

U.S. Women's Open

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Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA

Lancaster Country Club

Lexi Thompson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by Lexi Thompson, making her 18th appearance at the U.S. Women's Open.

Lexi, obviously you shared some news here earlier today. How does it feel?

LEXI THOMPSON: It feels amazing just to be here this week. Reflecting back, this being my 18th U.S. Women's Open, at the age of 29, it's amazing because this tournament is where my whole career got started, I always say.

2007 at Pine Needles when I teed it up, I'm like that's when I realized I want to play against the best. It's been an amazing journey. I've loved every bit of it. So to be able to tee it up on my 18th is unbelievable.

THE MODERATOR: To be back here at Lancaster, just talk about playing a U.S. Open at a golf course you've played before and a little bit about your practice round today.

LEXI THOMPSON: From 2015 I can't say I remember too much. I remember a few of the holes. But the course is in unbelievable shape. Super hilly, not the easiest of walks, but it's a challenge as every major championship should be.

The practice rounds have been great. Dodged a little rain yesterday, which is nice. Like I said, it's a great layout and in great shape for us.

Q. I know it's been a really storied career over the past few years, since 2007. What's continued to motivate you as you've progressed, and maybe what are you most looking for in this next chapter?

LEXI THOMPSON: I would say what's motivated me, a few things. With golf being such an incredibly challenging sport that you can never perfect, I've always -- growing up with two older brothers, playing against them I've always wanted to beat them. That's the driving force to go out

there every single day and improve on the challenges I was faced with.

Out here what's pushed me and dedicated me has been the fans. Seeing little girls and little boys out there cheering me on -- even like today, there were so many people out there. That warms my heart. It makes the game. It makes me want to be out there to play. They've really pushed me, and I love every single fan.

Q. I know you've just announced. Have you had a chance to reflect yet? Are you reflecting as you walk around here and thinking about those other 17 U.S. Opens?

LEXI THOMPSON: I don't know if I'm thinking about all 17, but yes, reflecting. I've been out here, this is my 14th full-time year. Golf has been my life ever since I was 5 years old, tournaments when I was 7. I haven't really known much of a life different, but it's been an amazing one.

This sport has taught me a lot, and I've learned so much along the way, built so many friendships and relationships. I'm looking forward to what life has in store.

Q. How did you know that now is the time, and what are the factors that went into making your decision?

LEXI THOMPSON: Like I said, it's my 14th year. I'm not going to sit here and say it hasn't crossed my mind in past years, in the past few years, but I feel like I'm at a point in my life where it is time to step away from a full-time schedule.

There's more things to life than going to a tournament every week and doing the same training every day. There's just more to it, and I'm looking forward to experiencing that. I feel like I'm very content with where my life is and where this decision will lead me to.

Yeah, I'm just looking forward to what life has in store other than golf.

Q. I know you've been dealing with a hand injury. How



much has that played a part in this?

LEXI THOMPSON: I wouldn't say -- of course, I haven't been playing the golf that I expect myself to, but my hand has been unbelievably better. I've actually been able to go out there and swing without pain, which is always nice. That's been a great feeling to have.

I wouldn't say that has any factor. Of course the results haven't been what I've wanted. It's just where I'm at in my life.

Q. You mention retirement from a full-time playing schedule. Are you still planning on playing any competitive golf?

LEXI THOMPSON: Yeah, I'm taking it day by day right now. I'm not going to say yes or no on how many events I'll play or if I do. I'm just going to take it day by day and see how I feel, especially going into next year.

But I'm very content with this being my last full-time schedule year.

Q. Earlier in your post you mentioned some of the struggles you've dealt with throughout your career. What are you proud of yourself for overcoming?

LEXI THOMPSON: That's a great question. I think honestly just staying true to myself. Being out here can be a lot. It can be lonely. Sorry if I get emotional. I said I wasn't going to. (Crying).

I just think, especially with what's happened in golf, as of recent too, a lot of people don't -- they don't realize a lot of what we go through as a professional athlete.

I'll be the last one to say like throw me a pity party. That's the last thing I want. We're doing what we love. We're trying the best every single day. You know, we're not perfect. We're humans. Words hurt. It's hard to overcome sometimes.

But having the people around you that love you and support you, I feel like that's been the biggest thing for me. I might not have a huge friend group, but to have the people that matter the most around me have gotten me through some really hard times.

I think it's a lot for everyone out here or in any professional sport. A lot of people don't know what we go through. The amount of training and hard work that we put ourselves through, it's a lot. I don't think we deserve -- I think we deserve a lot more credit than what we get.

Q. You talk about looking forward to seeing what life outside of golf is. Have you thought about what that's going to look like for you? Or haven't really thought about it yet?

LEXI THOMPSON: No, of course I've thought about it. I'm super into fitness. Hopefully I'll have my Lexi Fitness app up and going very soon. And just enjoying life. Family's huge for me, so I hope to have a family one day. And just enjoy every experience of that and be there for every single moment. That's the most important for me.

I've only known golf as my life. So it's nice to branch out and be able to enjoy other things.

Q. Looking back at your first U.S. Open, could you have ever imagined that your career would have looked the way that it has?

LEXI THOMPSON: Gosh, at my first U.S. Women's Open? No, I was not -- well, I was trying to get over shaking there from being so nervous. It's been a blessing. Everything has exceeded my expectations of my career and the relationships I've built.

I'm just so blessed and grateful for every single person and experience that I've had along this career.

Q. A local business here in Lancaster. I was wondering how did you get partnered up with them? What's it like to represent the local community?

LEXI THOMPSON: It's a huge honor for me. I've been with the Amex Small Business Community Group the last few years, and to be able to support the Savoy Truffle Market, huge honor for me. It's so important to me.

I think it's so important, especially with Amex supporting these small businesses and help them grow and help them get their name out there to help grow as a business. It's so important and it's great what they're doing for these small companies.

I'm happy to partner with it and get their name out there and hopefully try some of their products (laughter).

Q. You mentioned maybe stepping away at other points in your career the last couple of years. When else have you contemplated that?

LEXI THOMPSON: To be honest, probably over the last few years just because it has been a long journey. I don't think a lot of people realize I've been out here since I was 15 years old. I've known only professional golf life and junior golf, amateur golf, being on the road.



But I've thought about it the last few years, but it never was the right time for me. Now where I'm at today and still the goals I want to accomplish the rest of this year, I'm super fired up about that, and I just want to enjoy every walk that I have out there.

Q. What are some of those goals you're hoping to accomplish?

LEXI THOMPSON: Number one is to definitely be on the Solheim Cup team. Huge honor just to represent my country and play alongside the team there and my captain; definitely that.

Every tournament I tee it up, I want to win still. Doesn't matter what position I'm at, I want to win and just enjoy the ride and keep on seeing the improvements.

I've been working very hard on my game, so to see the continued hopefully improvements, that's big for me.

Q. Mental health has obviously been a big focus in sports and in golf in particular recently. I kind of thought -- maybe I'm reading too deeply, but I thought you were alluding to it a second ago. I'm wondering what role your own mental health, preserving it and making sure it's as good as possible played a role in this stepping back announcement?

LEXI THOMPSON: Sorry, what's the question?

Q. Did mental health play a role?

LEXI THOMPSON: I feel like mental health is such an important thing, just for the everyday person, not just athletes. Everybody out here has their own struggles. That's what I always say. Just don't judge anybody because you don't know what they're going through and what they have going on in their mind and their heart and just be gentle with them.

I think we all have our own struggles, especially out here. Unfortunately in golf you lose more than you win, so it's an ongoing battle to continue to put yourself out there in front of the cameras and continuing to work hard and maybe not seeing the results you want and getting criticized for it. So it's hard.

I will say, yes, I've struggled with it. I don't think there's somebody out here that hasn't. It's just a matter of how well you hide it, which is very sad. It's an important thing to address and be okay with getting help and getting the support and surrounding yourself with the people that support you and love you, because there's always people

that do care so much about you and will help you get through those tough moments.

Q. When exactly did you know for sure that you were going to make this announcement today?

LEXI THOMPSON: For sure, I've been thinking about it for a few months now. It's just a matter of time and place. Like I said before, this is where my whole career got started. This is where the whole dream that's started of playing on the LPGA tour and being out here and playing professional golf and playing against the best. I only thought it was right to make it here.

Q. I wanted to ask you about one of your Solheim teammates. With how hard it is to win on tour, what do you make of what Nelly has been able to do and how amazing that run is?

LEXI THOMPSON: It's incredible. I think we all know what Nelly was capable of before this stretch of events that she's played in. She's super talented. I think it just goes to show in all the tournaments she's won this year and how well she's played ever since turning professional.

It's amazing. It's great for women's golf, especially having an American golfer. But to see anybody have that stretch of golf is truly remarkable.

Q. Two things. How much did -- over the course of your career, how much did results linger, good and bad, winning and not winning? Did you find yourself dwelling on them more than looking forward?

LEXI THOMPSON: I wouldn't say that I caught myself dwelling. Being out here, you play back-to-back weeks of tournaments, so as soon as you finish one week, you have to get on the plane to the next one. So you have to let it go as quickly as possible.

Yes, some are easier than others to get over and move on, but there's always another opportunity the next day to get better, to strive for an improvement, and that was always my mindset.

Even though as frustrated as I was maybe on a result, I was like, all right, I'm going to get better and I'm going to do better in the next tournament and learn from it.

I wouldn't say I ever really dwelled. Of course some hit harder, but I think that's a normal human trait.

Q. If you go back to you're 15, you're kind of full-time status out here, was there a player that you really admired? Not only results, but just the way they went

through everything. Who stood out to you?

LEXI THOMPSON: I'd say the player that -- I mean, she was playing when I was playing, but Nancy Lopez has always been an idol of mine. Obviously what she's done on the golf course has been amazing and something to look up to, but still to this day, how she is with fans, sponsors, doing every outing possible at a tournament, she just doesn't stop.

It just shows her love for the game, her love for the people, and the way to give back to the game. I think the world needs more people like that. I always looked up to her in just being like her and following in her footsteps.

Q. Why do you think so many little girls looked up to you the way they did?

LEXI THOMPSON: Looked up to me? Well, I'd like to think because of the way I give back to the game of golf, the fans, the sponsors. Signing all the autographs, even if I have tears in my eyes after bad days.

Like the fans are what make the game. They took time out of their life to come support us, even if we shoot 78. Hearing a little girl after a 78 saying, you did great today. I mean, that makes your heart melt every time.

It makes my day better seeing those little kids out there, and I hope that I impacted them in some type of way, and I hope to continue to do so.

Q. Speaking of that, Lexi, one of the things I remember the most about 2017 is you signing all those autographs after such a tough loss at the ANA. I wonder -- that obviously resulted in a change in the rules of golf, but how much did that pivotal moment in your career impact you and stay with you? It's been a long time now, but what did you learn from that?

LEXI THOMPSON: That was a huge moment in my career, not a great one. I look at it as I grew a fan base that I never thought I would have in that moment. It's an unfortunate circumstance, but to be there and to hear chants of my name on 17 coming down the stretch and just to be able to sign all the autographs and go through that moment, it was like -- the hardest moment of my career was like a blessing because it was just I learned so much and I gained fans that I never thought I would have.

Yeah, I'm not going to sit here and say that moment didn't hurt, still does, but it's part of a career.

Q. When did you come to view it as a blessing?

LEXI THOMPSON: It took me a little bit. It was painful for some time, but I took it as a learning experience. Of course that is not how I intended that tournament to go. I went out there, and it's not how I planned out that last day, but to see those fans and to hear them, that tournament was my favorite one on the schedule.

Like I said, the fans make my day and make the game. So just to see them out there, hear them, and sign every autograph, there's nothing like it.

THE MODERATOR: I don't think we'll see 18 appearances in this championship before a 30th birthday again. So thank you for everything you've done, Lexi.

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