

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Saturday, March 16, 2024  
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA  
TPC Sawgrass



## Peter Malnati

### Quick Quotes

**Q. We'll start by asking about how you played today, it was good, right?**

PETER MALNATI: Thank you. Yeah, was that a question?

**Q. Yes.**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I played great today. It was really nice. I've been working hard on my game. It doesn't always show, but I have been working really hard. In the last several weeks I took the week -- I say I took the week off, I didn't get into the event at Riviera, so I had the week off that week -- really worked on trying to just get my long clubs going a little straighter, and I felt great about the way I played at the Cognizant, and then this week has been a continuation of that. I've really felt fairly in control. I didn't drive it great yesterday, but this golf course will make you look silly if you drive it just a little bit off line. I still felt really competent. So today I played what I felt like was sort of a continuation of how I've been playing and just holed the birdie putts and it was really fun.

**Q. Did you think it was going in on 17?**

PETER MALNATI: I was Larry Bird'ing it. I had my finger in the air walking off the tee. Where it landed, I thought it had -- obviously the hole is small and we were 120-something yards away, so it's like never, like, it's never supposed to go in, it's always kind of lucky if it does. But where that ball landed I thought it had a really good chance to go in.

**Q. You must have been furious.**

PETER MALNATI: When it didn't go in? I can't catch a break. I haven't been able to in a while either.

**Q. Can you comment on the reports of a meeting Monday somewhere around here?**

PETER MALNATI: I don't even think our membership knows anything about a meeting on Monday yet. I don't

know the details of it. Yeah, I just, I think, when I do know details, I would rather tell our membership first, but I, honestly, like, I think at this point I probably should have more details because, yeah, there may be a meeting, but I don't even know, I don't know where it is or how I'm getting there. I would like to know that information, and I would like to then tell the membership about it before I talk about it.

**Q. Can you talk about where you personally stand with the Saudis, do you feel like something needs to happen?**

PETER MALNATI: I think something needs to happen for our sport. I would love to see a unified game where we can -- it doesn't mean that -- I want there to be different tours where guys can play, I want that, but I want to see a unified game where, when we have events like THE PLAYERS Championship, that we have all the best players in the world and we're proud to call 'em PGA TOUR members. That's what I want. I don't know how we get there, but that's what I want.

**Q. Are you a little surprised, I mean we, a couple of us talked to Webb about this last week, like he was, he said, Yeah, I've never met anybody from the Public Investment Fund, never spoke to them. I'm not talking Yasir, but even like at their lower levels. Do you not need to know what they want?**

PETER MALNATI: Well, that's, I mean, that is why our commissioner has been saying for months that the next step is to have Yasir meet with players of the PGA TOUR. He's been saying that for months. There's been, obviously, all sorts of challenges to making that happen. But, no, of course, that's essential. That's absolutely essential, because, at its core, like, players have no business running the PGA TOUR, but this is a member, this is a members' organization. Like, we should have input in the direction it goes. For something, some of these monumental changes that are bound to happen as we stand up this for profit company and take on investment, whether it's from the private sector here or the whatever it is, like, players should have involvement and knowledge of that, and even input. Like, players do not need to be running this organization, but we certainly, yeah, we certainly should be a part of decisions like that. I think, I must say, I think

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we're, I think we've almost swung the pendulum too far in the other direction now after what happened on June 6th, where players and the whole organization were left in the dark, the pendulum has swung too far to where players are probably feeling like they have, you know, more input than we should. So I think, as it comes back to sort of neutral, I think we're going to land in a really sweet spot where we have the leadership of the TOUR doing what they should, which they are, and we have a lot of transparency where the players know what's going on and are able to give their input.

**Q. Is there any resistance to working with the Public Investment Fund amongst you guys or players, to a large degree anyway?**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I mean, that's obviously something, like, we've got to understand that better as a membership. Like, what is our stance. Like, personally, I mean, at first, for me, like the announcement of June 6, I felt massive resistance to that personally. As I've learned more, I think I understand better and I'm very open minded to learning what involvement they want, what they want out of this and how they think they can help. I'm very open minded to that now. But, yeah, on the surface, I think there are players who have resistance to that relationship, for sure. So that's why I do think it's important that maybe our next step is to meet at some point.

**Q. With your membership, how much of an issue is guys coming back?**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, that's obviously, that might be the thing that's most top of mind for people. You would find opinions that ran the gamut, from guys that just have a line in the sand that say never, and guys -- I mean, I think Rory's been pretty outspoken that he wants to see the best players playing on the PGA TOUR. So we're going to have to net out somewhere in the middle. I don't think, you know, I don't think -- I think the easiest, most likely route we go when we do find a way for guys to come back, is just guys aren't coming back to the PGA TOUR with membership on the PGA TOUR. They're coming back to the PGA TOUR as guys are going to have to earn their way back here. I think there's certain methods that we've been able to establish and put in place that will be really, really good for the PGA TOUR and its membership, and our fans too. This player equity plan, I don't understand it, it's a little bit above my head, but I certainly know enough to say that I really do support it. It's going to make players owners of the TOUR, and guys who violated our policies aren't ever going to be eligible for that. That's a big deal. Like, that's a big, big deal. So I think, if we do find a pathway for guys to come back, there will certainly be safeguards in place to protect the members of the TOUR

who stayed here.

**Q. (Question about players coming back.)**

PETER MALNATI: We have to work through all that, and I don't know. I'm definitely of the mind that, some way, shape, or form, we need to give our fans a product where, when we have events like this, at the best venues, with the best everything, we have the best players in the world playing. We need to find a way to give that to our fans. Because that's what they deserve for being loyal to us.

As a player, I know, you know, I don't know if you guys pay any attention, I'm sure you do, because you're great, but I don't even want to play on the Korn Ferry Tour right now because the players are so good. It's not like I need better players to come play against, but whoever wins this golf tournament is going to have achieved the most incredible accomplishment, to win on this golf course, against this field, but it would be even better if we had Jon Rahm here. I'll just say it. It would be even better. It would be an even better win. So that's something that we as a membership and as leaders of the membership, we need to figure that out, how do we make this happen for people to come back, and do it in a way that has some semblance of fairness, some semblance of just, how do we do it in a way that can at least somewhat pass the sniff test and get us to a place where, when we have championships like this, we have a group of the best players -- like, we already have a group of the best players in the world -- how do we get to a place where we have all of the best players in the world here.

**Q. Do you see, Peter, a pathway or how you integrate team golf, what do you see as the bigger obstacle, I guess?**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, that was -- that's something -- I need to understand better what Yasir is really trying to accomplish there. Because, like, if we look at, you know -- obviously the greatest team event in golf right now is the Ryder Cup, and it's incredible. But what this sort of -- I don't know LIV, what they're doing, but it seems like a very forced team model, to me. When, at the end of the day, are there any fans that care which team won the tournament? And, like, and I don't know, I don't know what fans of LIV want or care about, but are there any fans that care about who won it? I mean, that seems so contrived to me. And so, like, I feel like we could also create some contrived team golf something, somewhere outside of the FedExCup season, but, like, what does he really want is a question that I want to understand better. Because I don't think it's some contrived, fake, add up random guys' scores and call them a team. I don't think that's it. I think what he means is more stuff like the Ryder Cup, I would guess, but I have no clue because I haven't talked to him.

So that's -- I don't think -- I don't see, I don't see away that we incorporate team golf into the FedExCup schedule. I just don't -- I personally don't want that, but I can always have my mind changed if I see a great idea, but personally, I don't want that and I don't see a way that we do that, that we integrate team golf within the FedExCup schedule. We're going to have some time to play with in the fall, I think, we're going to have some options, but I just don't know.

**Q. To clarify, you are not a big Cleeks guy.**

PETER MALNATI: I'm sorry? (Laughing).

**Q. I think their business model though is they see those teams as franchises that could be sold, and so, like, that's a potential revenue source, in terms of, if you were to go down this road.**

PETER MALNATI: Like you got the Washington Commanders and the Pittsburgh Steelers and you're going to have...

**Q. I'm just the messenger.**

PETER MALNATI: No, no, no. I have no idea.

**Q. But that was their business plan.**

PETER MALNATI: Interesting.

**Q. Like the captains --**

PETER MALNATI: Is that what, is that similar -- you guys must love me, because I sit up here and ask questions and don't shut up, I should probably just leave. Is that what we're doing with this TGL thing? The TGL, the teams of that are, like, owned by owners -- the only reason I even know that is because I saw the Atlanta team, there's a team in Atlanta, and it's like owned by the same guy that owns the Falcons who has now come onto the PGA TOUR Enterprises board, and it sounds really exciting, but I had no idea that's what TGL is. So there you go. There's some team golf. We'll whack it inside a dome or whatever they're doing.

**Q. Something you said earlier made me wonder, do guys care more about, as a membership, do you, generally speaking, do you think they care more about the TOUR now than they did three years ago, and if so why?**

PETER MALNATI: I think, well, because I think three years ago guys didn't -- it's like -- isn't there some -- I'm

going to butcher this, but isn't there some story like or some question like, or philosophical question, like does a fish know its in water. Did PGA TOUR members three years ago know they were members of a TOUR? Like, probably not -- and you also have to keep in mind that 80 percent of the PGA TOUR members, it's easy to get 'em riled up, because we all think we're great, we all have egos, we all care about this stuff, but like 80 percent of the PGA TOUR members just want to show up and have a purse, and know if they play well and make the cut they're going to get a check, and they think that's amazing, because this was their dream job, they're like me. They never dreamed that they would have control or a voice or stake in their TOUR, it never mattered three years ago because they trusted that the TOUR was run the way they wanted it to be, it worked for them, they showed up, they made prize money. That's exactly how I am.

And I think now we realize, Oh, my gosh, like, there's things that we have to figure out to make sure we're the best golf TOUR in the world, whereas, before, it was just taken for granted that we were, and when we were, like, does that mean that players weren't getting the best of everything? I never thought so, I always felt like we were. But maybe, maybe it took a competitor for this and now guys realize like, Hey, I want to help mold this PGA TOUR and I want to make it into the best product for our fans, for our members, for everyone, and I think right now that's caused a little confusion because we've got player voices really strong, we've got leadership's in a little bit of like a pickle because they messed up June 6th so badly, and we really need to get back to a place where it's like, Hey, our commissioner, who is a strong, good commissioner, is leading the TOUR, with input from players, and I think we're in a place right now where players are going to give more input than they have ever given before, but I think that will be really constructive, it's just a little messy right now.

**Q. Last thing, 2023 was always described as somewhat of a bridge year when things were kind of being sorted out. Is 2024 the same? Do you see this as a bridge or do you see this more as a solid blueprint going forward?**

PETER MALNATI: I think we're closer to the model going forward now, but I don't think, I don't think, I don't think this is it. Like, I don't think we're set in stone with the, oh, eight Signature Events, no cut, small fields. I think we just have to see how it's all working. 2023 was definitely a bridge because we knew 2023 wasn't going to be what 2024 was. I don't think we know yet -- I think 2025 will look similar to 2024, just because a lot of commitments we have to make are made, but I do think -- I don't want to call it a bridge year. This is our product, but our product is in a state of



evolution right now.

**Q. I know this can happen with full-field events where you can run out of daylight, but there were a few players that didn't finish their first round and second rounds. I think the second round was played for another 12 minutes this morning that it finished. Is that something that can -- is that like an issue, should that be happening, where players sort of are still left to go out and come out for another 10 minutes?**

PETER MALNATI: It's interesting, like, play on the PGA TOUR takes way too long, yes. But when you put us on a golf course like this where any little minute error causes you to be in a spot where you've got to do some serious thinking -- like, we need to play faster on the PGA TOUR. We should be getting done when we have perfect weather and a 144-man field this time of year, we should be getting done. But there's a balance to be struck. We want hard golf courses that challenge the best players in the world, and when you do that, you create situations where you end up with a guy like, you know, a 10-minute argument over where Rory should drop on the 7th hole. Like, those are all fast players in that group, now, but, yeah, I hate that it takes so long to play on the PGA TOUR. I wish as PGA TOUR players we all played faster. But I also want to keep playing golf courses like this, and I want them to be as challenging as they can be, so I'll, I'm, yeah, is it a problem, maybe, but I would rather take this golf course than make the golf courses easier to fix it.

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