

# NW Arkansas Championship

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

## Stacy Lewis

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship Presented by P&G. Joined by University of Arkansas alumna and 13-time LPGA champion, Stacy Lewis. Stacy, thanks for stopping by.

STACY LEWIS: Yes, thank you.

THE MODERATOR: First things first. I'm sure it's great to be back in Arkansas.

STACY LEWIS: Uh-huh.

THE MODERATOR: The community support for this event, the electricity with the Gatorade Loudest Hole on Tour, the amazing sponsors, like Walmart and P&G. For you, what does this event mean?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it's home coming every year just coming to a place you're comfortable, and obviously I say every year, I love it here. A little bit later than normal so it's a little bit cooler, which is nice.

But just this place is really special to me, and it's hard to believe it's been 15 years of this tournament. It's gone by really fast, so excited for a new year.

THE MODERATOR: If I did my math right, this will be your 14th start in the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship.

STACY LEWIS: Sounds about right.

THE MODERATOR: In your 13 previous appearances you've never missed a cut. Six Top 10s and a title obviously in 2014. From a strictly golf perspective, what is it about Pinnacle Country Club and your game that have led to such great results?

STACY LEWIS: I think it's being familiar with the golf course. Obviously played it a lot in college. I know how to play it.

I think having good vibes and having the fan support, it -- well, it does add some amount of pressure, and it does

help you play better. I don't know, I think more than anything it's being comfortable with the golf course is the reason for the success.

I love it. I love being here. You get up out of bed with a smile on your face and there is definitely something to be said for that in this game.

THE MODERATOR: Is there any memories that particularly stand out, I know it's been a while, but maybe from your college days of playing here?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I mean, I won the rain-shortened first year of the event, so that's obviously really special to get that trophy.

But just the win. I go back to the win every year, of the putts I made down the stretch and the crowd and how they got going with it. Man, it was so cool -- still gives me goosebumps. That putt on 18 I made was so hard and made it right in the center. It was just one of the coolest wins of my career.

Another highlight was actually the year prior to winning. Had a bet with my caddie that if I was in the last group he had to wear the plastic Hog hat up 17, and he's a Buckeye, so -- but it's twosomes, so I think he thought it was a safe bet, and then I get into the last group and he did it with his -- his cheeks were as red as the Hog hat, but he did it, so that's another highlight for me.

THE MODERATOR: One more I have before we open up to questions. Obviously you've had quite a busy year, and especially a busy fall between competition, assistant captain for Team USA at the Solheim Cup, your husband starting a new season as coach of Texas A&M, and so much more. How have you been able to balance it all, and how does all those different experiences continue to drive your career?

STACY LEWIS: Well, I'm tired. You know, it's been a lot the last month or so trying to move and get him settled and also keep trying to compete and do my thing.

So biggest thing is be where you are and do what I need to do today and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow. So I thought -- I've been doing a pretty good job of that, but I just want to play better golf. That's what keeps driving me.



I was in the gym this morning talking with my trainer about my golf swing, or talking to my swing coach about my golf swing and what we need to do to get it better. I just think with this game you can always get better. That's what I'm trying to do every day.

I feel like I still have a lot of good golf in me.

**Q. I was wondering if you could just comment on what this event has meant to the University of Arkansas golf team just in it general, not only for you, but for everyone that's come after you?**

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it's been tremendous. It's a tremendous recruiting tool to know that you get an opportunity to play in the event as an exemption, but also the Monday qualifying spots and just the access to professional golf and what it entails. There is no other university that has the access like this.

I think it's meant the world to our golf team. I think obviously me playing well has helped get us on the map, but I think this tournament has helped kind of keep it going. You know, to have Maria and Gaby, Alana, you got Brooke coming up.

I mean, Shauna just seems to keep rolling them out, and I think this tournament is a big part of it.

**Q. Speaking of Brooke, have you spent much time around her? Can you comment on what you've seen? Obviously she just set an NCAA record that was quite impressive.**

STACY LEWIS: Yes, that was very impressive. I had Austin Ernst even that said, Did you see what Brooke Matthews shot? I think you shoot those numbers on any level people are paying attention. It doesn't matter if the golf course is short or easy or whatever it is, 63 is a 63.

To do it three days in a row basically was pretty impressive.

I haven't spent a lot of the time with her recently. I mean, she's basically grown up with this tournament. I think Wendy Ward stayed with her and her family when she was younger. I can't imagine for her what this week is going to be like, and to be playing at home and to be a Razorback.

I think the coolest part about her is she just hasn't played her best golf yet. I think she very quietly got on though Curtis Cup team and has just slowly worked her way up. I'm excited to spend a little bit more time with her. Shauna said she rips at it and hits it pretty far, which it seems all

the kids are doing that these days. She obviously has got some nerve to handle the pressure, too.

THE MODERATOR: Couple more for you here. You're coming to this event, only your second missed cut of the season last year, and I remember when we talked after the KPMG in Dallas, at the Volunteers of America Classic, that was your other missed cut, but I remember you said you talked to your husband and he thought you needed a pep talk. You didn't quite need it, but you were back out grinding the very next day.

STACY LEWIS: Uh-huh.

THE MODERATOR: How did you approach coming to this tournament?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I mean, last week was one of the weeks I didn't feel like I played that poorly. Just the score didn't really show it. Golf course was a little bit funky and weather was pretty brutal, so I moved past last week quickly actually because I didn't feel like I played that poorly.

I'm just in the mindset of working on a few things with putting. If I can just get it a little bit better I feel like it's going to free -- I'm hitting it pretty good, so I just really need to get the putter a little bit better and I think I'll be in a good spot.

THE MODERATOR: Kind of an outlier week.

STACY LEWIS: Yes, outlier week for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Between AIG and Portland, obviously you helped out on the Solheim Cup; played a big role there.

STACY LEWIS: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: What else did you do with that time off to prepare for the end of the season?

STACY LEWIS: I moved and I unpacked boxes, and, yeah, and not a ton of golf was played, and that was probably -- that's probably what Portland was, a little bit rusty.

Yeah, we had movers come while I was in Scotland, so I came home to boxes everywhere. Had to get on a plane and go to Solheim for a week, so then it was a mad -- it was pretty short week after that not getting home until Tuesday from Solheim.

So really wasn't a ton of preparing for the end of the year. I

kind of feel like I'm using -- used last week and this week to get going in the right direction and finish the year out good.

THE MODERATOR: Couple more.

**Q. So Maria Fassi is launching her foundation this week. I was just wondering, just talking about this is early in her career and a lot of times players don't think of these things until they're on the back end, what that says about Maria as a person and just kind of what you think of her initiatives.**

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I mean, for Maria, and for Gaby even, they have that great role model Lorena that they've looked up to for so long. I think that's the big part of her doing it.

But it's also I have encouraged her, too, you need something outside of golf. You can't just do golf. You're going to drive yourself crazy. So you need to have something you're passionate about and something you enjoy outside of golf. I'm excited that she has found this.

I think what she's doing for the kids and the reasoning she's doing it, she has a personal connection, and you can see her joy and her excitement when she talks about it. So I'm excited to see what she does with it. I think it's going to be great for her career on the golf course just to have that balance.

THE MODERATOR: Is this a week where you talked about maybe a little rust last week, not necessarily preparing for the rest of the season, but using a couple of these events to jump start that final stretch, is this an event where you can feed off adrenaline more than any other week outside maybe majors?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I think so. We've got a Friday start so you have more days to practice, prepare, that sort of thing. And just, I mean, I get more energy just being here and being excited. I'm hopeful I can put some good rounds together and build some momentum going into the rest of year and finish the year out good and get to CME and see what happens.

**Q. The Aon Risk Reward Challenge hole this week, No. 14, how will you approach the par-5 and what makes it a test?**

STACY LEWIS: For me, well, if the tee is back I think it's pretty much a three-shot hole for everybody, but it's more of a risk/reward when they move it up. You can get it down in that neck.

But usually for me it's a three-shotter. For some of the

longer girls they can definitely get there in two. But the greens are soft this week. You know, I mean, big thing this week is going to be controlling spin on wedges. We had a bunch of rain on Monday night, so short game. Those wedges are going to be a big factor this week.

THE MODERATOR: One more from Pig Trail Nation. Anybody there?

**Q. You talked about Fayetteville, Arkansas earlier today and how special it is for you. What makes this city and state so special every time you come back?**

STACY LEWIS: Just, you know, feels like home. It feels like -- the way that everyone has welcomed me in, I'm a Texan, but I feel like I'm from here. Everybody is cheering for me this week. Everywhere I go I'll see people, whether it's at dinner or just around town, they're telling, Me good luck this week. We're cheering for you.

Just the way that this community has supported me over the years. My Razorbacks head cover goes with me everywhere I go. It seems to be every city I'm in I get a, Go hogs or a Woo Pig Soobie while I'm playing just randomly. I just love the reach of this university and how special it is to everybody that lives here.

And I will say, my husband, who is now the coach of Texas A&M, we got a big football game this weekend and I will be cheering for the Hogs, so there is no doubt there.

THE MODERATOR: There will be a divided household for a couple of hours.

STACY LEWIS: It will be a divided house for sure.

THE MODERATOR: I love it. Thank you so much for the time and best of luck in your second home.

STACY LEWIS: Sounds good. Thank you.

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