

Portland Classic

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

Andrea Lee

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Okay, welcome Andrea Lee back to the media center here at the Portland Classic. It's been a year now since you were last with us. Hoping you can tell us what you remember from your victory last year and how special this place is to you.

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I mean, Portland will always have a special place in my heart being a first-time LPGA winner here and just all the emotions I feel like are coming back as I look at 18 and the moment that I had with my dad last year just kind of crying it out and having that embrace after I won.

So it was definitely a special week and I'm looking forward to defending this week.

Q. When you arrived at this course this year, what sort of I guess...(sound muted.)

ANDREA LEE: I love Columbia Edgewater. I'm a little bias I guess, but it's an amazing golf course. I played nine holes yesterday and it's in great condition. Just really excited to get back out there and try to play well again.

Fairways and the greens are like pure right now, so it's in great shape. So, yeah, just looking forward to teeing it up and having some more fun.

Q. After Evian was there anything you sat down and changed about your game about your game from the last three events?

ANDREA LEE: Not necessarily. I did have a pretty rough start to this year. I think like the first half was just trying to find that rhythm again like I had last year. I think I was getting too ahead of myself and getting anxious wanting to play well after having a good 2022.

I just took a step back, just tried to go out there and stay like really patient and not try and let anything upset me or frustrate me.

Even at Evian I felt like my game was in a good place. I

had a solid first day and then the winds really picked up the second day and just like everything that could go wrong went wrong. I feel like Evian is just that course sometimes where that can happen.

So I tried to not let that affect me too much heading into the rest of the European stretch, and, yeah, finished out really well.

Q. If there are any changes you made before your run of solid play in the European swing? How do you see that playing out on this course?

ANDREA LEE: I think honestly from the start of this year I just want to go out and like I guess pick up right where I left off last year and go out and try to just play really good golf. I guess like chasing something or wanting to accomplish more things.

Didn't work out in my favor and I don't know when I really realized it, but, yeah, I just feel like I'm in a better place mentally right now and just having the same mentality I did most of last year, and I think that's really helped me.

Q. What was it like watching the leaderboard in Canada after finished your round?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, it was a little stressful. I didn't know where I needed to finish going into the week to automatically qualify for the Solheim Cup team. I said this in the interview afterwards, I said I saw Grant's tweet the night before, Saturday night, where I needed to finish. I was like, I didn't really want to know that.

But, I went out there and just stuck to my game plan and tried not look at the leaderboards all day. It's kind of inevitable at the end. There are leaderboards on 16, 17, 18. I was playing really solid golf, and, yeah, just stayed super patient until the end, and then sweated it out a little bit waiting afterwards.

Q. Did it feel like before this European run of strong play that Solheim was out of consideration for you?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I tried not to think about it.



Obviously it was a huge goal of mine coming into this year.

Yeah, after that kind of rough, four-, five-month stretch I thought maybe this year is not it for me.

And if not, that's okay. Like I still have next year. So, yeah, try not think about it. I think that was the key to actually helping me play better golf to get on the team. So it worked out in my favor at the end.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to ask a couple about Solheim. I know this will be your first Solheim Cup this year. What are maybe your expectations having played Junior Solheim Cup? You played that. What are your expectations for the Solheim Cup this year?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I'm extremely excited. I can't wait to tee it up for USA and play for Stacy Lewis, who is someone I've look up to for a long time. Used to be No. 1 in the world and just a fighter.

She's battled scoliosis and she is just a great leader, so I'm excited to play for her and the team. But just thinking back to like my junior Solheim Cup days, I remember just watching the real thing after ours was over and it was just so fun. The fans and the crowds and all the chanting and singing.

It was just such a crazy atmosphere and I'm just really looking forward to being a part of that. Yeah, I can't wait.

THE MODERATOR: What are some of the things you're expecting from the team or has Stacy talked to you about what's coming up for you guys team-wise? Anything fun happening?

ANDREA LEE: She just mainly told us be ready to kind of be bombarded I guess by everything that goes on that week. You're not going to have tons of time to yourself. It's going to be a very, very busy week, lots of events, opening ceremonies, just bonding with the team and team dinners.

It's a real honor just to be able to represent my country, and I'm totally fine with doing all that stuff. I have no complaints. Just really excited to tee it up in Spain.

THE MODERATOR: Anybody you're particularly excited to play with? Any matchup you think will be great for you, or are you going to leave that up to Stacy.

ANDREA LEE: I actually haven't really thought of that. I haven't asked Stacy about it either, what my opponent pairings could be like. I think playing with maybe Danielle Kang is would be awesome. Distance-wise pretty similar. You know, we're good friends, too and I look up to her.

So I think that would be pretty fun. She's fiery as well so I think there would be a lot of energy there.

I think another one, Rose Zhang. I've never played and Rose before but know her very well through a Stanford connection.

I think that would be pretty cool if we were paired together, too.

THE MODERATOR: And then just to bring it back to this week, what are your expectations this week? As Kent said, your game has been trending. Does that give you confidence coming back to place you had a lot of success?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, definitely. I do have a lot of the confidence coming into this week after having good three-week stretch. I think I'm just more excited than anything to be able to defend my title. First time defending so it's cool to see my face here and there.

Yeah, I'm just super excited overall. I love this golf course. I feel like it suits my game very well. Yeah, looking forward to it.

Q. The Solheim Cup is one of the most intense events and you talked last year about how you dealt with winning in Portland. What do you think you learned from that experience you can take into Solheim Cup?

ANDREA LEE: Yeah, I think last year I definitely learned a lot about myself coming down the stretch at Portland, being able to handle those nerves under pressure, knowing where I was on the leaderboard.

You know, I feel like I'm a bit more experienced now, and, yeah, I'm going to take all of these with me to the Solheim Cup.

Just learning from all those past experiences, I think are going to really help me. It's definitely going to be I think a more intense atmosphere with all the fans and the massive crowds. But I really enjoy that honestly. Just I kind of enjoy the big crowds. I'm just really excited for more than anything.

So I think just having my teammates and Stacy and the assistant captains there I'll be able to handle the pressure well.

Q. What do you love about the big crowds and those big pressure moments? How does it make you feel?

ANDREA LEE: I mean, it is nerve-wracking but also just

super fun to me at the same time. I love the big crowds. That's why I think the U.S. Women's Open is one of my, if not my favorite, events of the year. Because we get so many fans to come out and watch the best women in the world play is the such phenomenal stage.

I feel like I kind of thrive under that kind of pressure and I'm just really looking forward to having that at the Solheim Cup this year.

JULI INKSTER: What are you looking forward most about Solheim Cup?

ANDREA LEE: Seeing you there, Juli. (Laughter.)

No, I think just everything honestly. Being a part of the Solheim Cup team has been a dream of mine since I was a kid. It's truly an honor and I feel like it's one -- it's like the pinnacle of the sport being able to represent your country in such a lank event. I'm just looking forward to the entire week, being able to not just play for myself, but for my country is a truly exciting thing.

I can't wait.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much, good luck this week.

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