

U.S. Senior Women's Open Championship

Tuesday, August 18, 2026

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Barton Hills Country Club

Annika Sorenstam

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome to the interview area 2021 U.S. Senior Open Women's Open champion and World Golf Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam. You got to see this course for the first time today. What are the initial impressions of the test you and the other players are going to see this week?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I love it. I think it's absolutely beautiful, good conditions, fun holes, a variety of holes. Front nine is a little bit different than the back nine. But no, I think it's really a fun course to play, and the greens is kind of where things will happen. Pretty generous off the tee, amazing shape. Great to be here and come back and see another wonderful golf course.

Q. It's been five years since you won this championship. What's your favorite part about coming back to this year after year, playing this championship?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think the courses that we play, I enjoy that, but I also enjoy seeing everyone, seeing everybody and catching up, seeing what's going on. It's so fun because you've got 120 players here and we're all just excited to play and compete at a different level than maybe before, but we all try and we're out there with our caddies reading the greens and trying to get the yardage books.

It's like old times but it's not really old times, but it's kind of fun to be back and do it. This is certainly the biggest tournament that we have all year.

Yeah, we'll test our skills and go from there.

Q. First off, I don't have the perspective; did the ladies have to lobby to get this U.S. Senior Women's Open event or is it something where they just said it's just the right time to do this?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Good question. I don't really know. When it started, I wasn't 50. I never had any intention of playing anymore after I retired in 2008, and



then all of a sudden this tournament came on the schedule, and that's kind of why I started to play again. I think it's been a motivator for me and for many of the other women. I really do think so. The timing was right.

We've got some players that are somewhat still competitive at that age when it started with Laura winning and then Trish and Helen and some of the names you've seen recently. Yeah, I think it's a good addition for sure.

Q. One of the things I see with you by following you from afar and up close when you can, between the collegiate events that you sponsor, AJGA, and of course you have the ANNIKA event that you have in November, it seems like you really want to make a mark on the game and leave the women's game of golf in much better shape than what maybe you found it.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, well, thanks for noticing. We do quite a lot of work, I think, with the foundation. We started in '07, and '08 was our first event. I feel like we really are making a difference around the world. We have 11 different tournaments that we host now, whether it's a collegiate event or ANNIKA Invitationals. I feel like we're pretty much in every corner of the world. We have over 1,200 girls now every year participating, and many of them go on to play whether it's the Epson Tour on the ANNIKA Women's All-Pro Tour or the LPGA and so forth.

It's been fun to follow. You can imagine, 17 years, we see a lot of players are super successful now on the tour, and it's fun. We have an Annika development program that we started about five years ago and we sponsor 14 girls.

I feel like I got my fingers on the pulse. I really see what's out there, and really proud of where women's golf is today, but feel like there's more to do to help enhance them and advance them through the game. It's been a fun journey. Obviously it makes you feel good when you see the game is in a better place and a lot of young women are playing.

Q. Where are you spending the bulk of your time when you do practice leading into a championship run?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: You mean today or just before I got here? In the past, I've been practicing more. This year, I've been playing more. I thought I'd change my strategy a little bit and go out and play and try to score and

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hit one shot and really play golf versus just hitting a lot of golf shots.

It's been fun this summer. We've played a lot. My daughter Ava is now playing, so we go out on the golf course. She doesn't like to practice, so if I want to hang with her, we've got to go on the course. We play a lot, and as you know, Will plays all the time. It's been fun, family golf this year a little bit more and going out and just having fun, maybe the girls against the boys, or depending -- young against old and lots of different setups. But it's been fun.

So yeah, the answer is I've been playing more being on the golf course than just kind of grinding.

Q. When did Ava get the golf bug?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yeah, I don't know really what it is. She just decided to try out for Lake Highland senior year, which we got her ready, so she made the team. As a matter of fact, in a few hours she has her first match for Lake Highland, so she's third in the lineup, so I'm very proud of her. This will be exciting to see. That's kind of where my mind is. I want to make sure she survives nine holes, so that'll be fun.

Yeah, probably towards the end of her junior year, she said, I want to try out for golf. Yeah, it's a good time to try out when you've got SATs, you've got college applications, you've got everything, so let's just throw some golf on top of it.

Q. There's a lot of socializing early in the week, but when you tee it up on Thursday does the old competitive fire rekindle?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think so, yeah. Certain things will never change. I think most of us here are very competitive and you want to do well, and once you go inside the ropes, it's like, you still have the routine. You still do the things you've always done. I don't think that will ever go away, and I hope not. That's what we did for so long.

But of course, the way we play the courses, the way we hit the shots and whatnot is very different, but I think just going out there and being competitive and wanting to do well I think is the goal for everyone.

Q. Is your routine the same?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Pretty much, yeah. I like to have -- the pre-shot routine is 24 seconds, very similar. You've seen it many times. I feel like maybe I hit a few more shots

than I used to. But other than that, you visualize the shots. I do a lot of clinics, so I still talk about the way I used to do it. Sometimes maybe I should listen to myself nowadays.

I wouldn't say it's automatic, but some things it's just a routine, and I always think about what I do when I practice. If I don't practice, I feel like, wow, what happened to this day. This is something I've done for so long, so sometimes it just becomes old habits.

Q. I've talked to Jackson Koivun, talked to a lot of women all-Americans including Lottie Woad, and they say the leap to the PGA TOUR, collegiate or whatever for the points that it's really elevated the game and identified a lot more players. How do you feel like that's changed the game in the last five, six, ten years?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I agree. Certainly they're talking from experience. They've been there and they've done that. I think those are two great initiatives, great rankings and really pushing the young players up to the tour, but I think more in a -- it's more of a longevity route versus maybe just tour school.

I think it's really fantastic. For the women I think it's opening doors for them early. I'm a big fan of it. I think we should pay for attention to it and hopefully they will elevate it a little bit more. Great way to get them ready for the tour for sure.

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