yesterday I haven't been out on the golf course like actually playing since December, so that's very weird. So I had no expectations and I went out yesterday and played really lovely golf.

So that's the weird thing about golf. Sometimes having zero expectations is the best. I'm here this week in different roles. That is why I am here as well, just to be on the ground, show up for my sponsors, PIF and Golf Saudi and the amazing event they're putting on. Actually playing Shadow Creek couple times in week is a treat that we rarely get.

So yeah, like I said, my expectations have shifted a lot, especially this week. Like I gave birth just shy of eight weeks ago, so my body feels not the same like it used to be. My club head speed is not the same that it used to be.

I'm just out here having fun, having a good week, and also enjoying my new role. That's the reality of this week.

**Q. Anna, first of all -- two questions -- did you watch the football last night?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: No. Because I was out practicing, but I had constant updates about the Sweden-Poland game making the World Cup.

So heading to the chipping green we were 1-0 early on, and then all of a sudden I'm chipping for like 25 minutes and I thought I read that we had scored 2-0 and all of a sudden it was 2-2 and I wasn't really sure what was going on.

Definitely paid attention. Was obviously very happy that we made it.

**Q. Secondly, time management this week; must be difficult for you in terms of your playing. How are you finding the challenge of being in so many different places this week and how are you and Anne working together?**

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so this has definitely been a huge learning experience. I think already last year when I was kind of trying to embrace this role and playing full time it was hard because I felt like I was torn, my focus was torn and there was more things on my plate than I expected it to be.

This is my third tournament in a row this year. I hadn't tee'd it up for a couple months. I think two weeks ago was a real reality check of maybe what I was in for this year.

I think I -- well, I reached out LET team and LPGA team and my management team to all help me manage everything that's going on on my plate. That's been quite helpful because as much as I'm the captain, I'm also trying to play full time this year.

I wanted it to be a positive being out here, so I think just trying to prioritize when I'm doing one thing. Like on the golf course I'll always pay attention. I play with Chiara Tamburlini on Sunday, so it always helps. I feel like you see things different like inside the ropes, and I think that's going to be one the positives that I'm going to take.

Yeah, definitely going to take a village this year and a lot of my team to help me out kind of managing everything. Having Anne here this week, we're going to get together I think tomorrow. It's just been very busy the last couple days. So I try to do the best I can but also my attention to details and preparation has always been something I pride myself for, so not trying to prepare for both, but I just try to do one thing at a time and try to -- when I'm on the golf course I try to put my phone away because it tends to blow up these days.

Yeah, it's been fun. I'm trying to embrace it and also playing and being inside the ropes is something that I still love doing and obviously committed to doing.

Yeah, just going to try to manage both, so it'll be another good challenge this year.

**Q. Anne, I think you surprised a lot of people when you announced Jo on social media. What has been the reaction you've received from your fellow LET or LPGA members?**

ANNE VAN DAM: Yeah, I think the LPGA and LET, we're all like such a big family. We've know each other playing junior golf, so even for me seeing any of my friends or even colleagues that I'm not that close with becoming moms and having kids, I think it's the most beautiful thing.

We have a lot of the super bad ass moms on Tour that are combining playing with raising kids. I never saw myself as the type that would play full time and raising a kid. I was like, I first want to take a year or two years off to focus on the baby and then come back.

But, yeah, just seeing this week how hard it is, I'm super impressed with my friends that do this every week, traveling with their kids. I definitely underestimated them a lot.

Yeah, I think celebrating a child, everyone has been so excited. I think it's a real family like I said, so seeing a lot

of kids on Tour, it's the best. It's been fun, but I've had a lot of, what the (indiscernible) are you doing here this week moments with players in the locker room. What are you doing here? I don't really know.

No, it's been great. Everyone is like, where is she? Can we meet her? For now she's chilling in the hotel with Grandma enjoying the nice Bellagio. I'm not going to disrupt her with bringing her out to the golf course quite yet. Yeah, come Dutch Open in June, come September, she'll definitely be out there cheering on Team Europe. I can't wait to have her be a part of this, and it's all been amazing.

**Q. You all got some mom energy in the team room this year. Do you think that kind of helps? You're ushering these kids around this golf course trying to get them to win a Solheim Cup. Do you think that experience will help?**

ANNE VAN DAM: Yeah, I hope so. I'm still quite new to this all, right? I think the coolest thing is as soon as you have a kid your life is not about you anymore, which I think these roles are quite the same.

It's very cool to take care of other players. Even Anna asking all the time, what do you need, can I do something.

It's a very fun role. Yeah, mainly obviously my first priority is the juniors. That comes first. It's also the first event. I know how stressful and how scary it is, so for them to be able to talk to me, I can learn a lot from Anna just to be approachable.

I think that's what it's about. Talk to the players, and whether they make it or not shouldn't change how I approach them. Everyone tries their hardest and that's what I want to bring to them. If I can mean something to a player that's going to finish 30th on the ranking and not make the team and someone that makes the team, I think they should all be treated the same, and that's my mentality going into it.

And taking that into the Solheim Cup like I said before talking about the kids. We're all family. Players go up and down throughout your career. So I've always been someone that just treated everyone the same. Didn't matter if they're playing well or poor. That's sometimes what can happen a little bit on Tour.

So just try to be, yeah, consistent as I can. Overall just try for them to have a good week and a fun week. I think that's -- they're such beautiful events that I want everyone to look back and win or not, win or lose, to just be like, this was a fantastic week. I think if we can accomplish that or I

can accomplish that for the two week span, I think would be very successful.

THE MODERATOR: So thank you and good luck this week.

ANNE VAN DAM: Thank you.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Thank you.

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