

PNC Championship

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Orlando, Florida, USA

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club

Annika Sörenstam

Will McGee

Press Conference

Q. How excited are both of you to be back here this week?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I'm super excited. This is the highlight of the year for us of course to be able to play together, to be part of this event. As you know, there's some great teams here, and the atmosphere is just fun.

I don't know, I just love walking inside the ropes with Will. I will say that my game is probably similar; his game has gotten a lot better. So it's fun to watch him and see him blossom and kind of be up front, a front seat.

WILL MCGEE: I'm also super excited. It's super cool to play a tournament with a bunch of legends and to be able to come back every year. It's super fun being able to play with her.

Q. Can you talk about how your game has progressed over the last year since you were here?

WILL MCGEE: Yeah, I feel like my ball striking is getting a little bit better. I feel like that's always been a struggle for me. So that's improving. I'm gaining a little weight and height, I would say. So hitting it a little farther, which is nice.

Q. Obviously this week and this tournament means so much to you. What are some of your favorite things that happen this week?

WILL MCGEE: I always like being inside the ropes. I watch the PGA TOUR each week and like, oh, that course looks like so much fun to play. Being inside the ropes is a lot of fun, and being alongside her makes it even better.

Q. Annika, you mentioned that a lot has changed with him over the years. What do you remember from six years ago, and how much did you kind of have to pull him through that first one? I guess six years later how much is he kind of pulling you through?



ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: As a parent, you see your children grow, and it happens so quickly. He said he's gaining height and weight, and I'm gaining weight, no height. Just to see them mature, and his passion for the game, I would say, is very, very similar. Now when we talk shots, when we talk -- now I want him to read my putts. I think he reads them better than I do.

The first time we played, I think I was a little bit more in control, telling him what to do, where to hit it and what to do. Now it's probably a little bit vice versa, which I'm proud of because he's got a really good sense for the game. He's been out here.

I just love his attitude, that kind of free spirit, go for it. As you know, at that age you don't really have the fear. Therefore, I go out there and just kind of enjoy it with him. I would say the difference is just a lot more knowledgeable about the sport and the game and the swing.

Like now he works the ball. Before, he was like let's just make contact. Now he wants to hook it and fade it and high and all these tricky shots. I'm just like, well, I'm just going to try and hit it straight. It's fun to see how he's evolving for sure.

Q. When you are giving each other advice or taking command of a situation, how much do either of you have veto power over the other?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Yeah, I'd like to hear your answer about that one.

WILL MCGEE: She definitely has a lot of power over me, I guess. I trust her game a lot. If she tells me what to do, I understand. I believe what she's saying is accurate because she's been around the game a long time. She knows what's right.

It's hard to listen to her sometimes because she's my mom. I feel like I know better, but I don't.

Q. Will, as you've progressed up the junior ranks into AJG events, into even the state high school championship -- congrats on the finish, by the way -- but what do you take maybe from being inside the ropes here that you can apply to that where a lot of the



other players don't have that opportunity?

WILL McGEE: I definitely feel like this tournament prepares me a lot more. I'm not as nervous, I would say, coming to these junior events. Especially in the past, say I'm close coming down to the end, I'm super nervous, questioning every shot. It's definitely helped with the nerves knowing I can play well in like better tournaments. It's not like as nerve-racking, I would say.

Q. Does Will do anything better than you?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: He has an amazing short game. I just love his touch around the greens. Well, we practice very differently. Even when I was at my peak, I'd be more of a grinder, just hitting shots and kind of go to my stock shot. I don't think he hits two shots in a row the same. On the contrary, I want to hit as many as I can in a row the same.

He likes to just work it all kinds of directions and hitting it high or hitting it soft. So he has a very different feel than I do. I would say that nowadays he can generate some speed. We'll hit balls next to each other, and I can hear that last minute, like a little acceleration. It frustrates me that I don't have that acceleration anymore. I would say that's what he has.

I still feel very confident with my consistency, which as you probably know through my career, that's been my strength, fairways and greens. So I think this type of format has always been fun because I think we complement each other.

But I also feel like when he's around I get a little bit more creative. I feel like my short game has -- not necessarily improved because I don't practice as much, but I'm imagining shots that I didn't before. I would just hit one shot, and now he's challenging me, well, try and hit it higher, Mom. I'd be like, well, this is how I hit them. He goes, well, try something new. I'm just like an old dog, do the same tricks. Here you've got the puppy with a lot of imagination. He brings it out in me.

Q. I'm sure you've been asked this before, but do you guys keep score when you play?

WILL McGEE: Yeah, we do.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: We do.

Q. And?

WILL McGEE: I would say we're pretty similar because if we both have a good day --

Q. I'm looking at a number. I'm not interested in similar. I'm looking at numbers here.

WILL McGEE: I don't know. We're always about the same. Numbers, anywhere from par to under par, maybe a few over. If she plays well and I play well, we're about the same, but she's a lot more consistent. If I play bad, she's going to destroy me.

Q. Let me be more blunt. Have you beaten your mother?

WILL McGEE: Yeah.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Yes, he has. This summer it started.

Q. Was that the first one?

WILL McGEE: This summer, and I did it a few more times. It doesn't matter.

Q. Where?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Remember we played Turnberry in Scotland.

WILL McGEE: I think it was in Turnberry.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: He's done it a few times this year, and he's outdriving me now too. It pushes me, what can I say? It's one of those feelings where as a parent, I'm psyched for him, but I'm also like, hmm, I want to keep going. I'm so competitive.

Now I love that he's on my team. Now I'll be cheering a lot for him.

Q. Did you handle that loss okay?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Did I handle it well?

WILL McGEE: I think you were good. I'm trying to remember. I don't remember much.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Yeah, it's one of those moments where I -- no, I'm very happy for him. As a parent, I love it. Every inch of it I love, but it makes me competitive. We don't give putts. We don't hit one over. I would say that we're pretty serious when we play because there is -- I mean, I have a little bit of an ego too, but then I want to push him.

Many times you could tell that he wants to beat me, and I



don't give up, but when he does, it's truly earned.

Q. Will, I remember at your tournament, Annika, when Linn Grant told that nice story about seeing you or Terry catching the ball when you were hitting wedges and she had done the same with her father. Is that anything you've done?

WILL McGEE: Sometimes I'll go out there and definitely practice with her with my wedges, but I wouldn't say trying to go to a yardage and try to hit that yardage over again. I'm picking different yardages, different shots, and finding new ways to hit the ball, I would say.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: You did it with your cousin at Christmas. Is he 7? Liam is 7. He plays baseball. They're out in the yard, and Will was hitting to Liam. That was kind of fun.

WILL McGEE: Yes.

Q. Did he have his glove on?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Yeah.

WILL McGEE: Yeah.

Q. Did he have to do a lot of running?

WILL McGEE: Not much because it was a pretty short shot, but I was pretty accurate.

Q. My question is for Will. One of the best things I heard last year is that you and your mom had a kind of bet that, if she won after 18 holes, you had to do the dishes, and if you won, you'd get ice cream. Are the stakes higher this year?

WILL McGEE: Yeah, so that was for last year, and we just played today. We did have a bet, and I lost by one, but the stakes were a little higher, I would say.

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: Yeah, it went from dishes to money. I guess that motivates him.

Q. Will, how did you feel when you beat your mom? What was the feeling like? Or did you think what have I done?

WILL McGEE: I was super stoked and excited, but I was playing really well that day. I was a few under. Then I remember messing up at the end. So I think I was more upset about that. I definitely felt like breaking the ice since I beat her for the first time, so I wasn't as nervous if we were close again.

Q. Did you feel a bit bad?

WILL McGEE: No. She's beaten me a lot. I finally got one on her.

Q. What do you see in Will? Obviously you've got amazing traits as a champion. What do you see in Will as a player?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: I know what his goals are and what he wants to do with his game. I think that's from kind of a long-term perspective. Right now I'm super proud of what he's doing. He's starting to take some lessons, some serious lessons, starting to work on his game.

He's always been such a feel player, and now it's like I just -- I want him to continue to have feel but just kind of work on the fundamentals. I see that it's starting to resonate, especially in the swing. The short game, he has so much feel, but in the swing making sure that he's strengthening the grip and he's starting to understand the difference in that and a little bit in his backswing.

So I think he's taking that quite seriously, and he's been very dedicated. He's going to the gym. I know what he needs to do down the road and continue, but he's still only 14. So I think where was I when I was 14? So I really shouldn't be giving advice in that sense.

But I know what it would take down the road as far as playing college golf and professional golf, but he's going to take his own road and his own team and people that he wants to listen to and be part of.

I hope that he knows I'm here, but it's so nice for him to have his own little way also and not just feel like it's just his mom's path. I want him to kind of make his own tracks.

Q. Is there anything you do -- because there's obviously a lot of children here with famous golfing parents. Is there anything you do like stay away from tournaments, or do you go and watch, or is there anything you have in not putting that pressure on him?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: You mean am I watching him? Whenever I can, I go. Mike and I, we take turns to go. I'd like to say that I'm there, I'm watching, I'm making mental notes, and if he asks, then I will give my answers or my opinions.

If he doesn't ask, I know where my place is, just supportive and loving and give him the resources he needs. Then if I'm there, I certainly would love to share that.

It's funny, his sister, she asks for advice pretty much every shot. He seems to know what he's doing or at least pretends to, right?

Q. Is that what your parents did for you?

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM: My parents were very much on the sidelines. They watched a lot, walked a lot, as you know, with my sister. I always felt the support, but I felt like I was a little bit in charge of my own game, which I think down the road is very healthy to be able to understand what to do and what you need to change. I think a lot of kids nowadays they have -- they rely on so many people. It's like they can't make their own decisions.

I think my stance on that is you've got to -- once you're out there, you're a little bit on your own, and you learn from your mistakes.

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