

# Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 6 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

## Linn Grant

## Maja Stark

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We welcome from Sweden Linn Grant and Maja Stark to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Maja, we might start with you, you kicked off your Olympics by coming to Paris for the Opening Ceremony and enjoying that with your compatriots from Sweden. Can you tell us what that was like to be on the boat and on the Seine and your experience so far being here?

MAJA STARK: It was really cool. I got the question, if I just wanted to come down for a couple of days just to go to the Opening Ceremony and I said yes because I didn't have anything else to do and it turned out to be a great experience.

Running around it was really cool, not just being on the boat but getting to stay in the Village for a couple of days and be with the other athletes that I would have never seen otherwise.

Like I was staying with a boxer and say sailor and the sailors have been down in Marseilles this whole time. It was cool to see the other people as well.

THE MODERATOR: And Lin, obviously as well, a debut Olympics for both of you, but yourself, what have you made of the experience so far and? You arrived at Le Golf National on Friday. What has the last few days been like?

LINN GRANT: It's been nice. It's not very often you get to a tournament on a Friday starting on Wednesday. So I feel like we've been hanging around and kind of chatting with other athletes. Kind of try to stay in the environment of the Village a little bit. And then just try to spend some time and watch other sports. I feel like the athletes -- when you see them on the TV -- it's the best experience you get this week. You feel some sort of connection with the other athletes and spend some time to watch them.

**Q. Much has been made of you guys going to school together and Ludvig being there as well. Curious, when you have physical education class, who is winning the Games when you guys are competing in gym class together?**

MAJA STARK: It wasn't us. We had like 15 different sports at the school and we had wrestlers and swimmers and everything. I don't think we had any chance of winning. We have super athletes -- I think ten people from our school who are competing for Sweden and we were a pretty tiny high school. So there were a lot of freak-ish super athletes at the school.

**Q. I guess for the two of you, he mentioned the other day, being around your guys and your success inspired him. He said he wanted to just kind of follow you around. Does that check out in your memory?**

LINN GRANT: I think obviously we were kind of in a national team a little around the time he was. I think he came in about the same time. And then I don't know, I think he really blossomed in college. I saw him a couple times over in college but I mean, his last year at Texas Tech where he got his card obviously and has really made that transition. I mean, now he's a very established pro. I don't know how much we inspired him. It was very nice of him to say that. It was just a nice environment to be in. There was a lot of good golfers and a lot of people who wanted to practise a lot and obviously he was one of them, and he like grinded every afternoon and at night, he would rather play golf than hang around. I felt like during that time, he was the one that works a lot and probably did the most work. I'm not surprised?

MAJA STARK: I don't know, we didn't make the national team -- we weren't actually like the best of the best in our age group either. I got to the high school and I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't know how to practise. I didn't know how do Todd do anything.

It's very nice of him to say that because I didn't think I had any clue of what I was actually doing there. I think you have knowledge of how to practise and stuff. I think me and Ludwig both looked at her.

**Q. And you both arrive at the Solheim Cup stage together. Quite a memory, I'm sure. When you look back and you're on a bigger stage, was it a blessing to have the two of you each step of the way?**

MAJA STARK: We've had almost exactly the same journey here, and we are -- I don't think like at every tournament, there's a competition against everyone else and then there's the competition we have between us. Because we're just super competitive in most things, and I think it's always kind of been like that. We definitely support each other but I want to beat you.

Like it's always been like that and I think that's why the Swedish team has been doing so well because we have so many people that are so competitive and we were on the national team, we weren't some of the best ones there but we tried to get up there and beat them eventually.

LINN GRANT: Having someone, like may I can't said, having someone on the same journey from the start until here but we've experienced things very differently. Sometimes it's been nice to share your own thoughts and your own experience with someone who has been there but also has a different experience of the same thing or the same tournament, the same year.

It was one occasion where I looked at you and I said, "Well, your year has been amazing.

And you looked at me and you're like, "No, it hasn't."

I'm like, "Are you kidding me?"

It's so funny that you look at some things from the outside and you could always ask each other like inside information that you want to know because we know each other so well. And if there's anything, we can always lean towards each other and get some extra support.

**Q. When you're staying with a boxer and sailors, are you learning anything?**

MAJA STARK: No. I was a little bit scared to stay with the boxer because it was the day before competition and she was like starving. So I didn't know if I could talk to her. She's super nice, super sweet but I was a little bit scared.

I don't think we talked much about our sports and what we were doing. I mean, it's the Olympics. We are doing so much media. Everything is just sports, sports, sports. So we talked about everything in life, and that was really nice.

**Q. I saw you playing a bit of ping-pong with Alex**

**Noren. Just wondered who won the better of that duel?**

MAJA STARK: Oh, him. I had it explained to me why he's so freakishly good. He said when he had a wrist injury, he has a ping pong machine at his house that just shoots balls at him, and he gotten hours of professional like table tennis lessons a week. So I had no chance. But he's been practising a lot, and I've played at the British Open and the U.S. Open, and that's it.

**Q. You say you don't usually like to watch golf. Did you get out on Sunday to watch golf?**

LINN GRANT: We did watch a little bit obviously on TV a lot but we watched the last couple groups coming in on 18. I mean, it was such a cool after, and nice to see so many people out. I mean, it's a different stage, even though we're kind of used to playing golf in front of a crowd.

But it's a different week, and I think the guys, as well, felt that.

**Q. Have you been to Versailles where the dressage is and some of the show jumping? Have you had a chance to go over there and embrace it?**

LINN GRANT: We were there yesterday for the qualifier. It was nice to walk around for a little bit. I feel like I had time to watch at least something else than just golf this week.

**Q. I don't know how much you've talked about the course, but just what were your thoughts on it and how dangerous is the rough, how terrifying are the closing holes? Take your pick?**

MAJA STARK: I think the golf course is amazing. It's probably the best layout I've ever seen. I don't think it looks as scary when you're there as it does on TV, like the first tee shot. I think it looked very scary on TV but then you get up there and it's a mile wide and you can barely see the water because of the little mounds.

So I think it's less scary than people -- or at least it's less scary than what I thought it was going to be like. And then I mean you're going to have to take your medicine this week if you end up in the rough because it is really thick and compact.

But no, it's easier than I thought. Let just put it that way, and then we'll see how we play.

LINN GRANT: I agree. You still have to hit really good tee shots to put yourself in good position. Greens are not

terrible. They are quite flat. But there's these like -- you think the putts are straight but you know they are not.

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**Q. Have you ever played a tournament where finishing fifth, which is ordinarily a pretty good week, means nothing?**

MAJA STARK: Normally no one gives a damn unless you're No. 1. Here, there's three spots that people care about what you do and people will remember it. I feel like it's kind of easier that way. I think that's what made it so exciting, as well, for the guys because you had -- it really wasn't clear who was going to get the Silver or the Bronze. That makes it a really exciting week. It's not just a battle between two people. It's going to be a battle between five or six at the end which is really fun.

**Q. Lastly, since I completely screwed this question up to Ludvig when I tried it a couple weeks ago, when Henrik won the Silver, the same year he won The Open, I don't know where you were at that time but I was told that the general sporting nation of Sweden responded stronger to the Olympic Silver than the Claret Jug Silver. In other words, it was like golf fans in Sweden but then there's like sporting fans in Sweden. Does that make any sense?**

LINN GRANT: It makes sense. That's what we're telling ourselves this week, too. Winning a major, if you're a golf and you're interested in golf, you know that that's really big. But if you're just into sports or any other sport or not sport at all saying that you took an Olympic Medal is so much bigger.

I can't remember where I was when he took his Silver but I think now sitting here, me coming home with a medal would be huge.

MAJA STARK: Yeah, I think because golf -- watching golf in Sweden is kind of inaccessible because it's not like the U.S. where it's not on everywhere in sports bars. It's unique, like this certain channel that you have to pay for.

Not everyone can see, and if you're not interested in golf, you're not going to see it anywhere. You're not going to accidentally end up on a Golf Channel. Whereas for the Olympics, it's on, and you can watch every sport on time like 24/7, and golf is going to be one of those sports that are on for almost the whole day.

So I think it's just way more accessible, as well.

