

Early morning alarm calls are part of the parcel when you are a professional golfer. After years of automatically reaching for the snooze button (especially for these 0 dark thirty times!) it was refreshing to jump out of bed to stop the 5:50 alarm this morning with a lot of enthusiasm. After all, I am here in Denver with the European Solheim Cup team as one of Captain Neuman's official helpers. If I can't be excited about this week of golf, I never will be.

I arrived late last night after my flight from the West coast of the States was delayed due to inclement weather in the Denver area. Fortunately, the courtesy car vehicle was still waiting for me to drive me back to the team hotel. All I wanted to do was crash out in bed but after I tried on the uniform to make sure it fit, I probably got a good five hours sleep. One of the nice perks for helping out the team is the kit provided by Abacus and Ecco - which I can tell you is really cool!

My role this week is to help Captain Neuman and her assistants (Annika Sorenstam and Karin Koch) to manage the team as best as possible so all the team has to worry about is playing great golf. The other official helpers this week are a group of golden oldies, well at least oldies, in the shape of Pam Wright, Marta Figures Dottie, Ann Marie Palli, Helen Dobson, Mardy Lunn and Evelyn Orley.

We have many roles to play this week but our main job today was to take stats on how the girls were playing. Later on today, in between photo shoots and press conferences, Lotta, Annika and Karin will look at these stats and discuss likely pairings for the foursome's and fourball matches.

Another job I had today was to drive Annika in her cart so she could jump around the three groups who played to see for herself how the team were performing. Most of the girls did not play the full eighteen holes, but I can share with you, there were some internal matches going on. I just cannot tell you who was playing with whom! After all, I cannot give away any team tactics!

Colorado Golf Club is an impressive venue. With a wee bit of an imagination it does resemble a links style course, which will be tough but favorable for us if the wind blows. The verdict from the players is

the greens will be very challenging as they are very undulating and if the speed increases any more between now and Friday, watch out for some interesting putts and not many “gimme’s”! I am sure Captain Lotta will be instructing her team to keep the ball below the hole or even to leave an up hill chip rather than a down hill putt. This was a ploy Seve embraced when he won one of his Masters and if it worked for him I know it can work for team Europe.

Right now as I write from the team locker room it’s fun to watch the build up of the event with the broadcast of the “Golf Channel” interviews, an Orlando based TV company, airing on our team TV. I know in the past the locker room has had a closed feed from Sky TV and hopefully, that will be set up soon so we are hearing the news and views of the European golf pundits and not only the US one’s. In all fairness, the Golf Channel seems fairly neutral – at the moment anyway! They did just show the dramatic come back Europe staged in Ireland in 2011 and boy did that get our team going. Great stuff and let’s hope for the same drama come this Sunday.

Judging from the healthy amount of spectators watching today’s practice round I feel the home crowd advantage will help the Americans. However, I think they are going to need it. Yes, we will need a dose of good luck and fortune to go our way if we are to beat the US on home territory but here’s my theory. Triskaidekaphobia is commonly known as the fear of 13. This year’s match will be the 13th encounter of the Solheim Cup matches, played in the year 2013 and during the week of Aug 13, so perhaps this is the year Europe’s fortunes will change in the US. After all, in some countries the number 13 can be lucky-- especially in Europe.

It’s official photo time for both teams now. This exercise can be both tedious and time consuming but worth it when the framed and signed finished product is delivered to our doors later in the year! After that it’s back to the hotel for a team dinner in the team room, then early to bed to rest up to do it all again tomorrow. Friday can’t come soon enough!