

Aramco Saudi Ladies International Presented by Public Investment Fund

Tuesday, 15 March, 2022

King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf & Country Club

Anna Nordqvist Georgia Hall Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're now starting our second press conference this afternoon. We've got two British Open winners with us, Georgia Hall and Anna Nordqvist.

Georgia, starting with you. It's great to have you back. I feel like you've always done quite well competing around here.

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I played not too bad the last couple of individual events here. I really enjoy the golf course. It's always in really good condition. The wind can get up quite a lot, which I don't mind. Yeah, it's just really enjoyable place to be. Yeah, I love playing here.

THE MODERATOR: When the wind does get up, do you feel like you enjoy that more? Does it almost give you a bit more of an advantage when the wind gets up, do you feel?

GEORGIA HALL: I think so because I feel quite comfortable playing in the wind. I think I'm used to it a little bit more than other players. I like moving the golf ball around, hitting low shots quite a lot. So I don't mind it.

I think it will be fairly windy this week, but I've been out there this morning, and the course is in good condition again and the green's not too fast. So I think they'll be able to hold when you hit it on them.

THE MODERATOR: Anna, great to have you back as well. Royal Greens is always a course that players do seem to enjoy coming and competing on.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I love coming here. This is my third time now. We've had quite a few rounds around this track. This is probably as good as I've ever seen this golf course. It's quite lush out there. This wind is as powerful as I've ever seen it.

It's going to definitely be a challenge, and definitely playing this early in the year, this being probably one of

the first couple of events for most girls. Usually when it's playing in November, you had quite a few months of tournament play behind you and kind of maybe a little more awareness where the ball is going and stuff. So I think it's going to add an extra challenge this year, just feeling a bit rusty in tournament play.

But excited to be here, and everything is really good about this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: From an LET point of view, is now the fact this is taking place as the second event of the season here in March, is it almost quite nice to see on the LET an event of this kind of standing really quite early in the season?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Definitely. I think it sets the tone for the rest of the events to -- I mean, just how the tournaments are run. I've been enjoying playing all the Aramco events, the Team Series, and some of them have been run better than some of the majors. So it's been a real treat.

I know there's a lot of great tournaments that have been added to the Ladies European Tour schedule this year. I'm excited to go play a few. I know a lot of the girls, they have about a five-week stretch coming up. After seeing kind of past a lot of the COVID, it's just nice to see there's a good schedule coming up and a lot of playing opportunities.

THE MODERATOR: Georgia, just on one I touched on at the start, a lot of the players that we do speak to tend to say that these Aramco, these golf events, they do have that feel of almost feeling like a major or certainly a big event when you come to them. As someone who plays around the world in a lot of big events, do you feel the same?

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, definitely. I think it's one of the headline events for the LET and rightly so. I think the setup is really good, not too short distance-wise. We get looked after incredibly well. We just really enjoy coming here. That's why we keep coming back.

Q. We asked Maha before, I think it's a record breaking LET season with \$30 million up for grabs across the season. How does that feel to see that in the LET? How does it feel from a player's



perspective?

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I think it's fantastic. It's definitely what the LET needs. Definitely wasn't like that when I was on the LET five, six years ago. I'm really happy for the girls, and that's why you get LPGA players coming over because they want to compete in these events and play on this Tour.

Q. Anna and Georgia, welcome back to Saudi Arabia. The question is for you, Anna. Being a Golf Saudi ambassador, what does that mean to you and growing the game here and working closely in growing the game and making it possible for the Saudi youth girls?

ANNA NORDQVIST: It obviously means a lot for me. Growing up, I was fortunate to have a lot of good role models in sports, in my family, and I think it's always been important to have someone to look up to and to have someone show you that things are possible.

I never thought a couple years later that I'd be sitting in a position to maybe influence one or two people along the way doing what I love. I've actually seen walking off the 18th tee box today, I've seen a quote, which I think sums up why I'm so fortunate to do this. It was from Joanna, 16 years old, and I'm actually going to read it. The quote goes, "I have a desire to study in the USA or England at a top university. Hopefully these opportunities can help pave the path for my future and make my dreams come true."

I think that sums up what this is all about, giving women opportunities to chase their dreams, to believe in themselves. It might not be in sports, but in other areas of their life. I think both me and Georgia, we've been very fortunate to live our dreams all over the world playing in places that I probably never thought I would ever visit.

So I'm just very proud to be able to be an influence for people.

Q. The question is for both of you. The fact that the Saudi women now are picking up golf thanks to some work and initiatives done by Golf Saudi and the Saudi Golf Federation, how do you encourage them? And what would you like to say to them to get into golf, and would you do that?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, I think that the initiative that Golf Saudi had starting out with the first tournament here two years ago, the Ladies First initiative, where they gave away -- don't quote me on this, but it was like 1,500 memberships. I thought that was huge.

I didn't grow up in a golf club where there was many females. It's very hard. I actually started golf when I was

10. I quit about two months later because I didn't enjoy it and there wasn't many other girls that I could relate to. Then I picked it up three years later.

So I know golf might be a sport where you need to be surrounded by some friends or women in particular to kind of share the experience with compared to other sports, so just seeing that, I think, has been huge. Also coming here and meeting some of the young girls here. It's nice to see the COVID restriction lifted and see more people out and about and on the beach walk and around the hotel. There's a few more people coming out than last year.

It's been great to kind of pick up and just meet young girls and ladies.

Q. I have a question for both of you. What do you want the spectators to experience from this tournament? Is there any advice you would like to give for Saudi women and girls who want to play golf?

GEORGIA HALL: I started when I was 7 years old, and I just really enjoyed trying to make contact with the golf ball and try to hit it as hard as I could. That's the advice I would give to start off, just have a lot of fun with it, and golf can be a lot of fun as well, especially if you're going with friends. You can make loads of different games up.

I think number one is just to have fun and see where you are with it. Everyone is different when they take up the game. Some find it easier than others. But yeah, I think just have fun.

THE MODERATOR: Anna, I think you can answer the initial part of that, which is what would you say to spectators who are thinking about maybe coming along this weekend to watch the golf? What would you say to bring them here?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think it's a fantastic opportunity just to obviously watch women's golf. There's so much talent in Europe. There's so many good girls, and they're so young now. I'm old at 34.

It's a cool experience, and I think a lot of people who have never been to a golf tournament in person, I think it will be quite a different experience. It's pretty cool seeing it up front.

I know Aramco and Golf Saudi, they do so much things for the spectators, and they have this little village with a lot of fun stuff going on. So even if you don't go out on the golf course, it's definitely worth a visit there.

THE MODERATOR: I think on Friday of the tournament, they've got a ladies' day for any women that want to come for free golf lessons as well as to see these

awesome lady athletes in action.

Q. Anna, I was wondering if this whole controversy with Phil Mickelson and Greg Norman and all these things have affected you in some way? If you think there's a different reality between men's golf and women's golf in this whole scheme of things. And kind of your reflections as a Golf Saudi ambassador.

ANNA NORDQVIST: I've never been one to comment on other people's thoughts, what the men's like, what the women's is like. I've always believed in giving women opportunities to play all over the world and for people to believe in women. Just seeing the schedule on the Ladies European Tour improve and push all the other women's tours too. I think it's great.

At the end of the day, I think we're all fortunate to be able to do what we love for a living and try to get better every day. I met so many amazing people all over the world thanks to this sport. I think at the end of the day I'm very fortunate to do what I do and to see the women's game grow and being a bright future in it.

Q. My question is for both players. During the lockdown period, what did you do to maintain your golf form? And my second question is do you miss playing in front of crowds?

GEORGIA HALL: So in lockdown, there wasn't much we could do in the UK because we could only leave our house for an hour of exercise. So I couldn't even go on the golf course or anything.

I got a chipping net in the back garden and a mat, so I was chipping, and I've got some putting mats inside. I also turned my garage into a gym fitness-wise. So I really kind of worked on a bit of my fitness in lockdown while I had a lot of time.

Yeah, I kind of made the most out of obviously a bad situation. Yeah, there's not much we could do for a couple of months.

THE MODERATOR: I don't know if you've got anything you want to add on that, Anna. What was your experience during lockdown?

ANNA NORDQVIST: As much as I miss competing, it was actually quite nice to have a break. I turned pro in 2009 and basically have been going 150 miles an hour for a couple years in a row there until 2020. After I had a battle with mono for almost two years in 2017, '18, '19, that was probably the break I needed to take a couple years earlier and I never did.

It was just nice to not live out of a suitcase, have access to your own laundry machine, being able to cook and wake up in your bed for more than a couple weeks in a

row.

Obviously, it was a very unfortunate situation. I think we all tried to make the best out of it. Then once it was time to go, I think we're all very excited to compete again.

Q. Georgia, I'd like to ask about the weather and the change in conditions in terms of here, being a local, there is always changes in terms of weather. We're expecting a lot of wind the first few days, and then maybe it will be normal in the last couple of days. How did you prepare for that? Based on your previous experience and this experience, upcoming experience.

GEORGIA HALL: I kind of mentioned earlier it's windy. We've seen it, especially today and yesterday. Definitely challenging with the wind. I've heard it's supposed to get quite warm on the weekend, so maybe a little less wind, I imagine.

In the mornings here, it tends to be fairly calm even though it's not like that at the moment, and it gets a lot windier in the afternoon. So I think definitely today and tomorrow prepare for a lot of wind, maybe change ball flight quite a lot. I think the most important thing is just stay patient out there as it's going to be a long round and some long days out there.

Maybe mentally a little bit more tough, but I think it will be a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me just before you go. The press conference before, we had Maha, Lina, and Ines all together, three Moroccan players, three Arabic players. How great is it for you to see this kind of diversity in the field?

ANNA NORDQVIST: I think that's what's so great about the Ladies European Tour. There's players from all over the world, some girls from Australia. You see even players coming over from the U.S. to compete. Also them playing all over the world, playing Saudi, Dubai. We were just in Kenya a couple weeks ago, going to South Africa then to Thailand.

So I think the diversity and everything about the Ladies European Tour, I think it's a place where a lot of people feel like home, and it's a very friendly atmosphere, and that's what I enjoy to coming back and playing on the Ladies European Tour. I have been playing a little bit more, and it's just because I like the atmosphere. It's a nice change of pace to the LPGA Tour.

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