

Travelers Championship

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Michael Thorbjornsen

Press Conference



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Michael Thorbjornsen to the Travelers Championship media center. Michael, welcome back.

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Entering this week from last week finishing fourth place, what are thoughts and memories of being back since last year?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Feels really good. Can't believe it's been a whole year now. So much has happened in college and then prior to this week playing on TOUR for a couple weeks now.

This place feels like home. I love the golf course. The hospitality here is amazing. Everyone is very nice, very welcoming.

And, yeah, I'm just really excited to start playing again tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Any specific memories from that Sunday being in the mix?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Yeah, I remember starting my final round off like pretty well. Felt like I was playing well but wasn't really scoring. I think I was maybe even through four or five. Not really making any birdie putts.

All of a sudden I think I hit it to a couple inches on 6 I think for eagle.

Par'd the next hole.

Birdied my next four.

Can't really tell you too much about it. Kind of seemed like golf was pretty easy at that point.

And then, yeah, I think we were in contention or within one or two with seven holes play, and that was something that I wasn't really ready for.

I thought maybe if I put a good round together maybe I'll be in the mix with a couple holes left. Certainly not that early.

THE MODERATOR: It was such a good showing you were invited back this year. How and when did you get the call back to Travelers Championship?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: I think it was at school probably. I think I was playing a practice round with some of my teammates. Got a text saying to give this number a call. After hearing it, I was really surprised. Just knowing that it was an elevated event this year I'm thinking there is no way I'm getting invited back.

Surprisingly I got the invite and definitely really grateful and appreciative of it.

THE MODERATOR: Just wrapped up junior season at Stanford. Where have you seen your game grow since being back here?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: I feel like I've gotten better at being more consistent in my everyday life. That's been translating to the golf course. Both mentally and physically I feel like I was kind of erratic before my first two years at school, and then kind of last summer leading into this school year, been focusing a lot with my coaches on just like how can I get to that next level.

Yeah, after first couple weeks back on campus we kind of realized what I really needed to focus on and, yeah, I had my best college season yet, and hoping to do even better next year.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. When you have these opportunities with your dad, because you don't get a chance to be with your dad often, how special are those weeks when he's out here with you?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Oh, it's very special. I feel like I have an unbelievable team. I have my dad and Drew and then the Excel family out there always -- they always



got my back.

So, yeah, it's very nice. I feel like it's our own little family. We're traveling across the country. A lot of things are changing, but one of the things that stays the same is the team. It's very nice to feel like we're all gathering great experiences and making great memories.

Q. You just said it feels kind of like being at home. How nice would it be to have one of these events in Boston, whether it's next year or the year after that or whenever it works out?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, that would be unbelievable. I remember the U.S. Open being in Boston last year, 15 minutes from my house. It was a super cool experience. I mean, we don't have any PGA TOUR events in Massachusetts or Boston anymore.

I think what was it, like the Duetsche Bank or something, part the playoff series. I remember growing up watching that going to TPC Boston wanting to play in that tournament.

I mean, if there is ever an opportunity for the PGA TOUR to get a tournament back, I definitely think they should do it.

Q. You touched on it a little bit, but being a junior in college, how much of your growth over the past year has been learning about yourself and growing into the person you are versus on the golf course?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, that's been a huge part. I think it's my teammates honestly and my coach as well, or my assistant coach. His first year was my freshman year, and he's actually leaving after this -- or has left now.

And we had a really nice moment just saying like he's extremely proud of me, and not just because of how well I'm doing on golf course, but you've grown, you've matured. He's like almost crying. He feels like he's a father in a way. (Smiling.)

Yeah, I've learned a lot about myself and I feel like that's probably what causes better play on the golf course. And, yeah, I mean, golf is a part of my life; it's not my life. That's something that I have had to remind myself.

Q. Wanted to ask about the driving range out here. It's a pretty spectacular facility across the street. Your thoughts compared to some of the places you're usually practicing?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, this driving range is

huge. I don't think you can run out of spots for players to practice in. You got everything: Large putting green, great chipping, pitching green. Yeah, some of the other places that I've played definitely don't have as big of a driving range. You can't really see the full flight of your driver, sometimes hitting into a net.

I mean, I'm a big fan of bent grass and you got a lot of bent grass over here, so that's really nice, yeah.

Q. For those less familiar with your game, where would you say your strength is in your game? Driving? Short game?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Definitely my iron play. I'm known for being a good driver, but as of late, the past couple weeks, I've been kind of struggling with. We're figuring out. Yeah, definitely ball striking as a whole is my strength.

Q. The youth of golf, seeing PGA TOUR U players have success right away, especially on the Korn Ferry Tour, how great is that in confidence to see the path to follow?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, it's amazing. I think it was Adrian who won last week and then Ricky won most recently. Unbelievable work by them two. Outstanding players and good guys, so really cool and proud of them to see them winning out there.

Then you have Ludvig and Sam who are also part of that graduating class, and they've been doing really well on TOUR. Look at Sam at the Masters; made the cut at the U.S. Open. Ludvig I think hasn't missed a cut yet this year.

And, yeah, I think the younger guys are getting better and better, and I think it's because we all see what opportunities are out there for us. PGA TOUR U has created an unbelievable platform for us to perform our best and to have some sort of a pathway on TOUR.

Yeah, I'm extremely grateful for that.

Q. Who is on the bag for you this week? The same friend you have you've had past events?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, Drew Cohen has been on my bag now for I want to say two years. I think we first started I think for the Northeast Amateur two summers ago. Kind of picked him on a whim. Just, okay, I'll give him his one chance.

Then I think the next tournament after that was the Western Am and we won, and just kind of stuck to it.



Q. How does that dynamic work with a friend in competition mode?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Yeah, we definitely know what's it's time to work and when it's time to fool around and goof off. I think Drew has known me for so long, he's been my best friend for a long time, he knows what I'm like when I am upset, what I am like and on and off the golf course, so knows how to handle me.

I might not be the nicest guy to him at times, but I just do get a little frustrated out there. He does a really good job calming me down if I'm not playing too well or whatever it may be.

Yeah, it's a great relationship that we have, and when we are out there, we do have a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions? All right, thank you, Michael for joining us and good luck this week.

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Thank you.

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