

Solheim Cup

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Andalucía, Spain

Finca Cortesin

Team USA

Stacy Lewis

Natalie Gulbis

Morgan Pressel

Angela Stanford

Press Conference



FINCA CORTESIN
ANDALUCÍA, SPAIN

2023

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Welcome back inside the media center here at the Solheim. I am pleased to be joined by the U.S. team captains. To my left over here, Captain Stacy Lewis, Natalie Gulbis, Morgan Pressel, and Angela Stanford.

For those on the Zoom, please let me know your questions in the chat function of this call so that we can ask them for you. In the room, there are microphones, so please wave when you have a question.

I want to kick things off with the captain, Stacy. We've talked about it for week, for months, for years, it seems like, and we are finally in Spain. Overall, how have your feelings been since touching down here in Finca Cortesin?

STACY LEWIS: We've hit the ground running. It's hard to believe it's been a busy three days. I remember as a player these four days felt like they took forever and now as a captain these days are gone by so fast. So we've had a great time so far. Took the girls on Monday, we kind of got off site and went and had dinner down at the beach, and so just wanted them to see a little bit of the area. But, yeah, everybody has been really loose and we've had good practice rounds and we're going -- we're moving in the right direction.

THE MODERATOR: A question for you, Natalie. Since being here, what have been some of the excitement, the feelings, that you have had on the ground?

NATALIE GULBIS: Every single part of Solheim is exciting from the time that Stacy called me to be part of this. The Solheim Cup's have been my absolute favorite work weeks on tour and this week has even been so much more special because it's a completely different experience than my last Solheim Cups, and the players are incredible

and our captain and my fellow captains have been such a pleasure to work with.

But now it's going by too fast. Like, I need it to slow down. When we first got here, I was just ready for the matches to start and, like, to get to the action and now it's just been so special that I need it to slow down.

THE MODERATOR: Morgan, as you've talked with players, as we have seen you in here, what are some of the things that you're getting from the team? What are some of the feelings, how excited are they to be here in Spain and represent the USA?

MORGAN PRESSEL: Yeah, it's been a lot of fun to be on this side and to kind of see how different players prepare. Certainly, as a player myself, I always knew how I prepared for an event like this. But, like Natalie said, these were the highlights of my career, there's absolutely no question, the six Solheim Cups I've been a part of.

You know, it's just been a lot of fun to walk and talk with the players in the practice rounds and talk about my past experiences, what -- especially a lot of the five rookies, what to expect come the first tee. I know they have been asked a lot about that in these press conferences as well, and just really trying to get them prepared as possible for what's going to happen this week.

But I would say compared to other teams that I've been on, it's a quiet team. It's a more quiet team room than I've seen in the past, but they're fiercely competitive, and I think that's kind of how they have all channeled their energy differently than other teams have in the past, and I think it's going to be a real asset.

THE MODERATOR: Angela, down to you, what has been some of the advice that maybe you've given to your team or the players that you've been coaching up. I know Cheyenne Knight talked about what you've been able to give her and the advice that you've given her, but what are some of the sterling pieces of advice that you've given Team USA this week?

ANGELA STANFORD: Well, you know -- what was that?



THE MODERATOR: Sterling pieces of advice.

ANGELA STANFORD: I think with Cheyenne -- I mean, I haven't talked to all the rookies, but just being able to be out at Shady Oaks with Cheyenne, we got to go out and play last week, and I think for me, I think I'm kind of going by the things that I regret a little bit. I just told her, you know, first off, you got to be honest. If there's something that bothers you, if there's something you don't like, be honest. We would like to know early in the week than late.

I told her, you know, it's a different week. You don't really control a whole lot. You may be around people that you don't usually hang out with. And then just learning how to be in that team room and just have a good time and enjoy it. Cheyenne's been great. She's taken it all in, as the other rookies. I think they -- I agree with Morgan, it's a different vibe. I think the average age is 25 (laughing).

So it's been fun to watch. You know, it's been fun to see 'em in the team room. They just kind of act like they don't have a care in the world. They're happy to be here. They're excited. It's been very refreshing and fun to be a part of.

THE MODERATOR: We will open it up to questions.

Real quick. Stacy, how much was that kind of sigh of relief when we saw Danielle's bag come in today?

STACY LEWIS: Well, it was last night. My dad actually went and picked it up for us. So Dad gets the MVP of the week.

But, yeah, the number of people that were working on finding that golf bag the last two days is astronomical, so we were very excited. Danielle's given us many hugs and thank yous. She was is very appreciative.

But, yeah, I mean, I've told a lot of people this, she's handled it so well, like, so remarkably well that I think it sent a message to the rookies of -- you know, there was no panic in her and it's helped that team room vibe. I don't even think Danielle realized it, you know, that she's being a leader in that aspect. So it's just been really cool to see her step up.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. This is a beautiful golf course, but it could be a little tricky to navigate. I'm curious, in Solheim Cups past, it's been easy for captains to kind of pop around and get to the matches that they needed to. How are you guys planing to work through some of those

challenges?

STACY LEWIS: I honestly just started thinking about that today on certain holes, that we can help them with tee shots and lines off the tees, and that will be something we're going to have to come up with. You'll probably see me walking more with more groups than jumping around a ton. But we have helpers with each group that are people that I trust and know really well and trust their opinions, and they're going to help me get to where I need to be.

But there's a lot on this team. Like Morgan said, they're pretty chill and they don't need a lot, so yeah, it's just -- it's using those around me to help us be successful.

Q. Stacy, a couple of things: One, how much are you using analytics, if at all, in regards to your picks and in regards to your pairings?

STACY LEWIS: A lot. It's been my start point for everything. It's not the be all. There's certainly personalities of people do or don't want to play together, maybe it's a golf ball issue, but analytics are a huge part of what we're doing and it's helped justify things to me in my head and it's helped justify things with the players as well.

Q. The other question, do you consider your team to be the favorite or not this week?

STACY LEWIS: No, I think Europe's the favorite. They have won the last two, we're on their soil, they have a great team that has a ton, a ton of experience in this event. So you look at history, you know, it doesn't bode well for us. But I love our chances. I love these rookies. I think they're going to have a great week and hopefully surprise a lot of people.

Q. This week Europe against the United States, obviously next week Europe against the United States. It doesn't feel as if there's much, if any, connection between these two events. Do you think maybe the sport has missed an opportunity there to do something that would have elevated this apart from anything else?

STACY LEWIS: 1,000 percent yes. I thought this could have been marketed together as two weeks in Europe, two Cups for play. I think it was a missed opportunity for the sport of golf. I wish that, you know, people could, you know, get the sponsorship things out of their head and let's figure out how we can work together because this may not ever happen again of the two Cups being in the same year.

So I thought it was a massive missed opportunity. We tried to do a little bit with the guys and just weren't really able to



move things along the way I would have liked. So I don't know, hopefully -- I just would like to see it for the good of the game. It's not to further women's golf. Let's further the game of golf in general.

Q. So did you have those conversations with people yourself to try and do that, to try and push that?

STACY LEWIS: I did. I tried. I tried really hard, actually. I probably spent more time on it than I should have. But whether it was timing or it was too late in the process, I don't know. I mean, to really market it correctly, like, this probably had to happen two years ago. So it's something that going forward, I think the game of golf needs to get on the same page and do better with.

Q. This is for any of the captains that want to answer. I'm curious what you guys think of having a drivable par-4 on the first hole. And then obviously, I don't expect you to go into the strategy or anything like that or any specifics, but curious if you think a lot of the U.S. players are going to be going for it and what that's going to be like for the first tee?

ANGELA STANFORD: I think it's so cool. I mean, I stood there today and watched Lexi and Nelly bomb at this green, and I'm like -- and it's elevated, and you have all the fans behind you -- and I know Europe has players that can do it too, and it's just so cool. I mean, so I think it will be a fun way to start the day. I don't think we would want to do it every time. But it was a lot of fun today to stand there -- and even the first day, I'm forgetting Monday. We were standing there Monday and doing it too. But just to see Lexi rip it and then to see Nelly rip it, I'm like, that's just cool.

MORGAN PRESSEL: Yeah, I was there watching Angel hit her little driver, like, just to the front edge as only the third swing of the day with no warm-up. I think it's cool. It's match play. It's fun. Whoever -- well, we will have the honor on the first tee all week, so that's an opportunity for us to put some pressure on Team Europe to start right out of the gate. Players who maybe can't get there, they have all been like, Oh, I could just get up-and-down and make birdie with a wedge. I don't think it's a deterrent in that sense.

THE MODERATOR: One from the Zoom. Stacy, do you have a theme or message this week that you're trying to convey to your team and have there been any special gifts or guests in the team room?

STACY LEWIS: No special guests. Just Chesnee running around singing Taylor Swift. Theme? The theme is I wanted these girls to know what they're playing for and

what they're becoming a part of. So there's a lot of things. There's my hat that I have on, there's 10 stars on it for the 10 times that U.S. has won the Solheim Cup. The golf bag has a pocket with 13 stars for our 13 past captains. It has a pocket with 62 stars for the prior to this year 62 Americans that have represented the U.S. at the Solheim Cup. The yardage book cover has the locations that we've won the 10 tournaments. So I wanted these girls to know how special of a group they're coming into. So you know what you're playing for. If you don't know what you're playing for, you don't know about the history. And then the history of the game, you know we lost Kathy and Shirley since we were together in Toledo, so I just, I wanted them to be a part of this week in some way. So I put the rubber duck on the bottom of the bag, and then the 88 on the hats for Kathy Whitworth's most wins of any golfer, not just female, golfer of all time. I put that on the hat for her so that they were with us this week.

THE MODERATOR: What's that been like for you to be able to kind of strategize these details? We have seen on social media the stickers on mirrors down to even table clothes, what's that been like and have you ever had an experience like that?

STACY LEWIS: Well, I just, you know, I think what the team room looks like, what their room looks like when they walk in, it sends a message of it being special and how important it is. I just, I had things from past ones that I liked or maybe I didn't like or things that I thought we could do better. I just, my brain just started flowing with ideas. These ideas just started popping in my head. So it just, it kind of all came together that way. That's the cool part about being captain is that you can decide all this stuff yourself. You know, I asked why things were done a certain way and if I didn't get a really good answer I said, Well, let's do it different. And that's kind of been the theme this whole time.

THE MODERATOR: Given how little crossover there was with the Ryder Cup is it a good thing that the Solheim has moved to even years starting next year?

STACY LEWIS: Yes and no. I actually think for the good of the game, for the game of golf, I think two weeks like this could be really cool, if we, if we could continue it for the future. So I don't know how to answer that one. I actually, I actually really liked them in the same year, if we can get some common ground and do it together.

THE MODERATOR: Great. With that we will let you all go. We know you have a busy day and night ahead of you guys. Thank you for joining us and best of luck.

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