

THE SOLHEIM CUP: THE PINNACLE OF WOMEN'S GOLF

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Inaugurated in 1990, the Solheim Cup is the foremost team event in women's golf, showcasing the finest talent from both sides of the Atlantic. In the biennial tournament, Team Europe and Team USA face off in a thrilling competition that follows the same format as The Ryder Cup in the men's game, comprising a series of foursomes, four-balls and singles matches. This year's edition will take place at the stunning Finca Cortesín resort in Andalucía, Spain from 22–24 September, marking the first time it has been held in Spain.

Some of the world's best golfers take part in the intercontinental event, with 12-player combinations contesting 28 matches over three days of intense, absorbing action to determine the winning team. As part of its commitment to the game of golf that goes back almost 60 years, Rolex first partnered with the Solheim Cup in 1994, as a Global Partner and Official Timekeeper. The competition's core qualities of teamwork, tradition and respect naturally align with the Swiss watchmaker's own defining philosophy.

One distinguishing factor at the Solheim Cup is the passion displayed in the matches; a fierce but respectful battle between the world's elite golfers where they put aside their pursuit of individual



ROLEX TESTIMONEE ANNA NORDQVIST DRIVING FROM THE 1ST TEE AT THE 2021 SOLHEIM CUP



ROLEX TESTIMONEE SUZANN PETERSEN PLAYS A SHOT DURING THE 2011 SOLHEIM CUP AT KILLEEN CASTLE, IRELAND

glory in the hope of securing victory for their team. It is this spirit that makes the team competition one of the highlights of the golf calendar and the women's game.

Rolex Testimonee and two-time Major champion Suzann Pettersen has been named Europe's captain for the 2023 Solheim Cup. The Norwegian is synonymous with the competition, having represented Europe nine times as a player (2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2019) and twice as a vice-captain (2017, 2021). She will be seeking to lead Europe to a successful defence of the title on home soil.



ROLEX TESTIMONEE STACY LEWIS OF TEAM USA PLAYS A SHOT DURING THE 2017 SOLHEIM CUP IN IOWA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Speaking ahead of this year's edition, Suzann Pettersen said: "There is still a lot of golf to be played before the final team selection is announced but things are looking very strong for Team Europe. It is great to see a huge amount of Europeans competing and winning. There are going to be some great Solheim Cup rookies on the team. I am in awe of them as they are extremely feisty and fearless."

Captaining the United States is fellow Rolex Testimonee Stacy Lewis, who, at 38 years of age, will become the youngest ever American captain in Solheim Cup history and the second-youngest captain for either side. She has represented the US as a player on four occasions (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017). The United States have won the Solheim Cup 10 times, compared with seven for Europe. Both Pettersen and Lewis will also be captains for the 2024 edition of this team competition.*

Commenting on the challenge of playing away from home, Stacy Lewis said: "It will undoubtedly be a tough task but I know that every player on our team will be extremely motivated to reclaim the Solheim Cup. With this in mind, a large part of our preparation will be to ensure that we are as prepared as possible for competing overseas with the number of fans supporting Team Europe. I am extremely excited and really looking forward to attending the event. I love traveling abroad for the Solheim Cup as it is always a great bonding experience."

One of the most coveted prizes in women's golf, the Solheim Cup has been the stage for some of the most memorable moments in the history of the game. At the 2019 Solheim Cup at Gleneagles, Pettersen was chosen as a captain's pick following an 18-month maternity leave. The match came down to a seven-foot birdie putt on the final hole on Sunday, and under such

extreme pressure, she famously holed it to clinch Europe's first victory since 2013.

Another member of the Rolex family of golf Testimonees with a long-standing Solheim Cup association is 10-time Major winner Annika Sörenstam. Widely regarded as one of the best woman golfers in history, the Swede is a Solheim Cup icon, having represented Europe on eight occasions (1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007) and been a three-time vice-captain, as well as a non-playing captain in 2017.

Reflecting on her experiences at the Solheim Cup, Annika Sörenstam said: "The Solheim Cup is the pinnacle of team competitions in women's golf where you are provided with the unique opportunity to take part in the team event as an individual athlete. I love the match play and team format that comes with the Solheim Cup. There is so much pride in being able to represent your country and in this case, the continent of Europe. Growing up and watching The Ryder Cup and the first few editions of the Solheim Cup, I always aspired to play in one and it was such a dream come true to be part of the team in 1994 – my first Solheim Cup."

Fellow Testimonee Anna Nordqvist has been named as one of Europe's playing vice-captain for the 2023 Solheim Cup. The Swede has played in the past seven editions from 2009 to 2021, featuring on the winning team four times (2011, 2013, 2019, 2021). Lexi Thompson will also be participating for Team USA. The American has played in five editions of the Solheim Cup (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021) and has been part of the winning team on two occasions in 2015 and 2017. On her 2013 debut aged 18, Thompson became the USA's youngest ever player.

The team that reigns supreme at each edition gets to keep hold of the Solheim Cup trophy until the next tournament. The impressive trophy is a glass-cut crystal cup with a storied history. It was made by the prestigious Irish firm Waterford Crystal, founded in 1783 by the Penrose brothers. Weighing just over nine kilos, the cup is almost half a metre high and after being commissioned by the Solheim Cup organizers, Waterford Crystal entrusted the creation of the trophy to Billy Briggs, one of its top designers, in 1990 – the year of the inaugural tournament. Engraved on the central area of the trophy is a silhouette of the cup itself and the Solheim Cup name, which is named after the Norwegian-American golf club manufacturer Karsten Solheim, a driving force behind the tournament's creation.

For more than 40 years, Rolex has been a committed partner of women's golf and developed one of the most successful relationships between a brand and sport. This enduring partnership contributes to the development of the women's game around the world. The Swiss watchmaker is part of the very fabric of golf and supports the game at all levels, including elite players and legends of the game, the biggest events – including all five women's Majors – the foremost professional tours and the world's leading team competitions, including the Solheim Cup. By staging the 18th edition of the Solheim Cup, Spain becomes the sixth European nation to host the famous event, joining Scotland, Wales, Sweden, Ireland and Germany.

Rolex's support for the game is built on a strong sense of integrity and respect for tradition that

promotes the continuity of expertise and transfer of knowledge, and an appreciation of the importance to invest in the sport's development for future generations. The brand's support also extends to amateur tournaments, international federations and organizations representing golfers of all ages.

*The Solheim Cup Committee decided in 2020 to change the scheduling of the event to even years, starting from 2024, following the announcement that The Ryder Cup would move to an odd-year schedule after the 2020 competition was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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