

Solheim Cup

Monday, August 28, 2023

Andalucía, Spain

Finca Cortesin

Team USA

Stacy Lewis

Ally Ewing

Cheyenne Knight

Angel Yin

Rose Zhang

Press Conference



FINCA CORTESIN
ANDALUCÍA, SPAIN

2023

CHRISTINA LANCE: Coming to you live from beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia Canada for some incredibly exciting news about the 2023 U.S. Solheim Cup team. Play is done and we are ready to name the 12 women who will represent the United States at Finca Cortesin at Spain's beautiful Andalucía coast later in September.

We already know the nine automatic qualifiers who are on the team, seven players in from the U.S. Solheim Cup points standing: Lilia Vu, Nelly Korda, Allisen Corpuz, Megan Khang, Jennifer Kupcho, Danielle Kang and Andrea Lee are joined by Lexi Thompson and Rose Zhang in the other Rolex Series Women's World Golf rankings. We have the nine, and now we need to know the three and you know who is going to tell us the three.

We've got right here with me the captain of the U.S. Team, Stacy Lewis. You were named captain in February of 2022, we are now automobile to September 2023. What's the last year and a half been like for you?

STACY LEWIS: It's gone by way too fast. I can't believe we are at this point to be honest. It's been stressful at times. It's been a lot of organization. A lot of decisions had to be made but excited to finally be to this point where we can say this is our team, and we're ready to go.

CHRISTINA LANCE: This is our team. Like I said, we know nine of the players, seven in Official Solheim Cup Standings, two off the Rolex Rankings. How excited were you to get all this news yesterday and see it come together and see all the excitement from the players?

STACY LEWIS: Yesterday was the most fun I've had in this process, and yes, I had to tell a couple people know,

and the disappointments there, but it's crazy with the way things turned out yesterday with Andrea jumping up and bumping out Lexi. There was some movement in how people qualified. But in our heads, nothing really changed as far as who was going to be, just more how they got there.

CHRISTINA LANCE: So you spent the last year and a half looking through your stats, working with your assistant captains, talking to potential players. What was going through your mind these last few weeks? I know you said the players made it easier for you but what were you looking for these last few weeks as you came down to your kicks?

STACY LEWIS: Obviously good form. You want people that are playing well coming into this week but just seeing are they continue to go play the way they are capable.

I've learned a lot about the players and just how they go about how they score, you know, everybody scores differently, whether it's ball-striking, whether it's putting, and just you know, seeing are they continuing those trends, are they not, and they really took care of it themselves, by their play, whether they started the year that way or whether they have come on strong as we have gotten to this point.

They really took care of it themselves.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Well, I think we are at that point. Are you ready to start unveiling your captain's picks?

STACY LEWIS: Let's do this.

CHRISTINA LANCE: All right. Can you share with us your first captain's pick for 2023?

STACY LEWIS: So my first captain's pick is going to be Ally Ewing. Definitely wanted a veteran, veteran voice, and someone that's been there. She's played overseas, as well. Just a very, very solid player. Statistically, she doesn't do a whole lot wrong, and I think she's going to be a great voice to have on the team room as well.



CHRISTINA LANCE: I know you mentioned in the press conference earlier that Ally statistically could match up with just about anybody and play with just about anybody. Does that make her the ultimate team player?

STACY LEWIS: She is, yeah. She's one of those you could put with any of the 11 players on this team. So I'm excited to figure out who she plays with because I really have no clue right now. She's going to be kind of the last one that falls into place.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Well, we are excited to have Ally here with us.

Ally you are going to be on your third U.S. Team at Finca Cortesin. What was your reaction when you talked with Stacy yesterday, and what are you feeling right now?

ALLY EWING: I was ecstatic first of all. I've said this since I played my first one: It is high on the list you don't want to miss after you're part of one. Getting the nod from her that it was going to be my third, it's super exciting, and it's a week that I say is unforgettable and I'm just really, really excited to be in this position again.

CHRISTINA LANCE: We are really happy to have you with us. We'll bring it back to you, Stacy. How about pick No. 2?

STACY LEWIS: Pick No. 2 is Cheyenne Knight, fellow Texan. She will be playing in her first Solheim Cup, so one of a few rookies we're going to have on this team; we're going to have quite a few.

Cheyenne got off to a hot start this year, I think seven Top 20 finishes in her first nine starts and capped it off with a win. Obviously she's one of those that just really played herself into it, and tons of fairways, tons of greens. Kind of the same mold of what we were looking for.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Cheyenne, we are so excited to have you on the team. You also have a win under your belt this year, a team win at the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational. You've proven yourself to be another great team player. What does it mean to get this call up to play on your first U.S. Solheim Cup team?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: It's been a goal of mine as long as I can remember growing up just watching the Solheim Cup, watching Stacy and Angela, just fellow Texans, and hoping I can be there one day, and I'm just so excited to represent my country.

I've never gotten the chance to represent my country in my career, junior, amateur level. It's the highest honor and I'm

really excited.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Does that make this even more special?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: For sure. I just can't dream of anything better. It's a huge goal of mine, and yeah, first time to do it. I can't wait to represent Team USA.

CHRISTINA LANCE: You'll love Spain. It's going to be a great week.

And now Stacy, we'll bring it back one last time, your final captain's pick.

STACY LEWIS: Third and final will be Ms. Angel Yin. Angel will definitely bring in personality to the team room, which I'm excited about. But honestly, her game, really since Chevron has caught my eye. I think she's third on tour in strokes gained putting. She's great on bermudagrass, and her length is going to be a huge factor in the team portion of best-ball and things like that.

I was excited that angel kind of turned it on and started to play great and made this decision easy as well.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Angel, we'll go over to you. You've been on the team twice, missed the team last time. We're so excited to have you back. Your game is so rounding into shape. How do you feel you're playing and what do you bring to Team USA this year?

ANGEL YIN: I feel like I'm playing really well. I'm excited to play well to, play on the team again. Obviously I missed it two years ago, so it makes me want to make this team more, especially since Stacy is actually captain, and growing up watching Stacy and then playing with Stacy, such a huge honor, and to make the team and play under here is really exciting.

CHRISTINA LANCE: She's kind of a cool role model.

ANGEL YIN: Yeah, she is.

CHRISTINA LANCE: She is for me, too. We have someone else here in the room that we want to introduce, another one of those rookies in name-only. Who is one of the other team members you've got today?

STACY LEWIS: We have Rose Zhang here with us today. I think everybody knows Rose's name by now, if you watch women's golf at all, and honestly she was on my radar for 2024, not for this one, but she took care of winning this year, so she was able to qualify. Rose was really a great, great addition for us.

CHRISTINA LANCE: I know it's been a whirlwind two months for you. Two months ago you were still a student athlete and now you're an LPGA Tour winner and now a member of Team USA at the Solheim Cup. Can you describe what the last two months have been like since you turned pro and now this major professional honor?

ROSE ZHANG: It's been as hectic as ever. I've been extremely busy, and there's certainly a lot more than just professional golf in the tour life. You have a lot more obligations. But I've been enjoying the ride, and especially being among the best players in the world, is just so exciting to be a part of them and be able to play this game.

But yeah, I've just been really enjoying it for the most part.

CHRISTINA LANCE: A lot of obligations, like getting to a studio at 6:00 in the morning on the West Coast, but it was worth it, right.

We're so excited to have you guys all with us. Again, the three captain's picks for Stacy Lewis are Ally Ewing, Cheyenne Knight and Angel I didn't know and also joined by Rose Zhang.

They are going to join eight of their other female leading golfers in the world to represent the United States again at Finca Cortesin in Spain in September, the 22nd through the 24th. I'm so excited to tell you about that, but we've got some other people who are really excited to help share the news and spread the celebration of this U.S. Team.

(Video played.)

CHRISTINA LANCE: Stacy, team, the news is out. You can relax. You can breathe. Stacy, how are you feeling right now?

STACY LEWIS: I'm feeling great. You know, other than my voice, I'm feeling great. Just to have the team finally be the team and not, you know, not worry about who is going to make the team. Now we can really dive into pairings and make sure they get to Spain and all the logistics that are involved. It's an exciting day for us but it's come way too fast.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Cheyenne, what was your family's reaction when you got to tell them you're making your U.S. debut, and you said, junior, amateur, professional of any kind?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: They are so excited. I mean, I don't think they are more excited than me but it was pretty close. They are so excited to go to Spain and get all

decked out in the US a gear and cheer us on, and they are going to be loud for sure.

CHRISTINA LANCE: You also said, "Nick Saban said my name."

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah, he knows my name. He said it right. He knows about the Solheim Cup, which is awesome. Definitely a very cool moment hearing that from him and congratulating me. And Roll Tide.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Angel, are you going to be able to bring that kind of emotion to the Solheim Cup?

ANGEL YIN: Yeah, I think I'm going to do my best -- yeah (laughing).

CHRISTINA LANCE: Rose, what was it like to see Sadie and Rachel on there, your good friends?

ROSE ZHANG: It's incredible, I've been on the team with them for the past two years at Stanford but at the same time they were also my fellow Junior Solheim Cup team members for basically in Gleneagles, so a little bit of experience with playing in match play and playing for Team USA there. It's really cool to just see them and hear them.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Ally, you're one of the veterans on the team. What kind of advice do you have for Cheyenne, for Rose, for the other rookies on the team?

ALLY EWING: Take it in. I've unfortunately been a part of two losing teams, so first of all, we are going to go get it back, but secondly, the week is unforgettable. It's incredible. And you know, you get to hang out with all these people that you might not get to usually hang out with, and it's going to be an awesome week and just -- I would just encourage you to take it in because it's going to be awesome.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the combination of rookies and veterans on the team, how you feel about that, five rookies but players like Lexi who have been on a bunch of teams. What are your thoughts on the chemistry?

STACY LEWIS: Well, one, I'm not worried about the chemistry at all. These five, they are rookies, but they are so experienced, just as far as the amount of golf they have been able to play. Rose is the only true rookie but she's probably got experience than a lot of us combined, in big events, that is.

So not worried about the rookies at all to be honest and I love having Lexi, Danielle, those that have been around

and played a lot. We are going to rely on them quite a bit just for behind the scenes and leading the way there. They have won a couple of these things, and so you know, they really need to lead us in that way.

Q. And Rose, where was making the Solheim Cup team on your radar when you decided to turn pro? Was it at the top of the list or how would you classify that?

ROSE ZHANG: Honestly, I didn't really think of it as a possibility. Especially at Mizuho, I came in wanting to make the cut and finish out my sponsor's exemptions for the summer before heading back to the school for the fall.

This was definitely not on the radar but now that I was able to have that opportunity and play with Stacy and play for Team USA and be on this team, it was definitely kind of a dream come true.

CHRISTINA LANCE: We're excited to get to D.C. next year, two in a row for the Solheim Cup at RTF.

Q. Can you walk through what the analytics said about the three picks you made?

STACY LEWIS: Sure. Goodness, where do I start. Let's see, Ally is kind of Top 20, Top 25 in pretty much everything: Ball-striking, approach, approach play, putting. She really doesn't do anything wrong.

Cheyenne -- Cheyenne, gosh, I'd have to look at my notes. I'm going to cheat. Sorry, I should have had this written. She's a great putter; I do know that. She's gained approach on more than 70 percent of her starts this year. She's top 30 on tour in approach around the greens and strokes gained total, so she doesn't do anything bad. Her birdie numbers are up 28 spots from last year.

Angel, here is a cool stat for you, one of two players to finish inside the top 30 at all five majors this year. So there you go, played well at the big events. Third best, third on the Tour in strokes gained putting. Top 10 on the Tour in strokes gained around the green. Positive strokes gained in every tournament since April. So there you go. Angel has definitely been one of those trending in the right direction.

Ally, Top 15 in tour in greens in regulation, top 20 in birdie average, Top 25 finish in two-thirds of her starts this year. So doesn't do anything wrong.

So that's kind of in a nutshell who they are. There's more, you know, about the greens that we are going to dive into as far as who what they pair up with, what formats they

play, things like that.

But yeah, I mean, these three more than anything, they took care of it themselves. They played well and took care of it themselves.

Q. I'm a little scared to ask. How long -- how many notes do you have on all these players?

STACY LEWIS: Well, this is just a very small portion of it. So you don't want the big version I have a lot. I have a lot. I know more about their games than they probably know about themselves.

CHRISTINA LANCE: That actually leads into a question I was going to the KPMG Performance Insights and the work you're doing with Justin Ray and the Twenty First Group Team, really, the first time you've had stats like this. You particularly, and Angela, your assistant captain, are very, very stats-oriented. How much is that helping you?

STACY LEWIS: A ton. It's amazing how you can predict good play coming by just you see some positive strokes gained in most categories. You can see the good play coming. So it's not a surprise, right. Megan winning last week was not a surprise. She had everything you needed on that golf course, is what she did well. I kept saying this over and over again last week, to Morgan who was on TV, I said, "This golf course is perfect for her. This golf course is perfect for her."

You can predict good play coming, and that's what's helped us most to get people that are trending in the right direction.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Do you guys feel this has been helping you as you get ready for the Solheim Cup?

ALLY EWING: Yeah, for sure, I think having KPMG step up, No. 1 and want to provide this as something that Team USA uses, I know it's helpful throughout this journey and you making selections, but it's also going to be huge, I think in just pairings and what makes sense. It's been great for us throughout the year but it's also going to be great in how we go about our pairings and everything.

Q. You've been talking a lot about the stats side of things, but was there any influence knowing the lineup for Team Europe? Did that have any influence on your picks?

STACY LEWIS: Very simply, not at all. The way we do pairings, the way we submit pairings, there's no real back-and-forth. So while I was interested to see who made their team, there was really no -- it didn't change anything I

was going to do last night or today.

Q. I'm going to go to Ally and Angel, whoever wants to go first. You have two rookies sitting next to you. What advice would you give to these rookies as they tackle what's going to be a challenging Solheim Cup on foreign soil?

ANGEL YIN: Wow, what advice, I don't really have any advice, but I think I'm just going to piggyback off what Ally said, which is like take it all in.

I personally experienced a lot of adrenaline. I think my stats were for 2017 Des Moines Solheim Cup crazy. I think I was hitting it 320 and carrying it 270, 280. A lot of adrenaline pumping through your body and sometimes you just have to manage it a little bit. But it's just all fun, and your partner has got you. No apologies anywhere, and all there to bring home the Cup?

ALLY EWING: Going with what angel said, the only other thing I would say that was big in my first Solheim in 2019 at Gleneagles, we don't know how pairings are going to shake out but my first match, I was out. And Stacy just encouraged me to go to the first tee, experience it before you experience it in the afternoon and that was great advice because there's something about the first tee that is unforgettable, a ton of adrenaline. Nerves are going to be there but it's incredible seeing so many people around the first tee and chanting USAs, and probably going to hear some "boos."

STACY LEWIS: Some "olés."

ALLY EWING: Some "olés." But take it in and just really experience and be in every moment.

Q. Stacy, I know you've been relying really heavily on stats but you've actually gotten to play with a lot of your poa that will team members throughout this season. How valuable is it, do you think, still being a competitor on the LPGA Tour and getting to play alongside these professionals and see them under pressure, see what it's like playing with the Solheim Cup captain, which I'm sure is a little nervy at times. How much did that help you in your decision?

STACY LEWIS: It's been really, really helpful. A lot of it's just being around, too, just being able to talk to them. Just know where they are at in their lives, just to, you know, to assure them -- a couple weeks ago, I was assuring a lot of these girls that they were in a good position. Four picks, yeah, you know, angel has been playing some, too.

Just getting a feel for how they are playing and just being

around and being close with them. There's no get-to-know-you phase, especially these rookies. I feel like I've played with the rookies more than I've played with some of the veterans, so it's been helpful. Rose played for me at the Spirit Amateur a couple years ago, a little amateur competition that I captained.

Yeah, just the comfort level, and it's going to help the team, everybody, get along and not have to worry about anything when we get to Spain.

Q. Now that the two teams have been finalized, who do you think are going to be the favorites going into the match next month?

STACY LEWIS: Honestly I think -- I don't know what the rankings with show on paper but I mean, I think Europe has to be favored. They have won the last two. They have got really great players playing well. We are going overseas.

And that's not to doubt my team. I just think Europe is really, really strong. They have got all the momentum in this event right now. That's going to be our biggest thing is we are going overseas, and we don't have the momentum on our side. And so we are going to go try to flip it. We have a lot of new blood that has not experienced the last two years. They don't know what it's been like, and I think that's going to be to our advantage, as well.

Q. And I know you would be focused on your team but you've played a bit with Gemma Dryburgh the last couple years. How pleased were you to see her get on the European team given what she's achieved?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I've gotten to know Gemma a little bit. We are both on the LPGA board together, and just to see her work her way up and just a great girl and great advocate for our tour, and see her be successful. I know how much it means to her to be on that team. I was really, really happy for her. I saw her on Tuesday, I guess, after the team was announced. She had a big 'ole smile on her face. I know it means a lot to her and she's going to be tough, as well. She just adds to the depth of that team.

Q. Your most experienced player is also going through probably her toughest year. What concerns, if any, do you have about Lexi?

STACY LEWIS: There are definitely some concerns about her game, a hundred percent. Talking to her, though, she's been handling all of this remarkable well. I've said it before, but you see her off the golf course and you would never know that she's struggling like she is right now. She is not going to quit and she is not going to give up on the

golf course, and sometimes I think that's the most important thing in Solheim Cups and team events.

These girls on this stage, they are all nodding their heads right now because they know that's Lexi and they know she is not going to quit and she's not going to give up. She's going to be working her butt off the next month. It wouldn't surprise me if we get to Spain and she's rocking on all cylinders. I know she's working on it, and she can help us not just with her play.

We are going to rely on her behind the scenes, too, to help in the team room and be in a different position than she's been in the past, because she probably is the most experienced of anybody on the team. We are just going to rely on her differently and hopefully over the next month with her work that she's putting in that she gets some things figured out.

Q. What are the, I don't want to call them disadvantages, but I guess I just did, disadvantages or advantages when you have rookies in the Solheim Cup making their debut on home soil or foreign soil, positive crowd, negative crowd type thing, how can that work?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, your negatives are obvious. We are away from home. There's less U.S. fans. Just not knowing what a first tee is like. Not knowing the pressure and the amount of people and what it feels like, what you feel like on that tee.

You know, we'll talk about it. Ally is going to tell her experiences. And I've been there where your hands are physically shaking, and just to try to comfort them and let them know that we have all been there. I think that's probably the overall negative.

The positives, they have not experienced what the last two years have been like. They have not experienced barely losing this Cup by one putt or one match. For the most part, they have all played on team events prior and they have won and been very successful. I think not knowing could be in our favor as well.

Q. How challenging was it for you to pull down to these three picks when you were looking at some of the other potential captain's picks that were in your pool?

STACY LEWIS: Easy. And a lot of it I think is probably more the stats and more the preparation that we had done prior to this week. Because they don't know this; I have really been set on them for quite a few weeks now.

But I think it's more the stats. I think it's more the preparation that we have done. The more the watching that the captains and I have done behind the scenes that other than Andrea -- I thought I was going to have to make one decision yesterday, and Andrea took care of it for me.

So really, I was down to 13 as of last night and Andrea made my final decision.

CHRISTINA LANCE: I was going to ask you about yesterday. These girls are out there doing their job. What's harder, doing that job or this job?

STACY LEWIS: Yesterday was crazy. Just to, we were watching Andrea her whole round and she was 28th and she was 5th and she was 11th and oh my gosh, she's 12th ask now she's 13th. We are trying to run the numbers of where she's going to fall and I don't think it's ever come down to that, finishing exactly in '13th place when you needed 13th place to get enough points. It was some of the probably most clutch play I've ever seen to be honest, and to do it -- she had to play well two weeks prior to get to this position.

I mean, Andrea is not here, but she's the one that really needs to be commended for what she's done the last month to prove to me that she wanted to be on this team.

CHRISTINA LANCE: And now she's off to a title defense in Portland. You have Ally off to a title defense the week after that in Cincinnati. There's a lot going on over the next few weeks. How many of you guys are going to play Portland? Two and three and the captain here? A bunch playing Portland and a bunch playing Cincinnati. I think we might have run out on questions here but Rose I'm going to putt you on the spot briefly. When we were joking earlier, you were telling a fun junior Solheim Cup story that might involve one of these people. Can you tell us again?

ROSE ZHANG: Yes, the 2017 Junior Solheim Cup, and the actual Solheim Cup team and the junior team, we kind of shared a common room, a team room in the same hotel, and the U.S. Team on the professional side stayed in the hotel a couple days earlier for practice rounds, etc., and Angel and I managed to play a Jenga game, it was a giant Jenga game, I lost, and then the dare was, I had to be thrown in the pool by Angel. And I think she forgot about this. I definitely remember it because I was the one plunged into that pool.

ANGEL YIN: Ice cold water. Team bonding.

ROSE ZHANG: Real team bonding.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Angel, have you been to Spain

before?

ANGEL YIN: I have been to Spain.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Have you been to this part?

ANGEL YIN: I have been to that part.

CHRISTINA LANCE: What do you recommend to everybody around who hasn't been.

ANGEL YIN: Beautiful views, lots of wind, hills. Hills. Greens are tough because of hills. But yeah, it's really pretty. The area itself is unbelievable, and as you know, Spain, it's just great weather. So it will be fun.

STACY LEWIS: It will be the warmest overseas Solheim Cup we've ever had.

CHRISTINA LANCE: When from your family do you think is going to come along with you?

ALLY EWING: I know for sure my mom and dad, my grandmother, I think my husband is going to get to come over. I think the in-laws are going to make the trip over, too. We are going to get the Ewing and McDonald crew out to Spain

CHRISTINA LANCE: Cheyenne?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: My parents, my aunt and I think Miguel, my physio is going to come over.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Angel?

ANGEL YIN: My mom and I think some friends are coming over.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Rose, who is coming along with you?

ROSE ZHANG: I've got my parents. My mom is going to come over, which is a rare sighting, and then got some family friends also coming over. So everyone is just going to have a good time.

STACY LEWIS: That's the coolest part to me about overseas Solheim Cups that I've enjoyed the most is, yes, you have family come, but it's relatively small compared to what you would have in the US.

It's a more intimate environment. Your team honestly spends more time together more than anything just because there's not a ton of extra family and stuff there. So I think I've always said the team experience is more fun

overseas.

CHRISTINA LANCE: And they are in for a real treat with the hotel, Finca Cortesin.

STACY LEWIS: Spectacular.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Who do you have?

STACY LEWIS: Too many to count.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Is the little team mascot coming over?

STACY LEWIS: She'll be running the music in the team room.

CHRISTINA LANCE: Thank you, everybody, for being with us. We are excited to again have captain Stacy Lewis, three of her captain's picks, Ally Ewing, Cheyenne Knight, Angel Yin and 2023 rookie Rose Zhang.

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