

# The LPGA Drive On Championship

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Bradenton, Florida, USA

Bradenton Country Club

## Leona Maguire

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All righty, joined at the DriveOn Championship at the Bradenton Country Club by Leona Maguire.

Got to shake the rust a little bit off last week at Hilton. What's it like to be getting ready for the first full-field event of the 2024 season?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, it was nice to sort of start at Nona last week. Like you said, sort of dust the cobwebs off and get back into competitive things again.

Looking forward to another week in Florida. Hopefully the weather is a little bit warmer this week. It's nice to catch up with everybody again after a break.

Doesn't seem that long ago since we finished up in Tiburon. It's been probably the shortest off-season I've ever had. Pretty quick turnaround. Nice to sort of keep things rolling and momentum from last week.

**Q. Speaking of the break, how do you spend it? Work on golf? See family? What did you do?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: I went home for three weeks, which was pretty nice. About as long as I get at home, so nice to catch up with everybody. Christmas is one of those nice times where everybody is at home, everybody is off work, and good food, good people. Recharge the batteries a little bit.

**Q. Obviously different course, but you won this event in 2022 in Florida. What is it about this event that bring out your game, and what do you remember about that win?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, Fort Myers is not too far from here. This golf course is a little bit different, but also some similarities. I think it's obviously Donald Ross design. It's been pretty clear from the getgo this week that hitting greens is going to be really paramount this week. Chipping is really tricky with the (indiscernible) bermuda around the



greens and things like that.

Going to be windy I think, a little bit gusty, a lot like the conditions in Fort Myers actually. I managed it pretty well two years ago, so hopefully can emulate that again.

**Q. Did you and your coach kind of dive into stats at all at the end of the year? Did he come to Florida and spend some time with you?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: I mean, stats are something that I think we sort of are checking in with all the time. I think with the fantastic thing with the new KPMG stats is that you're always -- you can compare yourself to the average and the best in the field but also to yourself as well.

A lot of the time it's seeing what made the difference on the weeks that you did well versus the weeks that maybe you finished 20th or 30th.

So my driving actually stats were a lot better last year. Didn't quite -- proximity to the hole wasn't as good as it needed to be, so need to tighten that up a little bit.

For me, the weeks that I putt the best are usually the weeks that I do well. It was pretty evident from like Baltusrol and Meijer and those weeks what made everything go well.

So just a case of I know what to do. It's just a case of doing it more often.

**Q. And have you thought about how to bottle up what you feel at the Solheim Cup and put it in on a week-to-week basis?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, that's the million dollar, isn't it? I get asked this a lot. If I had the answer I would do it every week. Solheim is just a special week. I love match play, team golf. There is something about the Solheim Cup that brings something out in everybody.

But I think you're a little bit more aggressive maybe in the Solheim. I mean, match play you can kind of go for things. Doesn't really matter if you miss that putt or one hole is one hole.

It's a little bit of a different mentality, but, yeah, if I can tap



into that a little bit more this year, yeah, be pretty nice.

**Q. So you were talking about the ability to read these greens being so important. How much do you rely on your caddie for that?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Reading greens?

**Q. Yeah.**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Dermot doesn't read my putts.

**Q. At all?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: At all.

**Q. So AimPoint mostly?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: AimPoint mostly, but, I mean, these greens are too grainy. It's pretty clear out there where the grain is. There is a lot of color change and stuff like that, so it's -- I mean, it's different golf in Nona with the overseed last week to here.

Greens are very slick. If you get above the pin this week it's going to be really tricky. There is going to be no guaranteed two-putt unless you're below the hole this week.

Lots of break. Lots of speed. Putting and chipping, you can make your life very difficult or very easy depending on where you hit it into these greens.

**Q. Since it's a Solheim Cup year, could you take us back to what it was like after the tie that really was a win, what the celebration was like that night and how much it kind of carried on that feeling through the season?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, I think there is an incredible amount of adrenaline after Solheim. It's such a high. It's funny, in the couple of days -- the week of I never felt tired. Felt like I could have played five more rounds. You're just so excited to be there. You're feeding off the energy of the crowd with your teammates. It's such a fun week, and the celebrations after.

I suppose obviously with everything being so dramatic in how it finished and Carlota and the king of Spain being there and everything, I mean, the whole team, it was nice to celebrate with everybody.

I think that's what makes Solheim unique, is a lot of the time when you win, it's -- you're onto the next event and you're there with your caddie and you most of the time

celebrate by your self. Everybody is gone apart from a few people that maybe hang around to spray with you water or whatever it is at the back of the 18th.

Whereas Solheim you're there with your 12 teammates, the caddies, all the friends, family, so it's a lot bigger celebration, which is nice.

I think that's one of those things in sport. I suppose you spend so long chasing wins and chasing all this you don't actually sometimes get to enjoy it as much as it's always onto the next, onto the next.

So I think the nice thing I found with Solheim is you actually take a little bit more time to enjoy it. Then it is weird going -- I remember going back to Arkansas the next week. You hit a shot and you're waiting for the crowd to cheer and roar and it just doesn't happen. There is only a few people behind the greens.

So it's definitely a little bit of a comedown, a little bit flat the weeks after, and you're trying to get yourself going again. Yeah, it's a lot of fun to be a part of.

**Q. Since it's an Olympic year, in your mind, how do you see the Olympics in terms of how big they are and what they mean to golf? How much has that grown, do you think?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think it's been fantastic for golf to be a part of it. I think a lot of people tune into golf in the Olympics that wouldn't normally watch golf.

I mean, it's the biggest sporting event in the world. I know different people debate whether it should be pro or amateur or things like that, but, I mean, it's a huge honor to represent your country and there is no bigger stage than the Olympic Games.

Myself and Stephanie Meadow represented Ireland the past few times. We been chatting about it. Rio was a little bit not quite a full experience of the Games with everything that was going on. Tokyo was obviously very different Games.

So feels like Paris will almost be our full experience of an Olympic Games. It's obviously in Europe this year, so hopefully a few more friends and family can go. Golf national a obviously an iconic venue from the Ryder Cup and all that.

It's definitely circled on the calendar and really looking forward to it. I just love the camaraderie with the other athletes as well. Being from Ireland it's one of those smaller teams. Everybody knows each other. You're

cheering for everybody. We typically don't win very many medals, so when someone does win a medal there is a lot of excitement. Everybody comes back and you celebrate with everybody.

There is a nice sense of team spirit that week that you don't normally get. It's a fun week.

**Q. Obviously captured your second win. Beth Ann alluded to a great Solheim Cup. Just how would you summarize your 2023 season and how much of that will you take away as you head into 2024? What are some goals you have for the season?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think just more consistently getting myself into contention more often.

The good stuff was really good, and just trying to do that more even, especially in the majors, and week in, week out.

So if I can bottle that for a bit more, obviously going to be a huge summer, a really busy summer with four majors, Olympics, Solheim, and packed quite into a short amount of time. So I think everybody is going to be trying to peak at that point.

So just making sure everything is ready to go by the time those summer months roll around, and put myself contention as much as I can leading up to that.

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