

Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass

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Chandler, Arizona, USA

Whirlwind Golf Club

Anna Nordqvist

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, hello and welcome to the Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse. I'm joined by Anna Nordqvist, ASU alumni, local resident, and newly named European Solheim Cup team captain.

Can you just talk about how excited you are to be back playing in Arizona this week?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, this is where I live and this is where my whole journey into professional golf started, getting an opportunity to come and play for Arizona State. It's always a special feeling, like getting to sleep in your own bed this week. I love it and I think it's awesome I get to play with Tim, the main guy from Ford who made it possible for us to play here this week.

I was just saying to him how much it means for us to have a stop in Arizona, because for many years we didn't have one stop here. It's just really great. It's good vibes. Everyone was telling me yesterday obviously it was 97, 98 degrees and asking me about the weather. I said, yeah, this is normal weather for maybe end of May.

Two weeks ago I was in a beanie because it was 50 degrees and blowing sideways. So yeah, we're lucky it's warm, but I love it out here. It's special week for me.

Q. And you talked a little bit about going to Arizona State, coming here. Can you talk about what going there has meant for your development to where you are now?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I started playing when I was 13, so I think was pretty late. I did a lot of other sports, so I think when I got hooked into golf, and there was a lot of Swedish girls going to the U.S., so I kind of wanted to follow along.

I thought it was an amazing opportunity to get green grass more than six, seven months out of the year. So I was lucky to get on the National Team and get some international experience and get recruited. I don't regret it



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one day. I'm glad I got the chance to come here. I loved every minute of it and played for the team for two and a half years.

It's now -- I mean, next year will be 20 years ago since I think I moved to the U.S. and came here with two suitcases and a golf bag. It's quite amazing what the game of golf has given me and the opportunities it's given me, the people that I met. Yeah, I mean, to call this your job I feel you're very fortunate. When you do what you love it doesn't feel like you work a day in your life.

Q. And a new opportunity that's arose for you, European Solheim Cup team captain for 2026. You've had a lot of media over the past week with that announcement. Can you just talk about that overall reaction and what it's been like to hear different people congratulating you?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so it's always -- I feel like the biggest honor you can get as a European golfer is to be named captain for the Solheim Cup. I don't think I've like been shy about how much this tournament means to me and my family.

Having gotten the opportunity to play in a lot of them and now be the captain, I found out about it in November last year so it's been hard to keep a secret. It's also been fun to tell my closest friends and family in person and seeing their reaction and just sharing those moments with them.

So far it's been pretty good. A lot of players seem pretty excited, and there has been a lot of people coming up to me and wanting to be part of the team as far as helping.

So I feel like we're in good hands. I'm excited for the opportunity ahead. I think I'm going to grow a lot as a person and also as a player during the process. I don't know how long I'm going to play myself, but this doesn't mean I'm retiring just because I'm taking the captaincy.

Obviously won't be playing next year in the Solheim Cup.

Q. Here at Whirlwind Golf Club, do you have any past experience, and what do you think are the tips and



tricks?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so I've never really been down at this part of town. Same thing last year. I hadn't played Seville before. Obviously heard a lot of good things about this course always being in good shape. It's a good test with the firm greens. Typically something we see in Arizona this time of year, greens being a little bit firmer.

It's not -- I think it's kind of a little bit of resort style off the tee. Yeah, I think it'll be -- it has a lot of character, so I'm looking forward to it. Yeah, I decided not to come here earlier because it's not something I do other tournament weeks, go early.

I'm an ambassador at Silver Leaf so that's where I spend most of my time practicing. It's been fun playing the last two days here, and I am looking forward to the week ahead.

Q. In addition to yourself, Arizona State has produced some other great Swedish golfers, like Linnea Strom and Linn Grant. How well do you know them and is there something that makes ASU so attractive to Swedish golfers, do you think?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I think Arizona State has always had a really good reputation among Swedes. I had Niklas Lemke and Anderson on the men's team when I went to school.

I know Linnea a little bit. Probably know Linn a little bit more. Obviously a few years younger than I am. But I think just the reputation, the weather, ASU has built an amazing practice facility at Papago called The Bird.

I thought we had it good when I went to college, but it's just amazing, the opportunities. I don't know if you can find any better with the combination of the weather and the practice facilities for golf.

So, yeah, I think we're all excited. And having Aza Munoz, she played on my team; Carlota Ciganda, she was a little bit disappointed I left college like a month before she started. But she did just fine without me.

So yeah, a lot of good golfers coming out of Arizona State. It's just amazing facilities and a good program and amazing support. So it does have a lot of international players, so for me I felt like we were all in the same situation coming here, so I think that helped my college experience to be a really good one.

Q. I would love to gain your perspective. The LPGA has a Girls Golf program that's global. We have sites

in Japan, Korea, Sweden, England. Can you just reflect on your experience as a youth golfer and how you hope to see the game grow from here?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I think it's amazing that the LPGA are associated with those programs. I started or I first picked up golf when I was ten. Basically played for three months and I hated it, so I quit.

But I think it was more because there was just no other girls really at the club. I have two brothers. I was able to play with them, but I think it's just for girls you need a little bit of a community in golf. I don't know if without those programs you can really have it.

So when my mom said she was going to pick it up again when I was 13 I didn't want to be the worst golfer in the family, and that's how I got back on it.

I do think it's very important to have other girls that you can play golf with and not make it so serious so early on. Seems like all sports everyone is getting so single minded so early in these days.

But it's just nice even for girls and boys to be able to like try the game of golf. Unless your parents play I think it's harder being introduced to the game than maybe soccer or baseball or one of those sports.

So I think it's very important. I was fortunate to have a lot of support like parents and brothers and friends and a really good system at my club where we met all the juniors at the club. I think it's just very important to create an environment, but more so even for girl.

Q. Our slogan is "Little Girls, Big Dreams. Can you reflect on maybe what some of your dreams were when you were younger?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, I was a very sporty person. I think I played seven or eight different sports before I found golf. I think I hate losing more than winning.

So, yeah, for me it was just like trying to find something I was very passionate about it. I tried team sports and I liked it. For me being able to do it on my terms, I've always been known for hard worker and, you know, people at my club, they would go out, play 18, go for lunch, and I was still out practicing.

So I think you need a lot of like dedication for that. I've been always very ambitious whatever I set my mind to; coming over to the U.S., wanting to see how far I could go and make it a career, because when I -- I said to myself, when I'm 25 I don't want to have any regrets. You know, I



want to like fully commit to see if I can play on Tour or make this my living.

If at 25 it doesn't work or it doesn't work out, that's fine. At least I knew I gave it my all. I think I did all right and I'm now, what, 37, so it's been quite a journey since.

I think definitely dreaming big, a lot of my dreams were big. Maybe not as big as being captain and playing in nine Solheim Cups and winning a couple majors, but I'm just very grateful for everything that golf has given me.

Q. I know Solheim has obviously been a hot topic for you. What have been the reactions from some of your fellow teammates, past captains that you got that you've been happy to hear from?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, it's just been all positive. I think it's been a little bit overwhelming to be fair. Obviously some of the players are a little sad I'm not going to be playing on the team, but I think they all seem pretty excited. You know, I think just being part of the last couple, I have a pretty good idea what I want to do, a little bit my style.

I also feel like just being out here and kind of sharing this journey with the players and the caddies and all the helpers, it's going to make my journey even more enjoyable. I think and like listening to them and -- but, yeah, like I had dinners with Catriona Matthew trying to pick her brain. Pia Nilsson lives in town. It's been fun, and I think they've all been very encouraging of me doing it.

I feel like I'm at a time in my life where I kind of live for the moment and just trying to embrace the opportunities and the days that I have ahead, and, yeah, like it's just been -- we had like a clothes meeting last week talking about clothes. I love the sign. It's just very cool, because I've been vice captain but now you're the one who is calling all the shots.

They're like, what do you want to do here? It's like, well, what does everyone else think? It's like, no, it doesn't matter. It's what you want to do.

It's definitely a new position, but I just want to do the best I can. It's one thing being a captain, for me I really want to do a good job and make sure the rookies or everyone else on the team gets to enjoy it in the same way I've gotten to enjoy it in the time I've had the opportunities to play on the teams.

Those are really the times of your life, and I don't think there is any moments in my life that are going to beat the times I got to represent Europe inside the ropes.

Q. Last season may not have been what you exactly wanted on the golf course. Looking ahead, this is where the meat of the schedule picks up. How good are you feeling about your game right now? What are you most looking forward to this season and just playing and competing again?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I mean, the last couple years it's been really hard. Two years ago I played this tournament at Superstition and it wasn't my best week, and basically saw my whole life fall apart after that. So the last two years if I put that in perspective I'm very proud of myself, how far I've come.

I did things a little bit different this offseason. I had surgery right after the season because I had a tumor and cyst in my stomach. It was benign so I was lucky, so sidelined me for a while. I wasn't able to do anything.

I went to Bali for a couple weeks. It was a retreat. Everyone thought I was on vacation, but I was doing a boot camp with two workouts a day with my trainer. I think it's just I've always constantly wanted to get better as a person and as a golfer, so I just -- I still love this game and I feel like I've been putting in a lot of work.

Probably my biggest asset this year is I've always been very motivated and inspired. It's hard keeping up with all the young girls these days because they're so good. I think at this time in my career I feel like I'm trying to play golf because I love it and because I'm passionate about it. Also feel like for the time that I have left, I don't know how long that will be, I'm just grateful for being able to play competitive golf.

But I feel like I want to end my career on my terms, and I really haven't felt like I had a fair chance the last couple years to really do that. I think my head is in a good space. I'm happy. Life just seems a lot easier.

Sometimes you got to go through a really big storm to get out on the other side and appreciate things in a different way, because waking up and knowing like you can play golf and you're your own boss, it's just amazing this game.

Obviously now with the captaincy I feel like the game keeps giving and maybe gives me things that I can give back to the game too in other ways than me holding the golf club.

Yeah, I'm very excited and just grateful to be able to do this.

Q. Could you describe the process for preparing for

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

major championships each year leading up to that portion of the schedule?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Well, I think Chevron is the toughest one because like there's not really a lot of tournaments before that unless you're in all the limited field events. So for me, it's just trying to get tournament reps, just trying to get playing, it's me trying to get into my rhythm because I feel like it always takes me a couple tournaments early in the season to kind of get in the swing of things. But then, once everything goes, I always like to play the week before a major if it's possible because I'd rather be in like playing mode entering a major. And, I feel like I almost do less during majors. I feel like it's, I mean, there's so many coaches out there, so many people everywhere. At the US Open they are playing four balls during practice days and it becomes really long days. So, I'm trying to get a lot of my preparations done before I show up for the week so those weeks get even easier.

Q. Particularly for Erin Hills and the US Women's Open, what is your familiarity with that venue and how will you get ready to play a course that has never before hosted a women's open?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, I've obviously heard a lot about it, but never thought I would have a chance to play. I think it's awesome that women's golf is now getting the recognition that I feel like we deserve by putting us on really good venues for the biggest championships. I'm looking forward to like – I believe it's going to be a a tough test and I think when the guys were there, you could see the best players were all up there. So yeah, I'm looking forward to it. And, the US Open is always special like, they treat us so well and you know the atmosphere and it's the tournament you want to do well at so I'm looking forward to it.

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