

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

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Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Derek Lowe

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Here we are with our defending celebrity champion of the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions, Derek Lowe. Thank you for being here today.

Just want to kick things off asking how excited you are to be back at the tournament and defending your title?

DEREK LOWE: I'm very excited. It's an honor any time you get invited into these tournaments. It's great to see a lot of friends, but it's nerve-racking. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me last year to play with my good friend, Nelly Korda three rounds. Got to play with Annika, got to play with Danielle. You want to duplicate that, knowing full well it's going to be hard.

But I get to play with Nelly again tomorrow, which I can't wait for. Lake Nona is just a phenomenal golf course. I think it's harder than it was last year, and it's going to be a tough challenge for all of us.

THE MODERATOR: Nelly did mention she was excited to play with you.

DEREK LOWE: Yes. Yes, she got my money I gave here.

THE MODERATOR: We asked her for some fun stories between the two of you. Any fun stories come to mind?

DEREK LOWE: I'm going to say no. It's probably more me. I'm a little goofy when I play. I've got to know her over the years and it's a blessing to watch her play. We went and watched her in Naples in the Shootout.

But no, I'm a little goofier I think than she was. But I respect her. I think we have a great rapport. Like I know when she needs her time and I know when maybe she needs a pickup along the way. But I really look forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: You have another arguably goofball



in your group, Alfonso Ribeiro. Are you excited to play with him? Have you played with him before?

DEREK LOWE: I am. I've never played with him. Met him in Dallas last year. I mean, I can't dance like him, let's be honest. I mean, it's just kind of his go-to move back in the day. I look forward to it. It's a great group of people. They do a tremendous job. No matter who you play with you're going to have a great time.

It's fun to have these special groups along the way, and I look forward to it.

Q. As an athlete, what's it like to be inside the ropes watching Nelly play?

DEREK LOWE: It's an honor, to be honest with you. People don't understand, men or female, how good they actually are and understanding the shots they hit. Like you may not see it on TV. They cut it. They draw it. The distances they hit it.

I don't pick their brain, but I definitely work. Be kind of moronic not to watch. I think if people -- and I said this last year -- if people would come out and watch the LPGA, they're so good, so talented. It's just an honor to play with them to be honest with you.

Q. Your comfort level was in another game. What did you prove to yourself last year in doing that?

DEREK LOWE: That I could play nervous. I mean, it's a grind for all of us. You can put anybody up here and they'll say the same thing. You get on the first tee, hands are shaking, you're hoping to get airborne, right? This is my tenth year playing in these events, and I think I've learned something every year.

Clearly this is my first win, and just knowing at some point you're able to hit a relatively good shot for an amateur, right? That's kind of what I learned. If you have to hit a 7-iron, you can do it.

Q. I'll ask you finally, winning a playoff was cool, but going up against arguably the GOAT made it a little more special?

DEREK LOWE: Yeah, it was on her home course. I know



for a fact I had four people, my family, were rooting for me, and I know everyone else wasn't. I don't blame anybody. Again these are the stories that you look back at.

Obviously everyone here has a great sports history or actor, what have you. That's my greatest golf moment ever. To stand there, me and her on 18, the GOAT, the greatest of all time, and I have one chance to beat her and I made a miracle putt.

So we'll see what happens this year.

Q. Annika told us earlier she plans on moving up a spot, just so you know.

DEREK LOWE: Oh, I know.

Q. I'm sure you heard it before, toughest thing to do in sports is to repeat. Based on your first answer you've thought about that dream again, but you know...

DEREK LOWE: I think the hardest thing, again, even playing baseball, which I did, like it's hard to replicate past success. I think you just have to go out there, it's obviously new year, clearly, and just understand that it's the four-day tournament. Most of us don't play in four-day tournaments. It's a long way. You're going to hit bad shots.

How do you deal with it? That's what I learned last year. You're going to make double bogeys. You're going to have bad holes. In the Stableford system that we have, it doesn't really kill you. You just kind of keep moving.

At the end of the day, just like the pros, we want to be there on Sunday, give yourself an opportunity. We don't have to make birdies like they do, just make pars.

So that's my goal. I really am honored to play tomorrow, and I look forward to it and we'll see what happens.

Q. Doing this for ten years, do you see the level of play among the celebrities raise?

DEREK LOWE: I think it's gotten more intense. You start off when you're -- my first year couldn't be happier to be there. You're T22, whatever, which I was. You're like, okay, that's not good enough, and you kind of work your way up the system. Eventually maybe are lucky enough to get a Top 5.

That's kind of where it started for me. About five, six years ago, okay, I know these guys. I have a chance. But it really comes down to nerves and understanding and playing in front of people and doing stuff that you aren't accustomed to doing.

Everyone asks, what's more nerve-racking, first tee or Game 7? It's no doubt first tee. It's just learning how to deal with the nerves. That's it.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to ask about the nerves myself. I was going to ask: What's more nerve-racking, playing golf or throwing a no-hitter, and you have done both well.

How is your golf game in general? How much do you practice?

DEREK LOWE: I play a lot. I don't practice a lot. I play a lot. To talk about nerves, like I think everyone sitting here will tell you the same thing. We are really good on the range. I'm talking about tomorrow. You go to the putting green, and then you go underneath and you get the scorecard and you still fine.

Then you stand on that first tee and you're like, uh-oh, this is real. They start announcing people's names. I can back to last year. On Saturday I'm playing with Nelly and Annika and they announce both of them. It takes about three minutes to announce the greatest female golfers.

I'm like, it's my turn and you're shaking. I mean, I didn't roll it, but it went about 150 yards, the drive. I was like, thank you. Just move.

Again, that's what I think everybody loves about this game. It brings out a different type of nerve and we're all competitive and want to do well. We'll see what happens in the next four days.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time.

DEREK LOWE: Thank you.

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