

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 30 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Sweden

Alex Noren

Ludvig Åberg

Press Conference

MICHAEL BALIKER: We Ludvig Åberg and Alex Noren here to the media center at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Alex, your second Olympics appearance. What went into getting back here and how big of a goal was it for you to be back representing Sweden?

ALEX NOREN: It's very nice to be here. I played in Japan under COVID circumstances but it was still a very, very well run tournament. I knew I would love Olympic without COVID, and it feels amazing to be in France and Europe where I was born and spent a lot of time and I'm very happy to be here.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Your familiarity with Le Golf National, just come comments on the golf course.

ALEX NOREN: I started coming here in 2008 for The French Open and played until 2019 so I played a lot and have great memories from that and also Ryder Cup. The course is in very good shape. It feels like a great week.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Ludvig, your Olympics debut. You answered a lot of questions about what it means to be here representing Sweden and now you're here wearing the colors and on-site. What's the overall feel?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: It's very cool. A different dynamic than a normal tournament, but teaming up with Alex. Still, I was fortunate to represent the national team when I was in my amateur days, which wasn't that long ago. It's nice to wear some Swedish colors again. It's hard to describe.

MICHAEL BALIKER: You played the World Golf Team Championship in 2022. What were memories of competing in that event?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: We played well as a team. We got a



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Silver Medal back then, and another Swedish guy got the Gold Medal individually. John, our coach this week, was our coach that week. It's a pretty cool, full circle moment, so obviously pleased to be here.

Q. Tricky question to answer sitting next to you, 24-year-old, 42-year-old, what relationship do you have, both from the same place and entering the game at different points?

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, I mean, I don't feel 42 but that's like everybody. There's not a lot that I can contribute; it's not like I'm a mentor to him. He plays golf better than I do. He's fun a fun guy and we have fun together I think.

I love coming back to Europe and spending time with Swedes, and it's very nice.

Q. Is there a part of Alex's game that you are envious of or that you really appreciate?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: We literally five minutes ago, we did a 21 in the short game area and I think there's things that he can teach me around the greens, short game shots. Obviously Alex is a great ambassador for Swedish golf and he's been that way for a long time.

I remember growing up watching him win a bunch on The European Tour, DP World Tour. It's neat for me to be around really good players that I look up to and actually create a relationship and I guess spend some more time together.

Q. Do you think there's any advantage, European players, European Tour players have, playing this event here, particularly yourself, given that you won here, both individually and as a team. Is there maybe a comfort level, a knowledge level that maybe puts you in a different spot than, say, somebody who is coming here for the first time?

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, I think maybe the setup this week maybe makes it less of an advantage because it's very like unified rough. Before we had gradings and some areas were super penal, and now it's more like, you know, like

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you see at a major course in America where it's pretty even how you miss it, and it's not super firm.

I remember we played a lot of firm events here where the ball rolls a lot, and then you probably have more experience when you've played it a lot.

Yeah, maybe it helps. Draw that I've played well here before and the good feelings. Some courses don't fit you and it is tough to go to those places. I know it's just mental but there's something in it.

Q. Obviously it's an individual event this week, but how much do you feel part of the team and do you feel part of the Swedish team spending time in the Village and other athletes and things like that?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, definitely. We went to the Village yesterday and spent some time, watched the handball team win yesterday. That was really cool and a big game for them.

That's what's so cool about this week and this tournament and this whole event is it makes you feel like you're part of something bigger than just golf, and walking around in the Village yesterday, the sports nerd in me loves it. I think it's so cool to sit next to some guys.

Alex went to the gym yesterday in the Village. I didn't want to do that because I felt tiny. I think it's just cool to be part of it and something that I've been wanting to be a part of for a very long time.

Q. Can you explain what you mean by feeling tiny? Because no one looks at that you way?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I can't lift a lot of the same weights as a lot of the Olympic athletes. I wish I could but I'm probably never going to get there.

Q. We were looking at the swimming before you came in. How do you separate yourself, in terms of golf and the skill level of all of us here, it's very high. There's probably separation, whether it's you or Scottie or whoever. Have you ever looked at other sports and wonder what makes someone great compared to just being good? Good luck with that.

ALEX NOREN: I've been in sports a long time. I think it's just the one who wants it the most. You can kind of see through preparation and everything, and like you said, I was in the gym after, just watched the handball guys and they are in there doing their work. I think it's all about what you want and how far you're willing to go.

Q. You mentioned you went to the handball game last night. Were you aware that a lot of the Swedish handball players are --

LUDVIG ÅBERG: When we got to the Village the first time yesterday, we met a few of them, and funny for me, there's a guy on the team that's from same hometown from me, small city, about 30,000 people. We are from the same city and we are both here in Paris. That's cool.

We understood that they like golf. We feel the same way. We watched them play handball and I've followed handball for a long time and seen those guys play, it's such a physical sport. I'm impressed by the way they stayed disciplined and the way they played.

I think we all feel the same way whenever we see someone we've watched on TV or something like that.

Q. How cool is it to walk around the Village and meet people from other sports, because most of the time during the season, you guys are in the golf bubble?

ALEX NOREN: It's inspiring and it's super interesting to see different body shapes, and it's just amazing. Like you say, it's inspiring to be part of something bigger.

Like I don't watch much judo but all of a sudden you follow it and now probably follow ones that you watched in the Olympics. I think the Olympics is such great thing for the world and for everybody to get together like this. Most of us love other sports, as well.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I think it's just that sense of solidarity. We walk into the Village and whoever is wearing the Swedish clothes we just say "hi" to, doesn't matter what sport you're coming from. You're in the same boat and I think that's really cool to be part of.

Q. It wasn't too long that yourself and Linn and Maya were at the same high school and now you're all going to be Olympians for Team Sweden. Is that a full circle moment and something you've spoke about with them?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, it's cool, I remember when I was in high school, they were so good already and I just tried to do whatever they did. It was pretty inspiring to see. Obviously Linn and Maya turned pro before I did, but they went on and won big tournaments quick and became part of the Solheim Cup.

It speaks a lot to the school we went to, I think. It lays a foundation of all of our games. We get taught a lot and educated very well and to be part of the national team in

Sweden helped me and I'm pretty sure they would say the same thing. It's cool, we all went to the same class together and we all know each other quite well.

Q. You're probably not aware but first Gold Medalist in golf in the Olympics was in Paris in 1900 and also a guy competing in tennis that week. If there was ever a dual sport athlete in the Olympics, which golfer would have the best chance of that?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I'm not sure I would be able to do any other kind of sport.

ALEX NOREN: Of us or all of -- everyone?

Q. All the players. You're older, Alex. You can answer this.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: He was in the gym yesterday next to them.

ALEX NOREN: It's fun to be the basketball guy, I don't know his name, he plays volleyball this year.

But I don't know anyone. We're all too specialized.

Q. Curious about this 21 game. As one of the veterans out there, do you feel like short game, just looking at your stats, one of your proficiencies, do you feel that's something that one ever the shots that Ludwig says he doesn't have that you have, is that part of the game that shows itself the most?

ALEX NOREN: Or missing a lot of greens throughout the years.

I grew up playing a bunch of sports, although I couldn't compete in any of them here. I was always interested in table tennis, the spin, the angles and other sports like hockey. I found it easier to do that than maybe to hit a dead straight drive.

So I think all of us have -- where we find it easier, like off the tee with an iron or wedges, putting. Then when that happens, it's something you're more interested in it.

I don't think it's age -- well, he's got a great short game, and you come out here and you're like, okay, I need this shot and you learn that shot. He can learn a shot -- say we play extremely firm greens or something that we don't play as amateurs, he will play it right away. It just being confronted with the challenges you and learn.

Maybe you've experienced that, as well, but I don't think he needs that much time to learn whatever shot he doesn't

feel comfortable with. I haven't seen that shot yet.

Q. Made me think just now of Open week, Scottie Scheffler is talking about hitting golf shots in his living room growing up, hitting ping-pong balls to work the ball left-to-right. Does that click in your mind, as well?

ALEX NOREN: Well, we set up the golf balls, but actually ping-pong racquets and ping-pong balls but you had to spin it around furniture and stuff. So whatever you can do when it's snowing outside similar with golf.

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