

U.S Senior Women's Open Championship

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Kettering, Ohio, USA

NCR Country Club (South Course)

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by defending champion Annika Sorenstam. Just thinking back to last year a little bit now that we're a year out, what did that mean to you and kind of put it into perspective.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, it's hard to put in perspective. It was just the coolest thing I think I've experienced in a long time. Lucky to be a mom and lucky to have my husband on the bag and to share such a special moment. We had worked together on it for quite some time. It wasn't just something, Let's go play the U.S. Senior Women's Open, so the preparation and to have the kids there with me and friends and family and to be able to share all that, for us it was a fairy-tale, it really was. Could not ask for a better return to a USGA championship.

Q. What are the expectations this week and where is your game right now?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You know, I feel really good about my game. I'm not going to say too much. Golf is golf; we know what that's like. As you know, I've been playing quite a bit this year on different tours really, different events, and been working on my game. I'm happy to be here. I'm happy to defend. I really don't do that very often. We're going to cherish that moment: The kids are coming in tomorrow.

When I was here for the media day, I fell in love with this place. Ohio has been good to me on a lot of levels, so this place is just very special. You can really tell that it's a championship golf course. You have to drive it well. You have to hit good shots. It's just a true test.

The goal here is to come and play, have a good time. I've said it before, this is a family affair, but I'm also playing for a different purpose. Try and go out there and just have a good time and see what happens.

Q. Just in terms of difficulty, is this a lot more difficult than last year's course?



ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I mean, I thought last year was tough, too. I had some good breaks and some good things were happening, but no, I think this is not a walk in the park by any means. I felt like yesterday was playing a little longer I'm not really sure what the official scorecard says, but it's been raining so we don't get a lot of roll off the tees, and the greens are undulated. It's got a lot of character to it. You need to hit the ball well. You can end up some places here that makes it really tough.

I think the key here is to be patient and try and hit fairways and greens. I know I say that all the time, but I think that's a recipe for USGA courses, just go out there and not be serious about it.

Q. What's the most difficult aspect of this golf course?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You know, I find the driving actually, it's narrow out there in some places, especially where I've been hitting. I feel like somehow they've made it narrower where I want to land it. So it depends where the tee boxes will be.

But then the greens, again, I think last year we came into the course knowing that, oh, the greens is what they're going to be. Nobody has really talked about the greens. But yesterday I felt like they were a lot more severe than I thought in April. I'm not really sure why.

I think, again, the speed is quite fast. You've got to be on the right side of the hole locations here.

Q. Are the kids coming?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: They're coming tomorrow, yep. They started school already, so we have to count the days that we take them away from there, but they're coming tomorrow and look forward to having them with us.

Q. How do you judge the field when you look at the other golfers as your top competitors? Who do you think has got the best chance?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I would say overall this is the best field you can get in a U.S. Senior Women's Open. I think you've got everybody here that we want to have here and that wants to play and is competitive. I look at every player here as having a chance.



Q. JoAnne of course is 83 and competing again. What do you remember about the first time you met JoAnne Carner?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: When I hear of JoAnne, it makes me giggle. She is just a fun person, a character of her own. She's done so much for the game. She's been way before me and then a little bit when I played and now she's still here.

I think it's amazing that she's here, I really do. I think it's terrific for the game, and it just shows the longevity of the game that she has but also the passion. I'm not sure what I'll be doing at 83, but to be out there playing in a U.S. Open, I think that is just remarkable, really.

As far as stories, I mean, one of the things that I always think about is -- I think it shows a different, what do you call it, just approaches to the game. I was in the trailer when I played on the LPGA, and I was in there stretching and doing some weights and getting loose. Here she comes in and she literally just kind of sits on a bench and is kind of like observing everybody. Then the trainer comes up and said, what can I do for you, and she goes, "Do you have any Advil?" She got like two or three, and that was it. That was her trailer fitness moment.

Q. You've obviously defended tons of times over the course of your career; how does this feel different?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think it feels different because I don't do it. This is the first one this year and the first one since I stopped playing as far as I can remember.

Yeah, I mean, I guess the eyes are -- I'm thinking that I have a chance, so I think I come in here knowing -- before I didn't really know where is my game and where do I stand and how are the others playing. Now I feel like, I can a good time last time. There's something about winning, there's something about performing, and that's a feeling that I felt a lot before, and I still like it.

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