

Longs Drug Challenge
The Ridge Golf Course
Auburn, California
October 5, 2005

Pre-round Interviews

Interview of Annika Sorenstam

THE MODERATOR: Annika, thanks for coming in. The last time you played here it was 2001. Since then you have won 36 tournaments, and nearly \$11 million. So you have accomplished a lot since you have been here. Can you talk about being back here for the first time in a couple of years.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: wow. Yes, a lot of things have happened since then, I guess. No. I mean, I'm happy to be back. And, you know, I've not played this golf course before, obviously. And this is kind of close to my home in Tahoe, so it's about time I came back. I am happy to be here, and I look forward to playing this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Go ahead and take some questions. One of the reasons is because I live close to here, but another reason is this year this tournament fell in the schedule. Everything is about schedule for me. It's all about pacing myself, and playing the right amount of events, playing the right events at the end of the year, and so forth. This year is perfect. That's why I'm here. A lot of times it's tough to decide which tournament to play because there is so many to choose from, and it's tough to get them in sometimes.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, it hasn't really changed. I mean I play this game for myself and I motivate myself and I have my own goals and I think I know my limits. I know what I want to achieve and so forth. So that really hasn't changed. There are a lot of young players coming up, and they are very good, and have I seen young players coming up the last three years, and they are very good already. I love the competition, and I love what I do, but I also love being in the spot that I'm in so that keeps me motivated.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: It's good. Yeah. I mean to be honest I really didn't know what to expect. I played 9 holes yesterday and I thought it was a good course. Tricky certain holes. The greens with a lot of different pin possibilities. There was a wind yesterday and today there was no wind. I'm sure we can get a lot of different conditions it was a little cold this morning, and warm in the afternoon. So I'm looking forward to it.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Um, I'm not going to play in any official PGA events. I think I made it clear a few years ago after the Colonial. But I'm going to play in the men's game again this year which to me it's a big deal. And I'm excited about that.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well it's very flattering there's no doubt about it. I remember when I was a rookie or, you know, my second year on tour I looked up to the players on top. And I said, no, that's where I want to be. And I analyzed them and I figured what are they good at, and what do I need to get good at. For me it's flattering to hear that. I work really hard to get where I am. And I have put a lot of thought into my practice and the scheduling part, and this is my job. And I try to be the best I can. When you hear people that look up to you it means a lot.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well I mean it's, you know, the game is growing. Women's golf is growing. I think a lot of hard work at the college level is bringing great players out here on tour. It's growing internationally. You see so many players from so many different countries and, you know, right now it's cool to play golf. And I think that is a good thing. It's just really healthy. The game has never been as popular, and kids want to play, and here they come.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well, to win all the four majors in one year is my goal. You know, will I be able to live without doing that? I think so. I hope so. But that is something that I think that I can do. This year I didn't achieve it, but I did win the first two majors, which is the first time I have done that. So I believe that pushing myself and setting really high goals, I believe I can take my game to the next level. When it comes to Kathy Wentworth's record I have said that from the beginning. You know, I came out here and I didn't know if I could win a single golf tournament, and here I am 63 later. Obviously my goals have changed, you know, the last few years, but I still look at 88 and I still question if that is something I can do. I can do it if I continue to play on this level for a few more years. But it's very hard to stay on top. And especially with the competition nowadays, it takes a lot of hard work. And it's not like I haven't done that, but I've done it for so long, but knock on wood, I'm lucky I haven't had an injury. But it's tough to say on this level for so long, and therefore, we'll see. If I get to 87 I'm sure I will give it a shot. But then I'm going to focus on the majors, I want to win them, and I would like to win four in a row.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: I think it's an exciting time. Michelle has taken the step to become a professional golfer. I wish her all the best. She is talented I think she will be a great asset to the tour. And I look forward to seeing her out here and playing with us.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Tougher to do what?

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Oh, to win. Well the competition is tougher, there's no doubt. Every year it's tougher. The game is getting better and, you know, I have to take my game to the next level to stay where I'm at. There's no doubt about it.

Q (Inaudible)?

Player: I started to get to know them and they are great people and we have a lot of fun together. And I practice with Tiger a little bit in the winter and a few times in the summer, and for me it's obviously great to learn from the greatest. And it's a friendship that we have. It's really nothing more than, that other than I support him, and he tries to cheer me on. And, you know, he roots for me and it's kind of fun.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: well, I just heard that today that we might be moving. And, you know, I'm not so informed about anything. But I played with the head man from London Drugs and we had a good time. And hopefully the relationship will continue. And I know nothing about what's called Blackhawk. I know nothing about it. I would like to see this event to continue. Everyone strives to let the tournament grow and get better, and more recognition. And maybe this is a step to get there.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Yes, I am.

Q (Inaudible)? Of course it crossed my mind. It's hard work to, you know, to get to the top, but I also think it might be even tougher to stay up there. Sometimes I look at myself and say, I have achieved so much more than I ever thought I could. I'm quite satisfied at times, but then there's a little part of me that says, you know what, I still think I can get better, I still think I can do this or that. That's what keeps me going. I'm all or nothing. I think when the day comes where I feel like, you know, I can't be out there, I don't want to do this, I will definitely put my clubs to the side and do something else.

THE MODERATOR: Do we have anymore questions?

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well I think the biggest pressure comes from myself really. I mean I have very high expectations. You know, I have always felt like when I come to a tournament I should be ready to play and that's one of the reasons that I don't play as many events because I want to be ready when I come. What I mean by "ready" is I my game to be top-notch and I want to a chance to win. That's what I strive for every week. The pressure is from within, and when people talk about me as a favorite, that is a nice thing. So it's positive.

Q (Inaudible)?

PLAYER: I would say so, yes. If I was golf fan I think that would be great. I mean this is great area. A lot of people and a lot of great golf courses, and the weather is perfect. I think it's a great weekend for golf in any way.

Q (Inaudible)?

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Well I mean so far I think she is doing pretty good on her own. I think the key though is -- I mean, it needs to be fun. You know, it's very important to have a passion for the game and play golf for the right reasons. You know, there's no hurry to get up here. I love being here, and I love what I do. I have been here my 11th year on the LPGA, I have been a professional for 12, and I'm only 34. I definitely don't see a need to rush to do a lot of things. I think time and playing a lot of tournaments gives you experience, and experience is what you need. She has the talent there's no doubt about it. I hope she comes out and enjoys the opportunity to play out here with the best women golfers in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Are you guys all set wise. Thank you, Annika.

ANNIKA SORENSTAM: Thank you.