

JOHN Q. HAMMONS
HOTEL CLASSIC
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AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNIKA SORENSTAM

THE MODERATOR: Annika, we'll get started. Annika, thanks for coming in.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: This is a different course than you played. Last year you played Tulsa Country Club, this is the first time you saw it today during the Pro-Am. Just your thoughts on the course and how your week will shape up.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: First of all, I love the golf course. It's one of those old traditional courses. It's quick tricky.

I had a chance to play nine holes last night and then like you said 18 today.

It does kind of remind me of the Colonial a little bit, the tree lines. I feel really good here. It's a really good course, and I think it's going to shape up to be a good championship, a true test when you go out and play.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and take some questions.

Q. It is a different venue than you played the last three years at Tulsa Country Club, anything stand out after 9 last night and 18 this afternoon, other than the trees?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: The rough is big. It's quite narrow, a lot of trees. Overall it's just a really good golf course. The greens are quite big. There are a lot of different pin placement opportunities. You know it's just a really true course. I think sometimes you have to shape the ball off the tee, a little draw here, a little fade there. It doesn't seem like I'm hitting the driver as much as I thought I would on this type of golf course. But there are a lot of doglegs and bunkers. It's quite narrow. So you just got to place the ball, which I think is going to be the key here this week. It's in wonderful shape. The greens are really smooth. If you are putting well, I think you can make some putts here, too.

Q. How suitable is it the way you to hit the ball, or the way you like to shape the ball?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think it's good, I like tough courses where you have to think your way around the course. I like when you hit 4-woods or

7-woods off the tee just to place it in the right places. The greens are undulated. You have to make sure you're on the right side of the green and the pin, otherwise you have some really tough putts. You notice that today, you can get some really hard ones. I think this course really demands a lot of good shots and smart play for sure.

Q. 6-0 for one year, and the U.S. Women's Open, what kind of scoring do you expect to see this week?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think a little better than. But again it is a tough course. Everything depends on the weather. I looked at the forecast. It looks really nice, warm, really no breeze. Not really too low, I don't think, but under par for sure.

Q. Is that good, some weeks it's just a birdie fest on TOUR, whoever makes the most birdies and eagles is usually at the top, where this week you can accept par, go on to the next hole and still feel good about yourself?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Oh, definitely. There are certain holes out there where par is a good score. It seems like there is a few par-5s where you can't reach it in two. You know, it's not necessarily saying that par is going to be good on par-5s, but normally courses we play, when there is a birdie fest you can go for all of the par-5s. You can't do that here this week. You know, par-4's are lot long, but really tricky. That's the third hole today, I thought was really tricky, but not long.

Yes, par is a good score on a few holes but then again you have to take advantage of the ones you can birdie.

Q. What was your approach on No. 3? It's not a hole that you can -- the pro here says you got to play it like 2 par-3s, is that your impression?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: That it's what? Two par-3s.

Q. You got to play it like it's two par-3's fee, just put your tee shot out there and put your approach in.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yes, I never heard that expression. It's very right. I hit a 7-wood, and then have to hit over a tree. Then again I can't really hit a 4-wood, then I'm too long. I definitely, I can't hit driver. So I mean, you got to be patient here this week. That's bottom line especially on the hole like No. 3. You can't bomb it off the tee, you got to just put it there, then plug along, and then hit on the green, and then you got quite a severe green as well. That's probably one of the holes that if you make par you're happy.

Q. Do you your approach a 54-hole tournament any differently than you do a 72?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: No. But you hope to get off to a good start. I mean, mentally I don't think anything differently, but you really don't want to have a too high score in the first round, then you really have a lot to catch up, and you only have 36 holes to do it. So you want to get off to a fast start and hopefully keep playing well.

Q. What does this tournament mean to you now on your schedule? You're kind of winding down, getting pooped, getting tired?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I can't be pooped. I have had four weeks off. I'm happy to be here. I'm ready to come back and play some tournaments. I've

always liked it here. I am impressed with the new venue. So I'm excited to get going again.

Q. You were one of the people that really expressed, you really thought highly of Tulsa Country Club, with the new venue here, is there similarities, or major differences between the two?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Not really major differences, I don't think. It's still an old traditional golf course, and I always liked those type of courses. This one, I think it's much better than Tulsa Country Club. They are both great places. I think maybe the practice facilities are much better. There is just a lot more room. It seemed a little crowded at the other place. Hopefully, that means we can get more crowds because there is more room for them.

Q. Tiger Woods just finished five years No. 1 in the world, and you finished a lot of times the top player in the world, how incredible is that record that he was able to stay there for five years? Is that pretty remarkable in your mind?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Oh, definitely. I mean, what he has achieved on the golf course is incredible. Like you said, one of those things is being No. 1 that long. The guy has done a lot for golf. I enjoy watching him. I will continue to watch. I know he is going to get back No. 1 as soon as possible if I know him right.

Q. Do you like being referred to as the hall of famer now?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yes, it feels very good.

Q. When you go about mapping out your schedule each year, do you take certain times of the year where you like to take a break, or do you just take the month of August, or do you just let the season play out and try to pick your spots when you need some time off?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, I look at the schedule early in the, then I, first of all, I pick up the majors, I pick up tournaments that I like, pick up tournaments where I defend, tournaments, courses that I like to fix my game, purses plays a roll, then you add them up, and I look at them and say how much can I play of these? Normally I play two or three weeks in a row, then take a week or two off. I normally don't have four weeks off in the summer but it just turned out to be that this year. I played in Europe three weeks and needed a long break. I actually planned another week off. So I'm actually back sooner than I wanted -- not wanted -- but that I expected because I wanted to come out. There are a lot of factors to decide where to go and when to play.

Q. Have you played a tight schedule this year than you have in previous years?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yes. I mean that was my plan, I wasn't going to play as much this year. So far I'm keeping up kind of the way I planned. I'm going to focus more on quality than quantity.

Q. I was going to say, you won four times, so you have been have proficient when you have played?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you very much. I'm very happy. I played a lot overseas. I actually won two tournaments around the world, too, so that makes it six the whole season out of 14. I'm not complaining at all.

Q. Has this year been a little more normal than last year with all of the hoopla at the Colonial, all of that stuff, you try to get back normal, or can it be normal anymore after what you've experienced last year?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I don't really know what normal is, but I'm happy where I am at and where things are going.

THE MODERATOR: Everybody all set? Thank you.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.

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