

# Curtis Cup

Thursday, June 11, 2026

Los Angeles, California, USA

Bel-Air Country Club

**Catriona Matthew**

**Patience Rhodes**

**Nellie Ong**

Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Welcome to the Great Britain and Ireland media conference ahead of the Curtis Cup at Bel Air Country Club. We're proud to be joined by Catriona Matthew, the captain at Sunningdale two years ago, a member of her team who was also at Sunningdale Patience Rhodes, also Nellie Ong, who played the U.S. Women's Open last week at Riviera.

Catriona, how have the preparations been going this week?

**CATRIONA MATTHEW:** Preparations have been going really well actually. We've played the course probably three times over the four days practice. I think the team have really got to know the course. Six of them had come out in November and played it before, so they knew it.

Certainly playing a little bit different, a little bit firmer, maybe a little bit faster. The team are all just getting to know the greens. I think the greens are going to be crucial here. So lots of putting, lots of chipping around the greens.

**THE MODERATOR:** It's a new look team, two players back, as I said, from Sunningdale. Everyone gelling well? Happy with the team dynamics?

**CATRIONA MATTHEW:** Yes, absolutely. We obviously had a good time. Obviously Patience and Beth back from Sunningdale, but some really exciting new talent coming up, of which Nellie is one. We're all getting on well. We've got seven who are English, so they all know each other.

**THE MODERATOR:** To you, Patience, nice memories of two years ago coming back here?

**PATIENCE RHODES:** Yeah, completely. I think it would be insane to do it on away territory. All those memories are flooding back, and it's great to be back here, yeah.

**THE MODERATOR:** You're not too old, but I take it you've been one of the experienced ones, along with Beth, in the locker room to be passing on advice?

**PATIENCE RHODES:** I don't feel like that. I feel like we're all the same age. We're all really close, so we try and pass on inspiring words to each other all the time.

**THE MODERATOR:** Nellie, can you talk about your experiences last week and how this has potentially helped you for this week?

**NELLIE ONG:** Well, last week it was an amazing experience. I wasn't really expecting to experience that this year, as much as it was a goal of mine at the start of the year. I think my two main goals were playing in a major and to compete in the Curtis Cup.

Although it was one of my goals, I knew that the chances were a little slimmer than maybe playing in this, but to get the opportunity to play in that, I'm really grateful, and hopefully I can put in like the first tee nerves I experienced last week, the different shots, because there were some very challenging shots that Riviera had and I think that Bel Air has similar shots. So hopefully I can take my learnings from last week and put them in play this week.

No, I'm really grateful to have experienced that last week, and hopefully it will help me this week.

**THE MODERATOR:** Lastly, what's it like being in the team environment? You've got one of the players that you know in there from your England golf days. What's that been like?

**NELLIE ONG:** It's been great. I know a lot of the girls -- well, I know all of the girls really well already, but spending this amount of time with each other, it just makes that bond even stronger.

I think we have an amazing team environment, both on and off the golf course. It feels so natural. We gel so well together. So it's been great. It's been so enjoyable. I know we'll have each other's backs, and we'll do our best

to play for each other. So, yeah, it will be exciting.

**Q. Patience, I'm curious with all the new faces that are in the team room compared to this time two years ago, what's some of the advice that maybe you've been asked or given out to everybody considering just, again, the new freshness in there and what you remember from two years ago that was the big key to your success?**

PATIENCE RHODES: I remember two years ago I was really, really nervous. So I think all of these players are bound to be nervous, but that just means they care so much about winning and trying to win as a team.

What was the other part of the question? Sorry.

**Q. Just about the keys to success, being one of the veterans on the team and what you tried to share with everyone.**

PATIENCE RHODES: Keys to success, I think one of the biggest things is we are such a close-knit team. We all know each other so well. So if someone hits a bad shot out there, like everyone is going to support each other. Yeah, it's just we're all really close, really friendly with each other. So, yeah, I think that's the success.

**Q. I know Lottie was out here earlier this week. What was that like kind of having her out here and having her to maybe talk a little bit with, bounce some ideas off of, ask her about her experience playing in this competition?**

NELLIE ONG: I mean, Lottie is someone we all look up to. She's obviously had all the experiences that we're looking forward to, and she's full of wisdom. I mean, she just wants the best for us.

She was giving us some great advice around the greens, particularly into green shots, but also kind of preparing us mentally for what it's going to be like and what we need to be ready for.

She's a great, I want to say, mentor to have. Even though she's two years older than me, she has done everything we want to do, and she's a great person to talk to about anything like that, so yeah.

**Q. Catriona, I'm wondering, for some of your players, this will be their last Curtis Cup before trying to go pro later this year. For some, it might be the only Curtis Cup they'll play in. For someone who's had plenty of success as an amateur, as a professional, and now as a captain, why is it so important for them to soak in**

**this week?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I think because this is the pinnacle of amateur golf for them. You put in all that hard work throughout the year, and it's being able to come in and do it under the pressure, as they say.

As Patience said, they're going to be nervous, and that was what Lottie said as well, they're going to be nervous, but they're good enough players, and it's putting themselves in these positions to show them that going forward in their careers when they're under the most pressure, that they can pull off the shots and do it.

I think it's just great experience for them. At every level you're at, whether it's amateur or professional, you're always wanting to get to the top of that level, and this is the top. This is where obviously this is going to be on television, they're going to have people watching them.

Any time you're playing for your country against America, it's a great feeling, that pride and kind of honor when you walk onto the first tee knowing you're playing for your country, you're playing for your teammates. It makes all the hard work worthwhile.

**Q. Do you have a favorite moment back when you played in the Curtis Cup as a player?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: That was so long ago, I don't know if I can remember (laughter). I think it has to be we got well and truly trounced in 1990 at Somerset and then won in '92 at Hoylake. So obviously some great memories from that.

Then I played in Tennessee in '94, and I think the one thing I remember there, we managed to get a half match and retain the trophy, was watching Janice Moodie coming down the last playing Carol Semple Thompson in the singles. She either had to win or tie her match. Whatever she had to do, she did, and we got to retain the trophy.

That's what makes it so special. It's not whether it's the Curtis Cup or playing in the Solheim Cup, it's the same emotions you're going through.

**Q. Catriona, you're facing kind of an unprecedented situation with three of the Americans coming in off amazing performances. Can you remember anything like that in your time involved with the Curtis Cup?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I mean obviously both sides have had some great players on their teams over the years. You know it's perhaps not often there's a major -- obviously Lottie two years ago coming off a top 10 at St

Andrews. So, yeah, there's always a player or a couple of players from each team.

Obviously this year the Americans are a very strong team, but they're on home soil. They're going to be favorites. So that adds its own level of pressure to them.

**Q. And what have you done to get everybody acclimated to Los Angeles and to the golf course?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I think half the team stayed over here after the NAAs, so jet lag wasn't an issue for them. The other four, we all flew over on the Saturday, went down and watched a little bit of Riviera on Sunday just to kind of get over the jet lag. I think we watched Lottie play a few holes and watched Charley and watched Nellie warm up.

Just that, and then just kind of taking it easy, easing ourselves into it. Yeah, it's a long week. I think we were just saying that today, you kind of feel like you've been here for a long time, but then once tomorrow starts, it will be over before we know it.

**Q. Nellie and Patience, what do you make of Los Angeles and Bel Air?**

PATIENCE RHODES: I think it's a really cool place. We went to go see the Hollywood sign, which was really cool to see in person. We see it in the American movies all the time, but to be here, it's great. The atmosphere, the golf course is amazing, and everyone has been so nice to us. So it's really great.

NELLIE ONG: I mean, I love L.A. The weather is considerably better than what we get at home. No, Bel Air has treated us really well. All the members have been super welcoming and the staff as well. It's been great, and the golf course is amazing. We really look forward to playing it.

**Q. Nellie and Patience, can you talk about what Catriona and the assistant captains are able to give you as a team and how helpful they are to you in a week like this?**

PATIENCE RHODES: I think it's extremely helpful that like they played in it, they understand what it's like for us, like it's the pinnacle of our amateur career. So it's really nice that they've been, that they've experienced it. They give us tips as players and captains, which I think is amazing.

NELLIE ONG: Yeah, as Patience said, they've all played in it, which means they understand what we're going through, all the emotions, but also they've done an

amazing job of bringing us together as a team.

Obviously we all know each other, we're really good friends, but in this week in particular, we all need to be together, we all need to stick together. They've done a great job of promoting that and helping us be in a great mindset. Yeah, it's been great.

**Q. Catriona, the team have spoken about how well they get on and the team atmosphere. How important is that to you, that there is that togetherness?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I think it's crucially important. There's 20 matches; you need 10 1/2 points to win it and eight players on the team. The goal is you want everyone to contribute. No one person is going to win the Curtis Cup for other side. You need the whole team, you need all eight players, and you need them all kind of fighting in the same direction.

**Q. Catriona, from a player's standpoint, now you're captain for the second time, you understand how hard it is to win on the road. When you look back, it's been 40 years since GB&I has won on this side. Is there anything you can point to that causes the difficulties when you come over here, or is it just the difficulty of playing on the road?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I don't really know. You can see in Walker Cup, Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup how difficult it is for the away side to win. Obviously when you're away from home, the crowd is kind of against you. The different kind of golf courses, you've perhaps not quite played as much golf on those kind of golf courses, so everything is just a little bit different.

We actually had a message from one of the team in 1986, so hoping to change that 40-year-old last time we won. Yeah, we know it's going to be a challenge. The Americans are always going to be a strong team, but yeah, as we've all said, we need to stick together, stick to our game plan, and just go out there and play hard.

**Q. Do you mind sharing a little bit about that message or who sent it? Don't need to know the entire contents of it.**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: We had messages from a few players saying different things. Claire Dowling sent a lovely message. I can't believe she had it, she had her jersey from the 1986 Curtis Cup that she wore when she was giving her message. But just giving them some encouragement and telling them how they managed to do it was all in the preparation. So yeah, just wishing them the best of luck.

**Q. For Patience and Nellie, this is maybe the first time, I think, that every player on GB&I has gone to college in the U.S., is going to college in the U.S. or will. Do you think that provides any advantage for you guys getting acclimated to the golf over here?**

PATIENCE RHODES: For sure, definitely. At home you've got links golf, which is completely different. Having the grain as well, you kind of get used to it being in America. Like college in America is great and it prepares you for pro golf. So I think playing golf courses around here near L.A., I'm in Arizona, it's all really similar, like the high shots that land soft. So I think it's really important.

NELLIE ONG: Yeah, I agree with Patience. It's definitely the golf courses are very different to the UK, the ball reacts very differently, and it's mainly around the greens, short game where you need to have different techniques.

Also in college golf, we're often exposed to media, Golf Channel, that can prepare us for events like this where we know it's going to be broadcasted. We've had a few events where we can be prepared for it, and we're in a good space mentally, and it's not a sudden shock.

I think like the conditions, it's great being out here in the U.S. and getting to know the grass but also just being exposed to bigger tournaments where it's not a shock when we come to something like this.

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