

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Suzann Pettersen

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll wrap things up today with Suzann Petersen, the 2009 CP Women's Open champion, so celebrating the ten-year anniversary of your win. This is her 12th CP Women's Open, and your first since 2016 for very good reason.

Welcome back, Suzann.

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Good to have you back. First time playing on this side of the pond by yourself since coming back from your maternity leave.

How are you feeling as you come back to Canada?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Well, obviously Canada has always been very kind to me in my golf game and I've had some great success. When I was thinking of how I can possibly prepare the best I can for September, playing here was very obvious choice, so I'm happy to be here. I arrived a little bit later than I normally did in my heyday. Routines have changed.

Saw the course this morning. Another great track. Fantastic surroundings. Can't wait to tee it up tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned September. Big week for you. Just announced that you would be part of Team Europe from the Solheim Cup. Certainly playing with Beany at Dow and getting yourself back into the game, have you caught the golf bug again? Is it getting back to you?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Well, I caught it long time ago when I started preparing for the Dow team event. But, you know, things evolved a little different over the summer and my game kind of came back to me a little bit.

I kept playing and I was encouraged to keep practicing and playing and hopefully get a pick. I'm very happy to be part of a playing team and not only as vice captain to Beany.

Fantastic to play another Solheim. Gleneagles is going



to be a fantastic venue. I think we have an awesome team. Young, great spirit, feisty. It's going to be a lot of fun. It already is a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: This is your third event back since maternity leave, the Dow event, and then played at the Scottish, this week, and in Portland next week. What is the state of your game as you get back and get used to the routine of it all?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: Well, I'm kind of creating new routines. I'm not trying to pick up where I left it because priorities are different; my time is a little different.

But these two weeks I left everyone at home so I can kind of get the preparation and the hard work done for what's coming in three or four weeks. I thought that was my best option.

I would just love to go out and compete, get sharp. For each shot that I hit, each round that I play, I feel like the game is getting better and better. So, no, I feel great. Obviously great to be back, see all the other players. Some players I haven't seen for almost two years.

Yeah, feel like I'm the only one who has actually aged.

THE MODERATOR: How does Magna set up for you this week?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I mean, it's fantastic. Lovely wide fairways. Tough greens. Challenging greens. A lot of undulations. Got to have the speed and kind of read the greens good.

But like I said, it's always fun to come to the CM because we play fantastic tracks and you know they're in absolute perfect condition, so no excuse.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open up to questions.

Q. Curious, is there anything unique or distinct about Canadian crowds when you play here?

SUZANN PETTERSEN: I just think the Canadian crowds are sports fanatics in general. If hockey is not on I think golf is at least high on the list of high interest among the locals, the public.

I don't think I've been to any tournaments in Canada

where the crowd had been absolutely fantastic. I have no doubt it's going to be exactly the same this week. This week we're a little bit closer to like a bigger hub, so I don't know if that appeals more. From what I've heard, this is golfing mecca with golf courses and a lot of golf interests.

It'll be fun to see.

Q. Let's not forget you won the 2016 ManuLife, so two wins in Canada. Welcome back. About the course, you've only played nine holes so far. Most of the courses on the LPGA Tour seem to be 64 to 6600 yards. I'm not sure. This one is a little bit over, 6700. Is that going to make a difference, do you think?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I don't really think so. From the nine that I played this morning, I played the back nine, the fairways are fairly generous. Usually hitting driver off every hole, so leaving yourself with a scoring iron.

You'll see birdies out here. The par-5s are somehow reachable. Some tricky greens, but you can't but expect low scores around this place. It's in immaculate shape.

Q. Second question is: You're a mother now obviously and back on tour now. What's been the biggest change that you've had to make to your preparation that you didn't have to make before?

SUZANN PETERSEN: First of all, becoming a mom has been absolutely the greatest gift. Leaving everyone behind was tough. First time away for -- well, first time I'm literally away for more than just a day or two.

It's probably a lot tougher on me than anyone else. I'm probably much better off not knowing what doesn't work at home instead of knowing everything, how everything goes.

But you know what? When I started kind of picking up the game again after quite a long break it was a big hurdle to get over, a lot of frustration. Obviously everyone who plays this game knows that it's not just like biking when you kind of pick it back up. It takes a while and you have to be patient.

At the at the same time, I feel like I've created some new routines. I just in general don't have the time that I used to have on my hand, so efficiencies on my time has gone up for sure. I can get a lot more done and I feel almost better quality than just wasting six hours standing on the practice range just wasting the time.

So just really enjoying it. I had a lot of time to think about the game. If you talk to some of my coaches I probably come back and things -- parts of the game

might actually look the best it's ever been. All of a sudden I've had time to read all my notes, understand it, think about it, and kind of digest it.

So I am just really excited to be out playing. The fun of playing this game has definitely come back to me. At times I probably been one of the toughest there is out here, especially on myself and to my own expectations.

I wouldn't say I have no expectations, but I'm a lot more laid back. I still know what my game should be like and how I want to play. Obviously the good stuff is great. There is still some rust in there. Like I said, the more I play, the better the overall game gets.

I feel very confident that by the time Solheim is around I'll be in top form.

Q. Will that laid back feeling be there when the Solheim Cup ramps up? That is usually a pretty fiery event.

SUZANN PETERSEN: Sorry, I didn't...

Q. Will you be that laid back once the Solheim gets here. That's usually pretty fiery?

SUZANN PETERSEN: It's just the energy that the Solheim creates that kind of brings out the competitor in you. I mean, obviously Solheim is a lot more than just golf. That's the most important thing that I've learned from Solheim Cups. The best memories I have from a golf course is definitely from Solheim Cups.

What you kind of achieve together as a team, the job that's kind of put down and the effort and all the memories that are made, you'll never forget them. Each and every one has a different story and a little bit different background.

I can't guarantee I will be as laid back, but I'm sure my teammates, because they're so young, will keep me grounded and make sure I don't kind of come out flying.

Q. Having said that, with the youth involved, do you see your role changing now into more of a leadership role as much as a player role?

SUZANN PETERSEN: Well, now I'm probably more of a motherhood role, to be honest. You know what? In our team there is a great dynamic. We have rookies, youngsters; we have -- I don't know if you want to call me a veteran, but a lot of players have played a lot more than just two and three. A lot of experience.

I just think the combination of all of us has already created a great energy among the team. We've already spent some days together and had fun, kind of loosened that -- I think everyone feels quite

comfortable around each other, and that's quite important.

For me it's getting to know some of the youngsters because I've been away for literally almost two years. I've enjoyed getting to know a lot of these young girls more than just seeing their name on the paper.

So I literally can't wait. I wasn't sure if this was going to happen again, so I'm very excited. I'm happy that I actually got a pick.

THE MODERATOR: Anything further for Suzann?

Q. You mentioned during your time off you thought a lot more about your game. Curious, what were you sort of thinking about? What were you focusing on?

SUZANN PETERSEN: Well, my absence from the tour became a little bit longer than first planned. In the beginning of my maternity leave, during the pregnancy, last bit of the pregnancy, to be honest I was sick of golf. When I realized I wasn't going to be able to play, be able to travel, the best thing for me was to actually just shut off the switch, which I've never done. First time in 20 years.

I turned it off and I didn't think about golf, didn't watch golf. I hardly paid attention to what was going on, who won, who was doing well.

And that's different to if you're injured and you can't play. If you're injured and you're sitting on the sideline doing rehab your mind is constantly grinding. At least mine is or has been. You think about golf. You think about your swing. You don't ever give yourself a break.

This is literally the first really big break that I've ever had in 20 years as a professional, so that was nice. But then once I knew that, okay, there is -- there are a few dates that I knew was on the calendar in 2019 that I had to be ready for. Once I kind of turned that switch back on it was almost like refreshed.

It almost refreshed my memories, refreshed kind of the, I don't know, the hard drive of 20 years of golf. People were like, Well, you won't have any problems picking it back up. It's so easy for you. It was as tough as it's ever been, and at times the frustration came back, and I must say that I did not miss.

But it's like anything in life. Once you got over the hurdle and things started flowing again, kind of respond to things that your coaches are telling you and your body feels like familiar again, it was a lot of fun. I just realize that I probably have a lot more knowledge than I kind of give myself credit for. That has probably also made it a little bit easier coming back.

To be honest, I've worked a lot by myself, trusted what I know, going through all the notes of all these years. It's been a fun process, but different.

Q. When you say that you turned the switch off, how long did you leave it off?

SUZANN PETERSEN: This is actually the first time I realized what a life this is and what a bubble being a professional athlete is. Once you're in it you don't think about it, but I stepped away long enough and I was far enough away that I could look at everything from the outside looking back in. That almost made me think I've been a weirdo for 19 years.

I was totally away from the game for about ten months, completely away from the game. Then I slowly picked it back up. I want to say I was at least absent from the game for good, solid 12 months, yeah.

Q. Was it harder physically or mentally when you started to practice again?

SUZANN PETERSEN: I think it's a combination. Physically you feel like you know -- you think you know what you're doing, but the body is not quite responding. That brings in the mental part. That's when the frustration comes in.

But once kind of both parts synced up a little bit I think it's -- you just got to give yourself time. Give yourself time enough to come back and feel like you can play the game again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. Welcome back. Good to have you.

SUZANN PETERSEN: Thanks.