

U.S. Open Championship 2023

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The Los Angeles Country Club

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming Southern California native Patrick Cantlay to the interview room area. How does it feel to be out here at LACC this week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: It's great. I played golf at UCLA just right down the road for a couple years, so played here dozens of times. They had announced the tournament I think around then, so it's been a long wait to get here, and it's going to be great.

THE MODERATOR: Talk a little bit about your experience with the course and what it's feeling like this week.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it's obviously totally different. It has been every time I've been on property. But I think it'll be a good test.

It looks like it's going to be in good shape and we're going to get good weather.

Q. Does it feel like coming home to be out here? I assume you have a little more family and friends.

PATRICK CANTLAY: It's definitely familiar. Feels a little like a home game. I'm definitely going to have a bunch of family and friends out this week.

Q. A lot of talk about the par-3s this week, short and long. Do you like a hole that can potentially play 80-ish yards?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I've never played it playing that short. I've never played that hole location before. But obviously I saw it in the Walker Cup, and looked like it played darned near just as difficult as some of the really long par-3s. It should be interesting.

Q. You've played in some U.S. Opens before. The setup feels different. Talk a little bit about comparing it to other U.S. Open setups you've approached in the past.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I feel like we haven't played a

lot of Bermuda U.S. Opens. That's a little different. Then also, we haven't seen fairways maybe this wide. But I don't think these fairways will play particularly wide.

It'll still be a challenge, and it'll still be very important to play out of the fairway.

I think those are the two biggest differences, but I think it'll still play very difficult.

Q. Plenty of people have had opinion and comment on your major championship career. How would you describe it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, off to a slow start I would say. I'm looking to improve that.

Q. You still have reasonable numbers, though, if we're being fair. Have you been able to pinpoint what it might be to even take that up one more notch?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Reasonable numbers for --

Q. Your results are reasonable. They're not terrible even though some people might want to pretend they are. What is it to take that extra step so that narrative doesn't exist?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, just got to play more and win one. That'll change the narrative pretty quick.

Q. As a policy board member, I'm wondering if you anticipate voting in favor of whatever final agreement comes out of PGA TOUR and LIV, and sort of what your experience is like not just being a player who this affects, but having a governing role in how it all works.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Sure. Well, as far as my role, I think it's my role to represent the members as best as possible and to do right by them.

As far as the deal goes, I don't have enough information about the deal yet to have an unfavorable or favorable view about it.



Q. On that, I'm curious exactly where you were when you got the news and what your reaction was.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I was at home in Jupiter. I got told, I think like most of the other players on the policy board, right before and the morning of. I was obviously shocked, like I imagine most people.

Q. You don't seem like you get shocked very often.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I try to predict what the future is, but I've been wrong about many things, and yeah, I was shocked. I was shocked at this.

Q. A little bit off topic, we talk about this kind of divisiveness in the game. One thing that's getting overlooked now is what we had going on at the Memorial a few weeks ago with the proposal of the rollback of the golf ball. Not so much your position on that, but where do you see that process of the proposal, the feedback, the whole timeline thereon, how do you see that working out in the midst of all this?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it obviously pales in comparison, when before it was maybe the biggest new issue we were talking about. We had a PAC meeting where the USGA came at Memorial to talk to us about it, and we had the club manufacturers and the ball manufacturers come in right after for the same meeting.

Tensions were high in those meetings. But like I said, it takes a little bit of a backseat given all this other stuff going on.

Both I think are really, really important. That sounds cliché, or like underplaying it. They're of paramount importance because they affect every single player on TOUR immensely.

I think it's really important not to lose sight of both of the big things going on in golf right now, and I think as players, we need to make sure that we have a seat at the table and understand what the potential changes are and do our best to -- I should say for me personally, to do my best to represent the membership as best I can, considering I'm on the policy board.

Q. (Regarding proceeding accordingly.) USGA and the R&A given the environment we're in?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I personally think it was bad before the environment, so I think it would be even more turbulent in a time of turbulence, which is not what the game needs.

The game is in arguably the strongest spot it's ever been. I know rounds in the country are at the highest they've ever been coming out of COVID and a lot of people are really excited about playing golf, and being in South Florida, all the clubs around are busy. The public golf courses are extremely busy.

Seems like golf is in a good spot, and doing anything that could potentially harm that would be foolish.

Q. A few players have alluded to this being a tough venue. This may facilitate some more fireworks than we're used to seeing of a U.S. Open venue. Does your game favor this type of setup or maybe the traditional brute of a U.S. Open setup we've come to know?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think when you say fireworks, I think there's just more an extreme collection of really tough holes and then birdieable holes. I think some of the par-5s, like 8 and then the drivable hole, 6, although they kind of tricked that up so it'll play I think more difficult than it ever has for sure, there's just holes where you feel like you should definitely make birdies and give yourself looks.

There's some early wedges you can get; 1 you can get. But then there are some really hard holes, and if you're not playing from the fairway they can get really difficult.

I think the harder holes may be harder and the easier holes may be a little bit easier than a standard U.S. Open.

Q. You mentioned No. 6; what have they done to maybe trick it up and make it different, and what are some of the factors you think of when determining whether to go for it or lay up?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, hole location, obviously, dependent on laying up or going for it, I think. But the type of grass they planted around that hole is totally foreign and not anywhere else on the golf course.

It's also very chancy, so you could throw three balls in there, one could be okay, one could be totally dead, like pitch it out, can't hit the green, and the other could be sitting up fine. It puts an element of serious luck in there, considering we're only going to play the hole four times. But just the fact that it's just totally different grass.

But if you lay it up and hit a nice wedge shot, you're going to have a good look. It's definitely within the players' control to play that hole well.

Q. Have you spoken to any of the non-player policy board members and/or Jay since this whole thing

came down? Aside from us asking you about this during U.S. Open week, what's the distraction level like, if any, other than us?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I've talked to a number of people, independents on the board, players on the board, and I've talked to Jay. I'm just trying to get as much information about it as possible so I can form my opinion, and right now it seems like it's still too early to have enough information to have a good handle on the situation.

Yeah, it's a distraction, but I imagine it's a distraction for everyone. Come tournament time, it won't be on my mind.

Q. Do you get a sense that this is going to take weeks, months, before you'll get a handle or anybody will get a handle on what it really all means?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I know there's a policy board meeting coming up in a couple weeks, the week of Detroit, so I hope to have definitely more information by then, and I imagine after the meeting I'll have far more information than I do right now.

Q. As a member of the UCLA Athletics Hall of Fame 2022, I wanted to ask if you've had a chance to meet Omar Morales who qualified this week, and if so, what that interaction has been like and what advice you would have for him as he heads into the Open?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I haven't met Omar yet, but I did see that he had qualified, and that's great. I'm looking forward to hopefully running into him this week, and I would just say to treat it like any other tournament that he plays. Get as prepared as you can and know that if he plays his own game and plays well, he can compete.

Q. I'm curious, in the times you've been here, have you heard any weird stories or heard any weird noises in the area to the right of the 14th tee?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, you can hear the monkeys almost every time you go back there. There's a bunch of other wildlife back there that you can hear occasionally.

Q. Is it distracting?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Not for me.

Q. This morning Jon Rahm said there's a sense of betrayal amongst many of the players, that they're frustrated about. Are you hearing that from other players? What do you have to say like if Jon Rahm is frustrated or betrayed?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it's totally understandable. I think anytime that you're left in the dark on a decision that potentially affects you massively, that could easily make you upset.

For me, like I said, I'm just trying to understand this deal as best I can or understand what's going on as best I can. It seems really complicated. I don't want to get ahead of myself and form an opinion like that until I know all the facts and know what it's about.

But I understand that emotion, and I think it's totally natural and understandable.

Q. Did shock turn to anger?

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, more confusion about what was really going on, especially with a lot of the information being information you get from the media and having just conflicted opinions and stories, where I'm not really sure exactly what is going on.

I've got a broad sense of what I've gathered and what I've talked to independent directors and then Jay, but I still don't think it's all been worked out. I think it's a process of getting worked out, and I think it's getting worked out right now. So there's just a lot of unknowns.

Q. Do you think players who stayed loyal should be rewarded for that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: In a perfect world, yeah.

Q. In the real world?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think the real answer is we'll see. It hasn't been decided yet.

Q. On the anger side --

PATRICK CANTLAY: I knew you'd get some in there.

Q. What makes you the most angry on the golf course, and which of the four majors invoke the most anger from you do you think typically?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't get very angry. Sometimes I'll get frustrated if I feel like I'm not executing how I should. I don't think I have that at any one major or the other.

Q. You don't get angry on the golf course?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think it ever turns into real anger, but I get frustrated just like anyone else.

Q. As much as you read, do you read much golf news, and did you read a lot last week and were you entertained?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I definitely read more last week than a normal week. There was much more of it.

I actually looked for golf articles last week, which is very abnormal. Normally they find me.

Q. Do you think yourself, who's played here dozens of times, the guys who played in the Walker Cup, is there any advantage to that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I hope so. I feel really comfortable with knowing where I need to hit it, and I don't think -- it's still the same golf course. It just is playing a little tougher, a little firmer and faster than I've seen, and obviously the rough is a lot more penal than I've ever seen it, and the fairways are effectively a lot narrower. But I still know exactly where I need to hit it.

There's not a lot of uncertainty about how I should play the golf course.

Q. As a proud Servite grad, and not only did you play at UCLA, but what are you going to tell those kids from that team that are used to making all the noise at the basketball games, what are you going to tell them when they come to root for you this week? Any messages for them?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I hope I can put on a show for them and give them something to root for.

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