

# Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass

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Chandler, Arizona, USA

Whirlwind Golf Club

## Nelly Korda

## Jessica Korda

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the 2026 Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass. We are joined by Jessica and Nelly Korda. I'll start things off with a few Korda Sister fun facts and some questions thrown in there.

The last time you two competed in the same tournament together as a full LPGA event was 2023. Just in general, is there a comfort level when you two are playing in the same event together, being with a sibling, a different comfort level with family out here?

NELLY KORDA: You can go.

JESSICA KORDA: Well, you're the one that's been playing, not me. Yeah, definitely. I mean, don't have to think about who you're going to play a practice round with or you're going to sit at lunch with. There is a lot of new faces, especially after not being out here for three years. So I think there is maybe like a handful of players that I really know from when I was playing actively.

Yeah, definitely have my sister out is a nice ease into the week.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, it's more of like life outside of the golf course where you're just a lot more comfortable. I think when we're both on the golf course, I mean, we -- she hasn't competed in a while but we're pretty focused on ourselves. We'll check the leaderboards here and there, but I think what really helps and what was a huge actual adjustment for me was kind of like life off the golf course; not having her there, like having that dinner buddy occasionally, playing a practice round together, majority of the weeks playing a practice round together.

It's been really nice to have her back today.

JESSICA KORDA: Today.



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NELLY KORDA: I didn't play yesterday. Took a day off. But it's been -- it's really nice.

**Q. First time you played together was in the 2013 U.S. Open. Since then you guys have played together 96 times in an LPGA event. What do you feel like you learned the most from each other over those 96 rounds on the LPGA and the countless rounds you've played together off the course?**

JESSICA KORDA: I am going to say one thing: The U.S. Open was I think one of the first ones that actually paired us together. We very rarely get paired total together. We have to play our way into this pairing. We're always opposite sides of the wave; our parents have to walk 36; it's never easy.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. I think Jess taught me what life on Tour was kind of like. Not many people really talk about it, but sometimes it is like a super isolating, lonely life out here, especially if it you don't have -- or you're not really a very outgoing person to develop friendships with other girls; because it is highly competitive as well.

So knowing what the Tour life was like, traveling and getting the insight from her from -- she turned pro in 2011 -- I feel like for me really helped me my rookie year on of having a built-in best buddy.

So learning a lot from like what to do inside the ropes, managing schedule, which our dad has always helped us with a lot, too. But it's different from tennis to golf so her already getting that experience under her belt and kind of sharing that knowledge with me helped me so much for my career.

**Q. Welcome to the desert. I'm wondering what's something about one another's game that you admire and also what's something about one another's game that annoys you?**

NELLY KORDA: I'll go. I would say for Jess she's made some really amazing clutch putts coming in on the stretch. There has been some tournaments where she's made some really long putts. We were just talking about back



when it was Diamond Grand Vacations but now it's Hilton when she made that long putt in the playoff and gave like the biggest fist pump ever.

JESSICA KORDA: Threw my shoulder all.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, and then playing alongside her in Solheim Cups. There were so many times I was like oh, my God please make this, I really don't want to putt, and she did. There were so many clutch putts that she made.

And then her energy. I don't really show too much up and down during my rounds and she really throws out really big fist pumps. That's something I always admired about her, too.

JESSICA KORDA: I don't think there is one thing I don't admire about her game. I'm super jealous how she rotates to the ball right now. I think that's something I strive for. I'm always watching videos like, I just need that. I need that.

But her feel, touch around the greens, playing in tough conditions, how she just burrows down. I think if you see her name up on the leaderboard during crappy weather you're like oh, crap.

And then what annoys me is exactly that, is just her steady attitude. You just know that she would rather rip your throat out than lose.

NELLY KORDA: I don't find anything annoying about you.

JESSICA KORDA: But it's a really good thing because once it's done, it's like -- once the round is done you hug it out and you're done.

But there have been times where she's seen my name on the leaderboard inside top 10 knowing she can knock me out with a birdie and makes sure she does it.

NELLY KORDA: That was once. That was actually my rookie year. We were playing somewhere in Michigan. I made this putt on 18 to knock her outside the top 10. She was the first text message I got when I checked my phone.

JESSICA KORDA: Made her pay for the hotel that week.

**Q. Speaking of games, Jess what were you working on as you were working your way back into competitive golf and then Nelly, I saw you doing a drill on the range with a tee in front of your golf ball maybe. I was wondering how that is helping you work on your swing?**

NELLY KORDA: I'm actually -- I actually wasn't doing a drill on the range, so sorry.

But Jess, go ahead.

JESSICA KORDA: I mean, it was -- I took a year, almost two years off of actually swinging a club consistently, so everything. Grip, which I'm still slightly struggling with. Been pretty vocal on social media about how much I hate grip changes. Literally we had to start if absolute fundamentals and working with Jason Beale trying to get my body moving the right way.

I played injured for so long that I created some bad habits, so it was just going backwards to like watching Nelly's hips rotate so nicely and that's exactly what I strive to do, but it's a very slow process.

**Q. I'm sure you're paying attention, but Seb just dropped a close one. I wanted to ask you about your reactions, how much you were paying attention to the Alcaraz match. What was that like when he won and what were the celebrations like?**

NELLY KORDA: I was on the golf course, so I was trying to win a tournament. My physio, Kim, she told me that he won so I was getting (audio cut out.)

JESSICA KORDA: We were watching it on TV. It was super exciting. He played great tennis. Just nice to see him be able to close out big matches like that. Unfortunately sometimes it doesn't go your way, but it's always a learning experience.

I think through the last couple years that he's had that have been very tough and digging himself out of some dark holes mentally and physically, it's not easy being injured and then wanting to go back and always seeing the guys you're competing against keep getting to play and you just have to be on the sideline.

So it's nice to see him feeling better and playing, and it's just building brick after brick to get back to where he was.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. Does Seb play any golf?**

NELLY KORDA: We rarely see each other. They play in -- God, they're like all over the world, so he does play.

JESSICA KORDA: Does he keep score though?

NELLY KORDA: No, he doesn't. He has a very pure swing. Short, compact.

JESSICA KORDA: Lefty.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah. Almost makes me mad how good it is because I don't think he's ever had a lesson. Just goes out, doesn't warm up, doesn't do anything, just is pure.

He can play golf. It would be interesting to see if he actually took it seriously and kept score and actually maybe like got down and dirty into the technique and chipping around greens how good he would be. I feel like he would be really good. I feel like he's the most talented out of all of us with his hands.

But yeah, I mean...

JESSICA KORDA: He gets bored out on a golf course sometimes and tries to hit cut 7-irons from like 130 yards.

NELLY KORDA: I'm like, you're in the middle of the fairway with a wide open --

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, like high draws just because he can like shape the ball like crazy. So it's less about keeping score for him and just more having fun and letting loose and hitting some shots.

**Q. Welcome back, Jess.**

JESSICA KORDA: Thank you.

**Q. Tell us a little bit about what practice looks like these days compared to prior to being a mom; how much time you're able to put in.**

JESSICA KORDA: About three days a week. Mondays I get about an hour and a half in, and Wednesdays I get a descent amount of time in. I have a sitter for about five, six hours so I need to make sure I can work out, play some golf, and just get everything done that I need to get done.

I definitely prioritize my time with my son over golf, so it's not nearly as exciting as it used to be practicing.

I think I was telling Nelly the other day I was there for literally 45 minutes because I just didn't have the time. So I just try to see what's the most important thing that day and go from there.

**Q. So how will you qualify success this week?**

JESSICA KORDA: Honestly, I'm just really happy to be here. I didn't think I would tee it up again after I was withdrawing out of a couple events in 2023, so being here,

feeling good, we'll see where it takes us.

Three years is a very long time. A lot has changed in three years, physically, emotionally, and just in general, so I don't know, just taking it one day at a time and seeing where it puts me.

I have no idea what to expect. Obviously going to be very nervous on the first tee and throughout the round. Just getting back into it and assessing from there.

**Q. Are you guys staying in a house together? Nelly are you cooking?**

NELLY KORDA: Oh, yeah, I did cook last night actually. Yeah, it's the best honestly. I said it before, but 2023 was like a very hard year for me when Jess kind of -- I think it was May?

JESSICA KORDA: Uh-huh.

NELLY KORDA: So the rest of that year and 2024 was a very big adjustment for me being kind of by myself on Tour without Jess.

So being in a house this week, having Greyson, our mom -- I have to say our mom.

JESSICA KORDA: It's just her mom.

NELLY KORDA: Our mom in the house has been a lot of fun. And Greyson is at such a fun age where there is always something to do and he's just so much fun and laughing all the time. It's been a lot of fun.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. Do you have any pain at all any more, Jess, in your back?**

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I don't think I'll ever not be in pain. It's just manageable with time off and doing certain things. Pregnancy changed a lot of things. Just less golf honestly. That's all it is.

I could do just about anything but golf was the one thing that kept catching my back. So like I said, just better at managing it. I haven't played as much. Didn't try to push to be here.

It's just if it worked out, great. If it didn't, I'm very happy where I am in life.

**Q. Some of this you two of already talked about. Jessica, going back to Grant Thornton you talked**



**about what it's actually like under the competitive atmosphere. So just refresh your memory, is it short game, is it just staying mentally focus and sharp that is the hardest part to getting back into competitive mode?**

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, definitely staying mentally sharp.

Grant Thornton after the first day Greyson decided to not sleep so I didn't sleep from midnight to 5:00 a.m. it adds another variable to golf, to preparation.

Hopefully he sleeps this week. My mom already took away the monitor so I'm officially banished from that.

It's definitely staying mentally in it. I mean, when I play at home the rounds are so fast; I'm on a golf cart; sometimes I don't finish 18 holes because I don't have time for it. I got to go home and relieve the babysitter.

Playing 18 holes for hopefully four days in a row is going to be something. (Smiling.)

**Q. Okay. So Nelly, this one is for you. It's been a little while. Want to know what is the current status of wedding plans for you? Where are you in that process?**

NELLY KORDA: We're in the midst -- we have the venue and the date, so it's going to be --

JESSICA KORDA: We're ahead of schedule.

NELLY KORDA: We are ahead of schedule for sure. It's not until 2027, so giving myself some time. Life is obviously a little busy on the road so didn't really want to stress myself out too much.

But it's been fun. It's been -- my brother and his fiance are in this era as well of their life where they're planning their wedding. It's been kind of fun to do it all together.

**Q. So one more for each of you. Nelly, did I hear correctly you're working with David again? If so, would you comment on what you like about his teaching style and why that's the feedback you need for right now for you?**

NELLY KORDA: Whelan? Yeah, I've always worked with him. He was kind of -- for a little bit I just worked with him more on my short game. My swing is my swing because of David Whelan; he built it.

If you guys kind of look back, I don't know if there is any -- I have a lot of videos from, say, 2013, '14. If you compare those swings to what it is right now, he completely turned

my golf game around.

I wasn't even sure what I was going to do with my life and then I met David. He rejuvenated my love for the game. So I have so much to thank him for. He's always kind of been there even when I struggled.

And I'm still working with Jamie, just scheduling-wise it was harder to match up our schedules. David lives in the area that I live in so it was always so easy to see him. Always kind of had him in the back to see if like what I was working on was okay.

And then this offseason I just had him at every single practice. Like every single time I stepped on the golf course at home, like he was there with me throughout the entire practice.

I just loved having him there, the initial feedback of me not having to video my swing 200 times that day and knowing, okay, like what I'm doing is working and also like mentally he was just very sound. Made me really relaxed out there.

So in general, we have so much history together and so much comfort there that I just love working with Dave.

**Q. That's awesome. Jessica, one more for you. This is now your first time teeing it up as a mom. I'm getting emotional saying this. What is the most fulfilling part about now being a golfer, stepping on to the course in the role as a mom?**

JESSICA KORDA: I don't -- honestly, the easiest way to say it is I have to compartmentalize. Soon as I arrive on property, not that I have to forget my son, but I'll see a helicopter and I will be like, Greyson calls that Cuppy. Oh, my God, he would love to see that right now. Ducks in the pond. He would go nuts for that.

There are have not things that always remind me of him. To be able to play you almost have to forget about it and forget about worrying about everything, if he's fed. My mom is amazing. I trust her literally with his life clearly. I don't have to think about it. I'm just really happy to be here, like I said.

I didn't think this would be part of my story, so I'm just grateful to be able to be in this position to do it.

**Q. Nelly, just wanted to ask after having the six weeks off -- obviously you were working hard -- but coming back and playing so well at the Founders Cup what were you most satisfied with in your game last week?**

NELLY KORDA: I mean, I put in a lot of work. I was

actually kind of thinking back. I think throughout the entire six weeks I think I had six days off honestly.

JESSICA KORDA: Six weeks off from the Tour.

**Q. Yes. We'll qualify that.**

NELLY KORDA: I love training and being in the gym and practicing on the golf course. By that sixth week I was like, okay, I'm ready to leave. I'm tired of being on this range and working on my swing. I'm excited to go out.

That's like the whole point behind taking that six weeks off, is I want to be excited to go out. Like I don't want to completely drain my batteries.

So just worked on everything honestly. We always say like that first week back you don't really know what to expect so it's all about -- every week is like just improving, trying to see where you need to improve or where you need to like tighten the screws a little bit.

Yeah, just kind of proud of everything. Proud of the work that I did on my putting. Proud of the work I did on my Full Swing. Just kind of seeing everything kind of come together when you haven't had those -- that competitive juices flowing.

**Q. When you called David Whelan and gave him the -- what was your synopsis of what you were most satisfied with?**

NELLY KORDA: We don't call. Text.

**Q. Oh.**

NELLY KORDA: We texted literally two text messages to each other.

JESSICA KORDA: Good job.

NELLY KORDA: He goes, all well, question mark. I said, yeah, it was good. Just made a stupid little mistake on 17. Overall, you know, played pretty well. He was like, yeah, it was a good week. Relax into it.

**Q. Pretty simple. Thank you.**

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

**Q. You both are at different places in your lives and games. Wondering if you come at this question from those perspectives, what do you think separates the top 10 players in the world out here from the players trying to make cuts, trying to maintain their playing**

**privileges out here?**

NELLY KORDA: I think just comfort. Knowing who you are. Everyone is good enough. You can see it. The game of golf, I mean, the players are just improving so much every single year.

I mean, I would say the talent out here is just getting deeper and deeper and at the end of the day it's just comfort, not comparing yourself to others and sticking to your routine that you have found that works.

From my perspective.

JESSICA KORDA: Yeah, I always tell rookies, don't change anything, especially the first year. They come out here and they're like well, so-and-so is trying clubs. I should be trying clubs. There is a reason you got out here. You are good enough to be out here.

But they're kind of just beating balls from sunrise to sunset because they're excited or feel anxious or whatever it is. You wouldn't do that prior to coming out here. We see a lot -- I've been on Tour for a very long time. That's the one thing you always see. First two, three weeks out, you're like, oh, she's going to get burnt out. You just see the pattern.

It's very similar year to year.

So it's a lot of it is don't change what got you here. Just keep making those things better. Yeah, like Nelly says the comfort of it. A lot of intimidation and the girls that have a little bit more swagger, cockiness in them, they're the ones that tend to throw a little bit more.

They're young. There is a lot of insecurities, still growing into who they are. Once they figure that out you see them kind of ride with it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

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