

= Annika Sörenstam =

Annika Sörenstam ( pronounced [ ?an.ni?.ka ?sø?.r?n.?stam ] ; listen ; born 9 October 1970 ) is a retired Swedish professional golfer , one of the most successful female golfers in history . Before stepping away from competitive golf at the end of the 2008 season , she had won 90 international tournaments as a professional , making her the female golfer with the most wins to her name . She has won 72 official LPGA tournaments including ten majors and 18 other tournaments internationally , and she tops the LPGA 's career money list with earnings of over \$ 22 million ? over \$ 3 million ahead of her nearest rival . Since 2006 , Sörenstam has held dual American and Swedish citizenship .

The winner of a record eight Player of the Year awards , and six Vare Trophies given to the LPGA player with the lowest seasonal scoring average , she is the only female golfer to shoot a 59 in competition . She holds various all @-@ time scoring records including the lowest season scoring average : 68 @.@ 6969 in 2004 .

Representing Europe in the Solheim Cup on eight occasions between 1994 and 2007 , Sörenstam was the event 's all @-@ time leading points earner until her record was surpassed by England 's Laura Davies during the 2011 Solheim Cup .

In 2003 , Sörenstam made history at the Bank of America Colonial tournament as the first woman to play in a PGA Tour event since 1945 .

= = Childhood and amateur career = =

Born in Bro near Stockholm , Sweden , Sörenstam 's father Tom is a retired IBM executive and her mother Gunilla worked in a bank . Her younger sister Charlotta is a professional golfer who coaches at her sister 's academy . Annika and Charlotta Sörenstam are the only two sisters to have both won \$ 1 million on the LPGA .

As a child , Sörenstam was a talented all @-@ round sportsgirl . She was a nationally @-@ ranked junior tennis player , played football ( soccer ) in her hometown team Bro IK , and was such a good skier that the coach of the Swedish national ski team suggested the family move to northern Sweden to improve her skiing year round .

= = = Junior golf = = =

At the age of 12 , she switched to golf , sharing her first set of golf clubs with her sister ? Annika got the odd numbered clubs and Charlotta the even ? and earned her first handicap of 54 . She was so shy as a junior she used to deliberately three @-@ putt at the end of a tournament to avoid giving the victory speech . The coaches noticed and at the next tournament both the winner and the runner @-@ up had to give a speech . Sörenstam decided that if she were going to have to face the crowd anyway she might as well win and the deliberate misses stopped .

= = = Swedish national team = = =

Her successful amateur career included a win in the St. Rule Trophy played at St. Andrews and a runner @-@ up finish in the Swedish national mother / daughter golf tournament . As a member of the Swedish National Team from 1987 to 1992 , she played in the 1990 and 1992 Espirito Santo Trophy World Amateur Golf Team Championships , becoming World Amateur champion in 1992 . While waiting to start college in Sweden , Sörenstam worked as a personal assistant at the Swedish PGA and played on the Swedish Ladies Telia Tour , winning three tournaments during 1990 / 1991 .

= = = University of Arizona = = =

After a coach spotted Sörenstam playing in a collegiate event in Tokyo , she moved to the U.S. to

play college golf at the University of Arizona in Tucson . She won seven collegiate titles and in 1991 , became the first non @-@ American and first freshman to win the individual NCAA Division I Championship . Sörenstam was 1991 NCAA Co @-@ Player of the Year with Kelly Robbins , runner @-@ up in the 1992 NCAA championship , 1992 Pac @-@ 10 champion and a 1991 ? 92 NCAA All @-@ American . She qualified for the U.S. Women 's Open at Oakmont in July , made the cut , and tied for 63rd . A few weeks later at the U.S. Women 's Amateur at Kemper Lakes near Chicago , she was the runner @-@ up to Vicki Goetze , bogeying the last hole in the 36 @-@ hole final .

= = Professional career = =

= = = 1990s = = =

Sörenstam turned professional in 1992 , but missed her LPGA Tour card at the final qualifying tournament by one shot , and began her professional career on the Ladies European Tour ( LET ) , formerly known as the WPGA . She was invited to play in three LPGA Tour events in 1993 , where she finished T38th , 4th , and T9th , earning more than \$ 47 @,@ 000 . She finished second four times on the Ladies European Tour and was 1993 Ladies European Tour Rookie of the Year . By tying for 28th at the LPGA Final Qualifying Tournament she earned non @-@ exempt status for the 1994 season . Sörenstam 's first professional win came at the 1994 Holden Women 's Australian Open on the ALPG Tour .

In the United States , Sörenstam was LPGA Rookie of the Year , had three top @-@ 10 finishes including a tie for second at the Women 's British Open and made her Solheim Cup debut . Her breakout year was 1995 , when she won her first LPGA Tour title at the U.S. Women 's Open . She finished at the top of the Money List and was the first non @-@ American winner of the Vare Trophy . She became the second player ever to be Player of the Year and Vare Trophy winner the year after being Rookie of the Year . A win at the 1995 Australian Ladies Masters and two other wins on the Ladies European Tour put her top of the LET Order of Merit and made her the first player to top both the European and LPGA Tour money lists in the same season . Her success worldwide resulted in her winning the Jerringpriset award in Sweden , the country 's most prestigious award in sports as well as being awarded the Svenska Dagbladet Gold Medal .

1996 saw Sörenstam win her home LET tournament , the Trygg Hansa Ladies ' Open in Sweden and three LPGA tournaments including the U.S. Women 's Open . In defending her title , she became the first non @-@ American to win back to back U.S. Women 's Open titles , passed the \$ 1 million mark in LPGA career earnings , and won her second consecutive Vare Trophy .

She won six tour events in 1997 , regaining the money list and player of the year titles . Internationally , she won on the JPGA and defended her home LET title at the renamed Compaq Open . She became the first player in LPGA history to finish a season with a sub @-@ 70 scoring average of 69 @.@ 99 en route to retaining the 1998 Player of the Year and Money List titles as well as winning the LET Swedish tour stop for the third time running . September 1999 saw Sörenstam change her on @-@ course team replacing her caddie of six years , Colin Cann , with Terry McNamara .

= = = 2000s = = =

At this point in her career , Sörenstam says she lost focus having reached her biggest goals . Karrie Webb became the best LPGA Tour player but Sörenstam still managed to win more LPGA tournaments than any other LPGA Tour player during the 1990s . She qualified for the World Golf Hall of Fame when she won the 2000 Welch 's / Circle K Championship , but was not eligible for induction until finishing her tenth year on the LPGA tour in October 2003 . Sörenstam was the first international player to be inducted into the Hall of Fame through the LPGA criteria .

Having lost her preeminent position , Sörenstam embarked on a new five @-@ day @-@ a @-@ week exercise program including weight @-@ lifting and balance work which by 2003 added over

20 yards ( 18 m ) to her driving distance . During the 2001 season , she had eight LPGA wins , became the only female golfer to shoot a 59 in competition and the first LPGA player to cross the \$ 2 million mark in single @-@ season earnings . She set or tied a total of 30 LPGA records en route to regaining the Vare Trophy and winning her fourth Player of the Year and Money List titles in 2001 . In a made @-@ for @-@ TV alternate shot competition between the two best male and female players in the world , Sörenstam and Tiger Woods beat Karrie Webb and David Duval .

At the end of that season Karrie Webb said she " would eat her hat " if Sörenstam repeated her eight wins in 2002 . Sörenstam accomplished that feat , joining Mickey Wright as the only players to win 11 LPGA tournaments in one season , earning her fifth Player of the Year title and fifth Vare Trophy . She successfully defended the Kraft Nabisco Championship , her fourth major victory , and also won the ANZ Ladies Masters in Australia and Compaq Open in Sweden on the Ladies European Tour giving her 13 wins in 25 starts worldwide in 2002 .

Amid notable controversy , Sörenstam was invited to play in the PGA Tour 's Bank of America Colonial golf tournament in Fort Worth , Texas , in May 2003 , making her the first woman to play in a PGA Tour event since Babe Zaharias , who qualified for the 1945 Los Angeles Open . Vijay Singh , fourth in the world rankings at the time , was particularly critical of her presence ; he was quoted saying she had no business playing and he hoped she missed the cut , although this statement was later proven to be misquoted and he later apologized . Cheered through each hole , she shot five over par , tying for 96th out of the 111 who finished the first two rounds , missing the cut . After shooting 1 @-@ over @-@ par 71 in the first round , finishing in 73rd and on pace to challenge for a weekend spot , Sörenstam said she was nervous all day but pleased by her performance . Through the first round she led the field in driving accuracy , was in the top 20 in greens in regulation , and was 84th out of 111 in driving distance . Unfortunately , poor putting ( last in the field , averaging over a two @-@ putt ) cost her a spot on the first page of the first round leaderboard and ultimately caused her to miss the cut .

Later in the 2003 season , she won the LPGA Championship and the Women 's British Open , becoming only the sixth player to complete the LPGA Career Grand Slam . She had five other victories worldwide , set or tied a total of 22 LPGA records and earned her sixth Player of the Year award . She competed against Fred Couples , Phil Mickelson and Mark O 'Meara in the 2003 Skins Game , finishing second with five skins worth \$ 225 @,@ 000 ; Sörenstam holed a 39 @-@ yard ( 36 m ) bunker shot on the ninth hole ? the eighth eagle in Skins Game history . In September , she was part of the winning European Solheim Cup team in her native Sweden . She was awarded her second Jerringpriset award in Sweden plus the 2003 Golf Writers ' Trophy by the Association of Golf Writers .

Sörenstam 's dominance continued in 2004 with her seventh LPGA Player of the Year award tying Kathy Whitworth for the most in LPGA history . She posted 16 top @-@ 10 finishes in 18 LPGA starts , including eight wins , had two additional international wins , became the first player to reach \$ 15 million in LPGA career earnings and took her own LPGA single @-@ season scoring average record to 68 @.@ 69696 , but played too few rounds to win the Vare Trophy . The Women 's Sports Foundation gave her the 2004 Sportswoman of the Year Award , and the Laureus World Sports Academy named her World Sportswoman of the Year . She also released a combination autobiography and golf instructional book , Golf Annika 's Way .

Sörenstam 's life both on and off the golf course changed in 2005 . In February , she announced that she had filed for divorce from David Esch , her husband of eight years , and this was finalised in August but it did not adversely affect her golf . Her achievements included being the first player in LPGA history to win a major three consecutive years at the LPGA Championship and the first golfer in LPGA or PGA history to win the same event five consecutive years at the Mizuno Classic . 11 wins in 21 tournaments entered worldwide included victory in the Scandinavian TPC hosted by Annika where she presented herself the trophy , giving her an eighth Money List title , tying the LPGA record , an eighth Rolex Player of the Year ( POY ) award ( a record ) and a sixth Vare Trophy . She is the only LPGA player ever to win Money List , POY award and Vare trophy in the same year in five different years . Team competition saw her make her seventh consecutive Solheim Cup appearance , her 4 points making her total 21 , the event 's all @-@ time leading points earner ,

and the inaugural Lexus Cup was played with Sörenstam as the Captain of the victorious International Team .

These events resulted in her receiving numerous awards . The Golf Writers Association of America named Sörenstam Female Player of the Year for the eighth time ( 1995 @, @ 1997 , 2000 ? 2005 ) , Associated Press voted her Female Athlete of the Year for the third consecutive year and she became the first woman to win the Golf Writers ' Trophy twice in the 55 @-@ year history of European golf 's most prestigious award . Having previously won six Best Female Golfer ESPY Awards ( 1996 , 1998 ? 99 , 2002 ? 04 ) , Sörenstam also received the 2005 ESPY Award as Best Female Athlete

When the first @-@ ever official Women 's World Golf Rankings were unveiled in February 2006 , Sörenstam was confirmed as the number @-@ one player in women 's golf , a position she relinquished to Lorena Ochoa on 22 April 2007 . In partnership with Liselotte Neumann in team Sweden , she won the Women 's World Cup of Golf , opened her LPGA season with a defence of her title in the MasterCard Classic . She then went winless in eight starts , causing some to talk of a slump . Her winning drought ended at the U.S. Women 's Open , where she won an 18 @-@ hole playoff over Pat Hurst for her tenth major championship title , tying her for third on the list of players with most major championship titles . She totalled 3 wins on the LPGA and two on the Ladies European Tour , the inaugural Dubai Ladies Masters and the Swedish tournament she hosts , which she defended in her home town at the course where she learned to play . Her International team lost the second Lexus Cup competition to Team Asia .

Sörenstam started 2007 by losing a playoff while defending of her MasterCard Classic title . At the Kraft Nabisco Championship she shot her highest 72 @-@ hole score in a major in nine years , a result explained by her subsequent diagnosis with ruptured and bulging discs in her neck , the first major injury in Sörenstam 's 13 @-@ year LPGA career . After a two @-@ month injury rehabilitation break , Sörenstam returned as the Ginn Tribute tournament hostess where she admitted to being at only 85 % fitness and finished tied for 36th place . She was still not fully fit in her next two tournaments , the LPGA Championship where she finished tied for 15th place , and the US Women 's Open , where , as defending champion , she finished tied for 32nd .

After an early round defeat at the World Matchplay Championship , Sörenstam finished sixth at the Evian Masters , 16th at the Women 's British Open and ninth in the Swedish tournament she hosts on the Ladies European Tour . On her return to the US , Sörenstam had three top ten finishes but missed the weekend at the season closing ADT Playoffs for the second year running . However , Sörenstam did win a worldwide title at the Dubai Ladies Masters on the Ladies European Tour in November 2007 .

Declaring herself recovered from injury and ready to return to a complete season of competitive golf in 2008 , Sörenstam opened the year at the SBS Open at Turtle Bay where she captured her 70th LPGA Tour victory and first since September 2006 . She won next at the Stanford International Pro @-@ Am in April then following a week off , won again at the Michelob ULTRA Open at Kingsmill in a tournament record score , giving her three wins and over \$ 1 million in earnings by mid @-@ May . It was her 72nd and final ever win on the LPGA Tour .

In 2008 , Sörenstam was highly critical of other female golfers who tried to play in the PGA Tour ? her comments to Michelle Wie for playing on the men 's tour : " I really don 't know why Michelle continues to do this . We have a major this week and , if you can 't qualify for a major , I don 't see any reason why you should play with the men . "

= = = Retirement = = =

On 13 May 2008 , Sörenstam announced at a press conference at the Sybase Classic that she would " step away " from competitive golf at the conclusion of the 2008 season . That night , she threw out the first pitch of the Washington Nationals / New York Mets baseball game at Shea Stadium in New York and the following day read the Top Ten on the Late Show with David Letterman . Her last tournament victory came in a playoff at the Suzhou Taihu Ladies Open , an event co @-@ sanctioned by the Ladies European Tour and the Ladies Asian Golf tour . Her last

scheduled tournament on the LPGA Tour was the season @-@ ending ADT Championship in November , where she failed to make the weekend play in the event 's unique playoff structure . Her final sanctioned LPGA appearance was as the winning captain of Team International at the 2008 Lexus Cup in Singapore . Her last professional tournament was the Dubai Ladies Masters on the Ladies European Tour in December 2008 , where she finished tied for 7th .

= = Business career = =

Sörenstam began the transition from professional golfer to entrepreneur during the later years of her career , attempting to combine golf , fitness and charitable works into various businesses under the ANNIKA brand with the brand statement " Share my Passion " . They are all promoted by her website on which there is a blog to which she and her staff regularly contribute .

= = = Golf course design = = =

Sörenstam has undertaken a number of golf course design projects . Her first , the Annika Course , was completed at Mission Hills Golf Club in Shenzhen , China , in 2003 ; the second was officially launched in January 2006 and opened in 2008 at Euphoria Golf Estate & Hydro in South Africa . She recently announced a new project at Mines Golf City , near Kuala Lumpur , Malaysia . Projects closer to home include a redesign of the Patriots Point Links Course near Charleston , South Carolina and a course at Red Mountain Resort , British Columbia . She and Jack Nicklaus lost out on their bid to build the Olympic golf course in Rio to Gil Hanse and his consultant Amy Alcott . In 2010 , a golf course at Golden Bay Resort was opened in South Korea . She designed this golf course , and Hanhwa Hotels & Resorts Corporation developed . This was the first project for her after @-@ retirement golf course design .

= = = The ANNIKA Academy = = =

The ANNIKA Academy at Ginn Reunion Resort in Reunion , Florida began construction in 2006 and opened in April 2007 with Sörenstam 's longtime coach Henri Reis serving as head instructor , her sister Charlotta an instructor and club fitter , her personal trainer Kai Fusser focusing on overall fitness training , and with Sorenstam available for coaching on certain golfing packages . The opening ceremony included a Make @-@ A @-@ Wish Foundation golf clinic conducted by Sörenstam who is a United States ambassador for the Make @-@ A @-@ Wish Foundation and it also hosted clinics for junior golfers during The Annika Invitational , an American Junior Golf Association invitation @-@ only event featuring the top 60 girls from around the world hosted by The ANNIKA Foundation .

= = = Other business ventures = = =

Other branches of the ANNIKA business include a clothing line with Cutter & Buck , a limited label wine produced in partnership with Wente Vineyards , and a signature fragrance developed by SA Fragrances . Sörenstam also hosted the Ginn Tribute Hosted by Annika , an event on the LPGA Tour in 2007 and 2008 , and the Scandinavian TPC hosted by Annika on the Ladies European Tour during its last four years from 2005 through 2008 . She won the latter tournament in 2005 and 2006 . Both tournaments had their last event in 2008 .

One of Sörenstam 's hobbies is cooking . She has participated in cooking demonstrations during LPGA tournaments and has talked about enrolling in cooking school . Before the 2003 season Sörenstam took the opportunity to improve her culinary skills by working eight @-@ hour shifts in the kitchens of the Lake Nona Country Club . Sörenstam has had a serious interest in investments , real estate and the stock market since she earned her first LPGA check and in August 2006 was invited to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange .

= = Personal life = =

Sörenstam has been described as an atheist . She met her first husband David Esch in 1994 on the driving range at Moon Valley Country Club , Phoenix , Arizona , where she was an LPGA rookie practicing for a tournament and he worked for club manufacturer Ping . They were engaged at the 1995 Evian Masters , married in Lake Tahoe on 4 January 1997 , and were divorced in 2005 . In August 2007 she married Mike McGee , the managing director for the ANNIKA brand of businesses and son of former PGA Tour and Champions Tour player Jerry McGee , at Lake Nona Golf & Country Club in Orlando , Florida on 10 January 2009 .

Their daughter Ava Madelyn McGee was born 1 September 2009 . On 21 March 2011 , Sörenstam gave birth to a son , William Nicholas McGee , several weeks prematurely .

= = Professional wins ( 93 ) = =

= = = LPGA Tour ( 72 ) = = =

LPGA Tour playoff record ( 16 ? 6 )

LPGA majors are shown in bold .

= = = Ladies European Tour ( 17 ) = = =

1995 ( 2 ) OVB Damen Open Austria , Hennessy Cup

1996 ( 1 ) Trygg Hansa Ladies ' Open

1997 ( 1 ) Compaq Open

1998 ( 1 ) Compaq Open

2000 ( 1 ) Evian Masters

2002 ( 3 ) ANZ Ladies Masters ( co @-@ sanctioned by ALPG Tour ) , Evian Masters , Compaq Open

2003 ( 1 ) Women 's British Open

2004 ( 2 ) ANZ Ladies Masters ( co @-@ sanctioned by ALPG Tour ) , HP Open

2005 ( 1 ) Scandinavian TPC hosted by Annika

2006 ( 2 ) Scandinavian TPC hosted by Annika , Dubai Ladies Masters

2007 ( 1 ) Dubai Ladies Masters

2008 ( 1 ) Suzhou Taihu Ladies Open

Ladies European Tour Majors are shown in bold . The Evian Masters is classified as a major by the LET but not the LPGA Tour , and along with the Women 's British Open is co @-@ sanctioned by the LPGA Tour , with wins counting for both tours .

= = = ALPG Tour ( 4 ) = = =

1994 ( 1 ) Holden Women 's Australian Open

1995 ( 1 ) Australian Ladies Masters

2002 ( 1 ) ANZ Ladies Masters ( co @-@ sanctioned by LET )

2004 ( 1 ) ANZ Ladies Masters ( co @-@ sanctioned by LET )

= = = LPGA of Japan Tour ( 2 ) = = =

1997 ( 1 ) Hisako Higuchi Kibun Classic

2003 ( 1 ) Nichirei Cup

= = = Other ( 3 ) = = =

1997 ( 1 ) JCPenney / LPGA Skins Game

2001 ( 1 ) Wendy 's 3 @-@ Tour Challenge ( with Dottie Pepper and Karrie Webb )

2006 ( 1 ) Women 's World Cup of Golf ( team event with Liselotte Neumann ; endorsed by all the main women 's tours , but not an official money event )

= = Major championships = =

= = = Wins ( 10 ) = = =

1 Defeated Grace Park with par on first extra hole2 Defeated Hurst in 18 @-@ hole playoff :  
Sörenstam ( 70 ) , Hurst ( 74 )

= = = Results timeline = = =

^ The Women 's British Open replaced the du Maurier Classic as an LPGA major in 2001