

Solheim Cup

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Andalucía, Spain

Finca Cortesin

Team Europe

Suzann Pettersen

Laura Davies

Caroline Martens

Anna Nordqvist

Press Conference



FINCA CORTESIN
ANDALUCÍA, SPAIN

2023

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome to the media center the 2023 European Solheim Cup team captain, Suzann Pettersen, and her advice captains, Anna Nordqvist, Laura Davies, and Caroline Martens. There's quite a lot of experience up on this table, but I'd just like to start with a few questions before opening to the floor for questions and if you have a question, please raise your hand or ask on the chat.

So Suzann, you said this is the strongest Solheim Cup team ever. Does that put a lot of pressure on you or do you feel ready to go?

SUZANN PETERSEN: No, I think we're all very ready to go. I don't think there's anything to hide under a chair that if you look on paper, we have the strongest team that I've ever been a part of, and that's based on great performances over the last few years from all the players. So with good results, there's also expectations, but these girls are so up for it, so we can't wait.

THE MODERATOR: What do each of your vice captains bring to the team?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I mean, three unique people, three good friends of mine, three people that the entire team kind of trusts. Anna obviously has the experience still playing. She is kind of the mom of the player group, I would say. I mean, she takes responsibility and she likes to take that role.

Laura --

LAURA DAVIES: The grandmother (laughing).

SUZANN PETERSEN: I don't know where to start. The icon of the women's golf, especially here in Europe. Big

honor to have her on our team, on our side. So very happy to have that.

And Caroline, obviously a great, great friend of mine. She's kept everything in line up until this point. Yeah, I think just together it works great.

THE MODERATOR: Anna, playing in your eighth Solheim Cup, how are you balancing playing with being a vice captain?

ANNA NORDQVIST: So far it's been a great experience. I think it makes you appreciate all the hard work that goes in a running a Solheim Cup, being able to see all the work that goes in behind and how hard everyone works. I think as a player, like, you show up, everything is sorted, and you're getting so spoiled.

But it's been really cool to see how much work Suzann has been putting in and being part of just the process of everything. I think it makes you appreciate the experience playing inside the ropes even more, knowing how hard everyone works as a team to get us all done.

THE MODERATOR: Caroline, can you tell us about your role and what you've been doing up to this point. I know you've been doing a lot behind the scenes.

CAROLINE MARTENS: Kind of been keeping everything in line. We all play an important part, and I have been working a little bit behind the scenes, yes, which is making sure everything is where it's supposed to be and everyone has what they need and everything, so I guess just being that person that everyone can come to if there is something that's missing or if they need something.

THE MODERATOR: Laura, how does Suzann compare to all the other captains that you've known?

LAURA DAVIES: Well, she's a lot calmer than I thought she was going to be. I'll be honest with you. I've played alongside her, with her, and against her in normal tournaments, and she's always been the same. She's just friendly, a little bit fearsome now and again, but brings everyone together.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

I think all the young players in the team this week, they respect Suzann so much because of what she's done, and when they see this lovely person greeting them and bringing them in the team room, I think they were surprised, number one, but number two, very, very pleased to be a part of her team and know how valued they are to her because it is, as she said, I think without doubt, the strongest Solheim -- European Solheim Cup team we've ever had in-depth. From 1 to 12, there's not much in it.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to open for questions.

Q. My question is to Laura first. Did you ever dream that the European team -- I mean, living what you lived all the beginnings of the European Tour, that you got to one point, like you can say the strongest ever European Team, how the evolution of the European women's golf?

LAURA DAVIES: Yeah, we've always had such strong teams, but it was always kind of the top 7, 8, 9, maybe, that played on the LPGA Tour. We always had players from the European Tour that didn't have the experience, and when you come to the very hardest women's tournament in golf, the pressure -- you know, you're not saying they weren't great golfers and they could stand up in any stroke play event, but it's really hard to play against a really strong American team when you don't really know what you're coming up against. So that's why I think this time, the 12 all play on the LPGA, they're all winners on the LPGA, and they bring that kind of experience to this team.

So that's why I think the teams are identically matched. I think it's even for both sides. We have a slight advantage -- well, not a slight advantage, an advantage in the home crowd.

But whether I thought in Lake Nona in 1990, we would be here with this kind of venue and the amount of people who are coming to watch, the TV coverage from around the world, no, I would never had expected this, so it's great.

Q. You're proud, right?

LAURA DAVIES: Yeah, very proud of the whole thing.

Q. For Suzann, Stacy Lewis has said that the thing that she's most looking forward to for this Solheim Cup is going up against you because of the high level of competitiveness and dare I say the feistiness. Do you agree and can you explain -- try and put into words for those of us who have never competed or been involved in a Solheim Cup why it's such a high level of competitiveness?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Yeah, I mean, it's great going up against Stacy. I mean, I've had a great journey with her on the LPGA. We're pretty much the same age, we're both now a mom, and we've had fairly similar careers. She has a couple of majors, I have a couple of majors, we've played several Solheim Cups between the two of us. So, yeah, that's going to be fun.

But I really can't wait to see our players go out there and really showcase how good European golf is at this point and stage. I mean, our team reflects kind of the hard work that's been put into, like, junior golf, Ladies European Tour, and I think it's just now we're seeing the results of all the hard work that's been put in.

So I really can't wait for Friday morning to let our team go out there and really do what they do best, and we'll see where that leads. But it's going to be a fun couple of days ahead.

Q. Suzann, can you tell us some words, a few words, about Celine Boutier and how is she as a teammate?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I mean, Celine, she's probably one of our absolutely best players. She's had a phenomenal summer to come and win Evian at home soil and then back it up winning the Scottish. She's coming into this event with a lot of form, a lot of confidence, and that's very helpful as well for the rest of the team. She's a super lovely girl and, yeah.

Q. Easy to manage?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Easy to manage? She really does everything that I say, so I would say yes (laughing).

Q. Stacy has been utilizing a new stats program that's geared specifically for the Solheim Cup. Do you have a resource like that? How have you been working out pairings?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Yeah, I think the hardest part of this captaincy was literally picking the 12 players. We've used a lot of stats. I mean, throughout my career, I was somehow into stats, but I was also very much a feel player, and I was a bit of a -- like, I took a lot by instinct. But it's always nice to base your decisions on facts, and then you can kind of take your heart and your gut feel on top of that.

So I think it's a combination of all, but you can't hide the facts, and I think it's great to have in your back pocket, but I would say stats are like any rules, there's exceptions to any rules. This is a game of golf. We're all human beings. Yeah, you can statistically say these two players should be

great together, but they also got to like each other, you got to have the dynamics. It's not just about a couple of players. I mean, you got to kind of pair 12 players throughout the week, so there's a lot of other factors that counters in as well.

Q. Suzann, we've heard from a few players talking about your style of captaincy. Just wondered how you would describe it yourself.

SUZANN PETERSEN: Yeah, I mean, we've all played under a lot of different captaincies. I think each one has their own kind of story and their own kind of trademark. I've tried to kind of look back and take the best from each and everyone. I think Beany was a great captain, both from a playing aspect and as a vice captain that I was last year. I would say it's pretty hard shoes to fill.

Yeah, so I kind of take a little bit from everything, but I think what I've kind of emphasized the most is transparency. I want the players to be part of the decisions that we make. The more we can do it as a team, the stronger we stand together. That's always what I appreciated the most as a player.

So I've been very transparent. I feel like the players really like it, so that's kind of so far what we're -- what I've done.

Q. Suzann, this is a beautiful golf course, but it presents some challenges as far as getting around. In previous Solheim Cups, captains were able to kind of bounce between groups and get to the ones that they needed to throughout the matches. How are you and your team planing to kind of work around some of those logistics?

SUZANN PETERSEN: Yeah, I mean, the course is a challenge to get around, but I mean, now that we've been around it a few times, I actually think everyone thinks it's not as bad once you kind of go out there and you kind of go with the flow. It's great to see -- I think you will actually see a lot of spectators walking around a lot more than what we anticipated, at least that's what we have seen so far through the practice rounds.

We'll make it work. The players, they obviously get first line in those -- some of those tight passes. There will be a couple of rides for the players. But I think overall, I think it's going to actually work out quite fine.

Q. We're in a country, in Spain here, where the big shot is summer and the final of football, you know, with the Spanish football president and Jenni Hermoso. Did you follow this and what do you think about this story and are you supporting the Spanish

football team, female football team, that was world champion and what happened in Spain?

LAURA DAVIES: Well, yeah, obviously it was unfortunate. I guess the guy resigned now, and we should move on. It wasn't the best thing he ever did, I don't think. But, yeah, we support the players, the Spanish team. It put a damper on what was the finest victory ever, so it was all very unfortunate.

Q. Anna, you have the rare duty this week of having multiple press conferences, one as an assistant captain, one as a player. How are you managing the dual role?

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, it's been a fun week so far for me. I get to do two press conferences this week because I'm coming in tomorrow afternoon as well.

No, I mean, it's been great. We've put in a lot of work before this week. But like Suzann talked about, she kind of kept the communication really open this week, so I feel like we've done a lot of things as a team. But, yeah, once I'm on the golf course, Suzann, Laura, and Caroline is doing everything they can to manage it all without me, and they're doing just fine.

I'm just grateful for the opportunity to be part of it. But we have such a good team with the caddies, the helpers, and everyone, so I feel like my role has maybe been a little bit more as a player too, communicating a little bit more with the players to the captains, given that I'm out there.

But everyone's -- or most of the players already have been playing in a couple, so they know what it's all about. Yeah, if I can help out doing anything, you know, find some nail polish for someone or whatever it is, I'm happy to do it.

Q. How do you describe your assistant captain role? I think it's going to be something that we watch most of the week.

ANNA NORDQVIST: Yeah, so I always said, if Suzann Pettersen was ever going to be the captain, it would be a dream come true to be assistant captain under her. So to get that honor when Suzann called me, I was truly honored, but I also felt like I wasn't done yet. Yes, I'm the oldest player, but I still have a little bit left in the tank. So far it's just been a great honor, and I'm looking forward to see what the next couple days bring.

Q. How do we compare Finca Cortesin to the Evian Championship all the way, quality of reception, comfort of the course?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Can you please repeat the question?

THE MODERATOR: How do you compare the course to other courses you've played, to Evian Masters? How do you compare the course?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: To the Evian Championship? Well, it's very different golf course. This is a bit more open, I would say, a bit more -- I think it's a bit more generous off the tee, a lot bigger greens, and it has obviously the wind aspect. You would anticipate wind here over the weekend. So I think they're actually quite different. I've been fortunate to come here a few times and play, and this is a course, at least, I really think it suits match play. I think it's going to be a lot of fun holes to watch. I know the Volvo match play was played here with the guys and it was a good venue for that. So, yeah, I really like Finca Cortesin.

Q. Do you have a theme or message this week that you're trying to convey to your team? Any special guests coming to the team room?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Well, I'm not going to blow all the secrets here. But, yeah, I mean, the theme for the week I think is it's all about the team. This is not about individuals. I want the players to come together and kind of stand next to each other shoulder to shoulder. They don't have a problem with that literally to start the week. So it's not a really big challenge to kind of get these girls going.

Yeah, we are going to have a few guests throughout the week that hopefully can inspire a little bit more. So, yeah, I can't tell you all the secrets.

Q. How important is it to play all your members of your team on the first day and is that part of your plan? And secondly, can you talk a little bit about what Leona Maguire did the last time and what you're expecting from her this time?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: No, this is the ultimate question: How do you line up your players. This is pretty much what we've spent the most time going through over the last, well, month since the team was announced. I feel like we're really well prepared. Even though if you do prepare you got to be open for surprises. You never really know how certain players feel. Is this a golf course where it's good to play five matches? Yeah, it's always nice to get all players going the first day, but it also depends how kind of the puzzle within the pairings are going to work. So I think we're pretty settled as we sit right here right here today.

This is also where I feel the communication and transparency with the players is a key factor, because the

more the players know, the more they can be part of decisions based on literally how they feel. Like I told them, I can't read your mind, and I can't guess what you're thinking, how you're feeling, so you got to communicate back to us. If one player is saying five matches is too much, well then that's great to know. On the other hand, all the players are here to play golf and they will do whatever we ask them to. So they're a pretty good group of players to handle.

Leona, I mean, I just think she's the type of player you would like to keep on the course at all times. She's just that feisty. She's just that good. As soon as those sunglasses goes on she's in her own little bubble and just keep her there. She kind of proved that pretty well in Toledo and I'm pretty sure she's going to be quite competitive this week.

Q. Suzann, but you're all welcome to answer. You talked about the team dynamics. I'm wondering if you've had any major early observations from seeing the team kind of acting cohesively together, and I'm wondering if there are any class clowns on the team.

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I guess there's only one, Charley Hull, playing this week (laughing) if you talk about the clown. But I mean, I don't know if there's any surprises from our side. I don't know.

LAURA DAVIES: No, I think Charley's the obvious choice. I don't even think she knows she's funny, but she is probably the funniest person you'll ever meet. She keeps everyone on their toes. But Emily Pedersen's a bit lively. There's a few out there that like to have fun. It's just nice to be involved with them all because they have all come here, they have all earned their spot, and they just want to have fun, but also play top-level golf. So, yeah, it's quite good fun. But what happens in the European team room stays in the European team room, so can't tell you too much.

Q. Do you think it's a good thing to have someone who is sort of comedic presence to maybe cut some of the tension in the room during the course of a pretty tense week?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Yeah, but I think this is part of kind of the part of the captaincy, the role as being a captain or the four of us is to try and create that atmosphere with the people that we bring along. So you obviously have the 12 players and you have their caddies, but then you also have the support system of helpers and physios and spouses, plus ones. I mean, it's all about this entire group working together. There are different individuals, yes, for sure in the room, which creates a great atmosphere. So

it's been a great week so far.

Q. What advice, Suzann, are you giving players on how to tackle the strategy on the first hole?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Well, it's an interesting first hole because it's a reachable par-4. We've been talking about this. I don't know if we've been trying to lay a strategy flat, because for some people it's very approachable, for others it's might be out of their reach to be comfortable to go for the hole in one or like go for the drivable par-4. So I think you're going to see both. I have just told the players, let's talk through this. Because, I mean, we had a drivable par-4 in 2017 in Des Moines which didn't really turn into the European favor. So I just want the players, the team to kind of at least talk through what we're thinking, at least have some kind of a strategy in mind when they step up on that first tee, and, yeah, I mean, the conditions are, I think it's going to be part of however what the players decides to do as well.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll wrap it up there. Thank you so much for coming in and have a great week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports