

# AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

## Nick Taylor

### Press Conference



DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome the defending champion of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, Nick Taylor, to the interview room here. I know you're excited to be back. You won in convincing fashion last year, the four strokes, wire-to-wire. First international to win the event since I think Vijay Singh in 2004. Just a couple of comments on being back here, obviously a very special place and a very special win for you last year.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, certainly, it's been an interesting year, as everyone can experience, since I've been here it felt like on one hand that it was 10 years ago and then all of a sudden it came up here pretty fast. A lot of great memories of the golf course, a different setup this year without amateurs, without Monterey Peninsula, and a few different changes. They have actually played nine holes today and they're probably going to use quite a few of the U.S. Open tees that they had from 2019. So there will be some different aspects of this year, but a lot of great memories from really start to finish last year and it's nice to be back with kind of having all those come to mind.

DOUG MILNE: You're making your 11th start of the season and coming off a good finish in Hawaii, tied 11 a couple weeks ago. Just if you could just bring up to speed kind of on how you're feeling about your game heading into the week.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, game is, game feels really good. Played pretty solid in Hawaii the first two events, had a good start in Palm Springs, and haven't played great the last few rounds, but I don't take a lot of thought into Phoenix. I've never really played well there, even though I live there pretty much. So I missed the cut by one but felt my game is still in good form.

It was nice to be back here. Like I said, I feel like whenever I show up here I feel like my game just feels pretty solid. So game does feel good. Like I said, having Pebble Beach being three rounds this year instead of two, I think I'm going to enjoy that, and Spyglass I've always seemed to play pretty solid there as well. So the course is going to be more difficult I feel like with the new tees and

they will probably experiment with a few hole locations without having amateurs as well. I would prefer that than super low scores. So with that being said, I'm excited.

DOUG MILNE: We'll open it up and take a few questions.

**Q. I think some people might think that the pros might not enjoy playing with the amateurs sometimes because it might be slow or just sort of something different. Do you enjoy playing with the amateurs? I know that these aren't normal amateurs, they're often celebrities and CEO's, is it a fun change of pace for you, do you enjoy it?**

NICK TAYLOR: It is a change of pace. I feel like the rounds are obviously slower and you can take that as a negative if you want, but I feel like it's easier to relax. It's easy to get uptight in certain tournaments, especially if you're kind of either playing well or not great. But I enjoy it. Jerry Tarde and I got along great last year. I feel like we have similar personalities, kind of mellow and low key out there, and playing well obviously helps that, but I felt like we just had a good kind of mojo going and got along really well.

So, again, if the weather can be bad and it's slow rounds and it's raining, it's easy to find the negatives in that, but I've always enjoyed kind of meeting new people and playing with them. So we do it typically twice a year and I enjoy it when we do it.

**Q. Quick question about the week as a whole. Obviously I don't know the answer but maybe you can advise, like is there like a photo of you holding the trophy up somewhere on the golf course, like have you seen yourself yet this week?**

NICK TAYLOR: Walking off the 9th green yesterday at Spy there was a couple, maybe me swinging. I saw a couple pictures, but I haven't actually -- funny, last year in the big tented facility they don't have this year, but there was a big picture of Phil with his trophy and it's just everywhere, it's huge, so everyone could see it. So I don't have that for me this year. But I haven't seen me with a picture with the trophy. I haven't seen it. I'm sure there is



one somewhere, but I haven't gone searching for it either.

**Q. You're going to be in one of the featured groups this week. You're the defending champion. Does that, do you approach a week any differently? I mean, this is your second PGA TOUR victory, so you have had this experience once before, but mentally is there anything different about a week like this versus a week that you're obviously not defending a title?**

NICK TAYLOR: There's a few changes. I typically don't have my Tuesday press conference. That's slightly different. Yeah, there's a few obligations, but this year I think with, obviously with COVID there's, it's much more minor than it typically would be. So having a pro-am Wednesday, typically these events you can kind of do whatever you want on Wednesday, so I've had to kind of schedule a little bit because of that. But I played the back nine this morning at Pebble and I'll play the front tomorrow in the pro-am.

But as of pairing, looking forward to that. It's not a pairing that I typically get the first two days, so looking forward to playing with Ricky and Jordan.

**Q. I'm wondering, I know you obviously take confidence away from winning any tournament, but to do it in a case where you've obviously held off, I think it was Phil and Jason Day and some big names, how much more confidence, if anything, can that give you?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I think it's hard to find in my career where I'm going to find more confidence. I think playing with Phil in the final group at that point probably midway through the front nine or into the start of the back nine it was really between us two who was going to win the tournament. I had a sizeable lead but lost a few of the shots through 14. So it was a big confidence boost where I was playing with Phil and head-to-head and beat him under some tough conditions. So winning any tournament gives you a lot of confidence, but I think in the fashion I did it, it gave me a little more.

**Q. What did you have for lunch today?**

NICK TAYLOR: They had salmon at the dining, so I had a bunch of salmon and huddled underneath one of their heaters on the range and ate it before it got cold.

**Q. Just curious what, I mean, we have seen different COVID protocols across the TOUR, but is it any different this week being on multiple courses and is it odd at all?**

NICK TAYLOR: It's different this week because it's set up

on the range and there's no indoor designing. So that's the biggest difference. But it is the grab-and-go, which has been I think pretty much every week.

**Q. Secondly, the PGA of America, I don't know if you saw this or not, they're going to allow rangefinders at the PGA Championship this year. Do you see the TOUR ever doing that and what would be your argument for or against that? Is that news to you?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I had not heard that. The argument that I constantly hear with it is pace of play. I think there would be an adjustment period where I don't think speed would, I don't think pace of play would speed up at all because we're still trying to find front numbers. I think caddies would still be double-checking. In the case when you're way off line, of course rangefinders are going to speed up play. But yeah, that's interesting. I'm sure if you talked to caddies they would be against it because I think they take pride in what they do and it is a skill to get the angles, the numbers, and be confident that you get those numbers, where the rangefinder probably takes away a part of that. But that is news to me. That's interesting. I didn't know that.

**Q. Curious, when is the last time that you were able to get to Canada?**

NICK TAYLOR: I was there over December. Went back, flew back actually on Thanksgiving day in the U.S. and did our two weeks in quarantine. They pretty much were in lockdown, so we didn't really do a whole lot when we were back. But I've been back quite a bit. I think they just added some restrictions that I won't go back for probably quite some time now, which is unfortunate, but I was back from kind of mid-April through the end of June last year and went back a couple other times in between December. So I did my fair share of quarantine and all that jazz, but I think I'll be down here for quite some time.

**Q. What's your level of confidence on the PGA TOUR being able to play the Canadian Open there this year?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I don't know. I obviously want it to be held. Confidence-wise, it's just there's so many factors. With hockey only having their division, all the Canadian teams playing together, with more restrictions coming down, there's going to be some stuff they're going to have to figure out. Luckily it's four and a half months away so hopefully things can improve by then and we can make it work. But I would be lying if I said it doesn't look as good as it did maybe a year ago, or not a year ago, but like when they cancelled it in June.

**Q. How would you compare your game right now to**

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## **how you felt coming into last year's tournament?**

NICK TAYLOR: You know what? Relatively comparable. I think tee to green everything feels pretty good. Last year everything kind of came together. I was playing well really that whole season and I putted great last year. Everything was really solid. But short game-wise, it feels really good. I feel like I read these greens quite well and it's just hitting the shots now. There's a lot of memories I can go back on and play on. It's going to be different this year with new tees. It's probably not going to play as easy as it can play when it is the pro-am with certain tees that are up. The par-5s typically play a little shorter too. So my game does feel comparable. It's just one of those things where when things start clicking I can just ride the momentum. So hopefully I can get off to a good start and do that like last year.

**Q. You're the first Canadian man of your generation of Canadian golfers to get your second win on the PGA TOUR. Have you sort of exercised any of those bragging rights in practice rounds with the guys? And have you had, we have all had a lot of time to sit back and think this year, have you thought about what this second win meant to you and your career?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, there wasn't a lot of time with bragging rights right after I had won. And then when I came back in the summer everyone was whooping me, so I didn't really have a whole lot of bragging rights outside of that. But I think it's just to, you know, get a second win and kind of back up that first one I think meant a lot to me, proved that I could do it again. There was a long time period in there where I was in contention a little bit but definitely not as much as I would want. And to get the second one definitely I feel like has opened some doors, especially last year with tournaments, but also just kind of a mindset of opening it up and where more wins are definitely possible and kind of keep pushing to get better. So it did a lot for my confidence and my career. But yeah, I think bigger things ahead hopefully.

**Q. And Pebble Beach, I know it's a lot of guys favorite spot in golf. Mike Weir says it's his favorite course. Where did it rank for you and did it change last year, did it move up at all?**

NICK TAYLOR: It's always been for sure my top 5, top 3. It's hard for me to have a favorite course. When I play a course that I love, I always kind of say top 5. But it's always been there. The first time I got to play here was my first year on TOUR. I love every course that we play here. It's just, it's an amazing place and I feel like I played here so much with the U.S. Open in 2019 and playing here every year, that we're very fortunate to, that I get to play

this course, four, five rounds every year. So it's a special place. With the win it makes it more special, but every year we typically get family down here. It's just a great week. So I've always loved coming here.

**Q. Give us two others on your top 5.**

NICK TAYLOR: Sahalee in Seattle is up there. Oh, Shaughnessy's in Vancouver. That's a favorite of mine.

**Q. Tommy Gainey's too, I heard.**

NICK TAYLOR: I don't know if the U.S. Open's going to be there this year, but you never know. No. Those would be three that I would consistently say they're in my top 5. The other two I would have to get back to you.

**Q. The other thing, I know it's early, it's February and who knows what's going to happen this summer, but how much do you have Olympics as any of your checklist?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, it's a goal of mine, for sure. It was last year leading up to it, it is this year. Again, I'm sure there's a few unknowns if that will happen. There's rumors a couple weeks ago if it was going to be going on or not. But, yeah, it's a goal of mine, I would love to be able to represent my country in the Olympics. It's something that really wasn't on our radar 10 years ago. Everyone I talked to that experienced it said it definitely exceeded expectations. So I hope to be there, I have a lot of work to do to pass a few of the guys, but it's definitely a goal of mine.

**Q. When you talk goals, and it's kind of the setup to the one I wanted to ask you, people who say winning takes care of everything whether you're trying to move up in the rankings or whatever you're trying to do, can it be a trap at all to think about outcome as a goal? It's hard to win out here.**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, a hundred percent. I think Rory has talked about it, last week when I watched on the coverage, Jordan and Xander. If you're focused on your outcome, this sport can drag you down, because you can play great and someone can beat you and if you're disappointed because you lost, even though you played great, it's not a great thing to look at.

So there's a lot of process goals of how you want to get to those goals and if you kind of get stuck in that process, which you hear a lot of, I think you'll get better incrementally every day. And then process goals on the course is kind of I think when you forget about the result stuff and things take care of themselves. A lot easier said



than done.

But outcome goals are good to have, but if you're focused on them it can be bad too.

DOUG MILNE: Well, we will cut you loose, we appreciate your time and certainly wish you all the best this week. Thank you.

NICK TAYLOR: All right. Thanks, Doug.

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