

# Women's Olympic Golf Competition

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Paris, France

Le Golf National

## Leona Maguire

## Stephanie Meadow

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We welcome from Ireland, Leona Maguire and Stephanie Meadow.

Just a question to the both of you, you've been here for a few days now. How is Le Golf National been for you and are how are your preparations going on the eve of the women's competition?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, we got here Saturday morning. So it was nice to watch the guys play a few holes Saturday, a few holes Sunday. Got our first look Sunday afternoon. Played the front nine. I think the two nines are quite different.

But it's obviously a phenomenal golf course. It's going to be a great test this week. It's going to really test every part of your game and I think whoever comes away with the medals this week is going to have to have played some really great golf and exactly how it should be for an Olympic Games.

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I agree. The golf course is in great shape. Leona is right. You're going to have to do everything well this week to go low and to medal and very happy with how it's playing. It was fun to watch the guys at the end. It's been a great week so far.

THE MODERATOR: This is the third Olympic Games for the both of you. What's your experience been like over the previous two Games, and what have you learnt from playing in the Olympics before that you're going to take into this week? Is there anything different you'll do to prepare or is it similar to most weeks on the Tour?

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I think we realise how special this is to both of us. That's why we came in early, so we could watch the guys and get to a few things and settle in. We're excited about the atmosphere we saw for the guys. Japan was amazing but no fans.

I'm very excited. I'm in the first group tomorrow, so I expect the first team will be quite a lot of fun and probably a memory that will last a lifetime.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, absolutely. Each year has been very different, Rio being the first go-around. I was still an amateur in Rio so I was happy to be there trying to soak up as much as I could.

We are very fortunate to come from a country that there's a sense of camaraderie as an Irish team, and had our best Games so far as a country. It's inspiring to watch them succeed and do so well and obviously you want to be able to add to that.

And like Steph said, out watching the guys at the weekend, there's a lot of Irish jerseys and felt like we can were closer to home rather than France. It almost has that sort of Solheim Cup/Ryder Cup sort of atmosphere to it with the grandstands and the crowds. I think it's going to be very exciting, and it's one of those things where you want to do as well as you can do give the fans as much to cheer about as you can.

**Q. I feel like you're the first person to acknowledge that there feels like a difference between the nines. Can you explain that difference?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Apart from the opening two holes, not a whole lot of water on the front. I think there's some of the holes on the front nine that are more bunkers are more the issue, I would say. That's one of the things we've noticed this week. The bunkers are incredibly difficult, especially the greens that bunkers, there's no sand in them at all. They are going to be very penal. I don't know how the guys managed it. We don't spin it the way the guys do, and I think the bunkers are going to be extremely tricky.

I know they are cutting the rough down around the tee shots but it's very thick around the greens. Especially the front nine it's very much a premium on hitting fairways and hitting greens. You will have plenty of chances if you hit fairways and greens but at the same time, if you miss a fairway you're just going to be pitching out. If you miss a



green, it's a flop shot from everywhere. It's hit it as hard as you can and hope that the ball moves sometimes.

Both nines are demanding but demanding in different ways and the greens are firming up quite a bit. I played the back nine today sort of 15, 16, 17, 18, those greens are getting pretty firm. So coming into those, even 18 will be a decision downwind whether you can stop the ball on that green depending on what club you're coming in with. It might be perfectly short enough to hit in two, but it's a case of whether you can hole that green or not or feel better laying up and hitting a pitch in. There's going to be a decent amount of strategy required but obviously yeah, focus on execution at the same time.

**Q. You're playing with one of the local favourites. A lot of people in your shoes react to playing in front of a crowd positively almost all the time. But is there something about it that's less obvious; what does it do for you to be in front of the major crowd of the day?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I said it on Saturday and Sunday when I was watching the guys, it was incredible to be in this atmosphere and have those kind of chills and goosebumps. We want that. We don't want to be out there with ten people watching us and just a small clap. That's something we dream about. The guys get it more than us but we would obviously want that as well.

I joked with Leona when we played nine on Sunday there were all those people around 18, and we were like, that's probably the most people we've ever hit a golf shot but nobody was paying attention and maybe we'll have that. It's something we all want. We're here for a reason and we're good. Like you said for a lot of us it makes us play better. I'm looking forward to it. It's a special opportunity for me.

**Q. Was there a goosebump moment watching the guys?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: On Sunday hit balls and came up the hill and was able to watch from afar 15, 16, 17, 18, watching people chant for Rory (chanting Rory, Rory, Rory). That's pretty awesome. And obviously Viktor on Sunday, the French, and that's just something when a country comes together and people can unite like that, it's really special and I think if you don't get goosebumps, I wonder, but for me, that's everything.

**Q. I've been trying to do my research quickly. Curious if you had a chance as long as you've been on the LPGA to have played in any of the mixed events on the LET or down in Australia?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I played in the Australia event and Northern Ireland in the last couple years with The European Tour guys. We had Grant Thornton and I didn't play in that last year.

But I think it's such a great opportunity for us to be shown I guess with the guys and all the guys, I think they represent us as much as we respect them as far as their game and how much hard work they put in. It's a great opportunity.

**Q. Curious how the course performed. Both of you were too young to have been at Pinehurst?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I was.

**Q. That was pretty successful in terms of playing the way the course was meant. Leona brought up the lack of sand. There is sand.**

LEONA MAGUIRE: They are just incredibly firm. Like a like dusting. They are really, really cut back and like a very, very light dusting of sand on top.

**Q. What are you expecting for the week in terms of the rough, it's still pretty juicy?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: It's hard to prepare, especially this course, there's a lot of areas where you can only hit it so far so obviously the guys are hitting to the exact same point we are hitting and they had wedge in and we have 8-iron in, as much as we spin the ball or not spin the ball, it's different. They play a different game than we do, but I think our game is just as impressive.

You know, it's hard to compare directly but I think they have done a good job trying to manage that. It makes a huge difference. I think it's almost like, what they had -- now we can get it somewhat the same way.

**Q. Curious where you put the Olympics and what it feels like to compete when you compare it with a major or Solheim Cup wearing a team outfit, for lack of a better word, differences and similarities you've seen from other big events you've played?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: It's the Olympic Games. It's the biggest sporting event in the world. For me my first experience at the Solheim Cup, one of the cool things I took away from it back home in Ireland, a lot of people watched golf and a lot of people watched women's golf for the first time that would never normally watch women's sport or women's golf. And I think the same is probably true of the Olympic Games as well. I met quite a few Irish people walking around over the weekend.

Yeah, it's a special event, and you get to represent your country is a huge honour. But to get to do it at an Olympic Games is even more special. I was at home this past week in Ireland, and the buzz around the country everyone and was talking about we won medals in the pool for the first time in a long time and there's a boxing medal coming up tonight.

This is the most successful Games for Ireland ever. We just won in Olympics, and it's very cool to see Irish people succeeding on one stage. You want to be part of that. You're sitting home watching and you want to see the Irish flag go up on the podium and even better if the National Anthem gets played.

I think you saw it with Scottie on Sunday, everything he's won, he's practically won everything, and how much it meant to him. You saw if with Djokovic as well, he's done everything in tennis and it seemed to mean an awful lot to him.

It's hard to compare to a major and it's hard to compare to a Ryder Cup or Solheim Cup. I think, yeah, this week is going to be a very special week either way, and then yeah, it's get surreal that it's the Olympics already. It's gone by pretty quick. Excited to start tomorrow and hoping we can do our best.

**Q. Talking about the golf course and how it's maybe similar or different to how the men play. Particularly 18, it played as a par 4, the hardest hole for the week for the men. How is your thinking on 18 as a par 5? Is it going to be that same sort of difficult decision, or do you feel like you've got sort of more of an out that the men didn't have in terms of how to play that hole?**

STEPHANIE MEADOW: I think if you get your drive in the fairway -- well, the past few days, Sunday, it was driver, 3-wood. That hole is really firming up. I think a lot will depend on the pin position, too, if it's the front left pin or front right pin.

I don't think any of us will have enough spin on the spec so the should stop it at those pins so pretty much middle of the green every day. It will be an exciting finish to get a medal or a playoff or whatever it is. I think par 4 or par 5, it will be drama on 18 either way and ultimately you're trying to get as low as shots of possible. So you'll have a choice to make on 18 if you're in contention.

**Q. The golf course was familiar to the men last week but not so to the women. What have you made from your practise rounds? Is there a course that's similar that you play on elsewhere and what can you take from that to this week?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: I think it's a mix of a lot of different courses we play. A lot of holes look linksy. Doesn't play linksy but the dunes and the way some of the greens are shaped, they almost look linksy, and you've obviously got a lot of water. It's a bit more American style.

I think it is a real mix. So of course, like I said, it just tests all aspects of your game. You're just going to have to drive it well and have really good control over your approach shots into the green. Ultimately like any major any tournament whoever holes the right putts at the right time is going to be successful this week.

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