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Monday, February 13, 2006

Updated: February 14, 2:44 PM ET

Sorenstam continues picking up the pieces

By Ron Sirak
Golf World

A year ago, [Annika Sorenstam](#) was picking up the pieces. She and David Esch had filed for divorce Feb. 4, 2005, after a stormy 14 months in which they tried to decide whether their relationship was worth saving, a stretch that spanned a tear-filled 2004 in which she remarkably won eight LPGA events. Asked whether her life is better now, Sorenstam laughs and says, "Yes, a lot better."

With the same discipline she uses to put a poor shot behind her, Sorenstam has moved on. In Mike McGee, a 31-year-old agent for International Golf Partners and the son of four-time PGA Tour winner and 1977 Ryder Cup team member Jerry McGee, she has found a friend she says "really looks out for my best, and he knows all about what I do since he grew up on the tour." Sorenstam's divorce was finalized Aug. 22, and shortly thereafter, doctors were able to sort out a mysterious hip problem that had obstructed her pivot much of the year.

"I met with doctors after returning home to Orlando [in September], and they fixed it, even though it took them four sessions," Sorenstam said. "They used a new therapy called 'Body Talk' and told me I probably got the problems in my hip because of the things I've gone through in my personal life. It was a mental thing that made me fragile in a physical way. All was fine after September. I can swing the clubs like I want now."

The injury, in which a bone moved in her right hip, could explain why she won only once in eight tournaments -- starting at the U.S. Open -- after six victories in her first eight starts. After treatment, Sorenstam closed the year by winning three of her last four tournaments -- a stretch that began at the Samsung World Championship, the first event in which [Michelle Wie](#) competed as a pro.

Sorenstam, 35, is coming off a 10-win season and a five-year stretch in which she has won 43 times and pushed her career total to 66 victories, trailing only Mickey Wright (82) and Kathy Whitworth (88). An athlete who loves a challenge, Sorenstam once again is dangling the Grand Slam as the carrot she is chasing. By the end of last season, she also seemed to be gaining motivation from younger competitors. She won by 8 in Wie's debut and dispatched Paula Creamer in the ADT Championship after Creamer twice challenged her on the rules in the first round.

In another display of letting go of the past, Sorenstam, the team captain, paired herself with Creamer in the Lexus Cup in December.

"She didn't want [the situation] to linger," one Sorenstam friend said. "She wanted to end it right there."

Sorenstam teamed with Liselotte Neumann as Sweden won the Women's World Cup last month, then left for her Nevada home to ski and relax. She will skip the first two LPGA tournaments of the new season and make her first start March 10-12 in Mexico at the MasterCard Classic, where she is the defending champion.

Ron Sirak is the executive editor of Golf World magazine. His book, [Every Shot Must Have a Purpose:](#)

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