

AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Patrick Cantlay to the interview room here at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Patrick is making his sixth appearance here. You have two top 10s here including a T-3 last year. Can you just open with your thoughts on being back here this week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it's one of my favorite places in the world. I love the Monterrey Peninsula and I love Pebble Beach and so every time I'm here I feel lucky and no different this week.

THE MODERATOR: So far this season you have two top 10s, including a ninth place finish at the American Express. Can you just talk about how you feel about your game entering this week.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, game has been good. I took a long time off and so now I'm back in the swing of things and going to have a bunch more starts here coming up and so everything's been good and just going to keep doing the same process that I've been doing, it's been working and I'm excited to have a bunch of events coming up.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please?

Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICK CANTLAY: I never did. They had changed venues before I qualified for one.

Q. Had you been here before you turned pro?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think so. I don't think I had played Pebble Beach until I was a pro.

Q. What is your next few weeks schedule?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Play next week in Phoenix and then L.A.

Q. And with the year you're coming off of and you already have two top 10s do you go into each week

thinking differently than you did before you started playing as well as you have been playing?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't. I feel like I want to get as prepared as I can for every week that I show up and the intention is to prepare to win the golf tournament.

Q. Was it love at first sight when you first played Pebble?

PATRICK CANTLAY: You know, actually I think did I play a round here when I was maybe 12 years old with my dad. But I had never played a tournament here until I was a pro. So, yeah, I think so. I mean, I love California golf and this is the epitome of California golf and so I think it's great and I definitely feel at home. I didn't pay when I was 12 either. (Laughing).

Q. How do you define when you say California golf, what does that mean to you?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I would say greens that are for the most part traditional and very severely sloped back to front. Poa annua greens and in general the properties are more condensed. There's less real estate so it feels like the properties are a little older in general and that's just golf I played growing up junior golf.

So I grew up at Virginia Country Club, which is a very old-school golf course and so whenever I'm on poa annua greens at a course like Pebble Beach it feels like I've played courses like that my whole life.

Q. What did you learn about yourself playing the Ryder Cup and how did that sort of change your place in the golf world do you think?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think I'm the right person to comment on where my position is in the golf world. I think that's more on everyone else. I would say definitely the Ryder Cup, there's so many expectations around what it's supposed to be, anticipation about what that event's supposed to be like and I think it lived up to all the hype, which things in life rarely do. So that was really exciting.



Also I just, that I love that type of environment and that moment and that the more pressure and the more intense it is the more I like it. So I really loved the Ryder Cup and everything that it brought out of me that week.

Q. What did you learn about Jordan Spieth being his teammate and maybe what you sort of see when you watch him did -- obviously you're worried about your own game -- but when you see Jordan what do you pick up from him, what do you admire about his game and the way he carries himself?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well I never played a match with Jordan. I've been on my Walker Cup team I was on with him. Same for Ryder Cup. We actually played nine holes today together. Jordan loves competition, it doesn't matter if it's throwing a water bottle in the trash can from 20 feet or trying to make a 25-footer to tie or win a match on the last hole.

I definitely remember watching him at the Walker Cup in 2011 and we were down, we ended up actually losing the Walker Cup, but I remember watching, I think he was in the lead match, if I remember correctly, on the second day in the afternoon and in singles. And I can't remember who he was playing, but it was blowing 40 miles an hour and our team room was inside, but had maybe almost like a one-way view of the first tee.

And he had got to the tee a few minutes early of the match and he was standing there in a way that made me think that he was definitely going to win his match. And he did.

Q. So standing in what way?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I wish I could tell you but if -- you know, sometimes you just get a feeling and it just looked like no matter what happened, no matter what break, no matter how he was feeling about his game, no matter anything that happened, he was going to win his match.

So I think certain people can be like that and when he's going, he can be one of those guys.

Q. (No Microphone.)

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yup, so was I.

Q. Who won today?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I got him by a shot.

Q. He didn't have that look on his face, I take it.

PATRICK CANTLAY: No. (Laughing).

Q. I want to go back to the Ryder Cup for a second. You've spoken about your emotion for the week and a lot of it is reactionary, it just brings it out of you. But have you gone back and watched any highlights of the Ryder Cup and if you have and you've seen yourself did you recognize yourself?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I've seen some highlights and, yeah, that definitely, how I looked is exactly how I felt. I would say that's normally true. I think it's just so much easier to make it feel like more important that week because you're playing for country, you're playing for the captains, you're playing for the guys on your team.

So to get excited, especially in match play, which is more visceral and more personal, and then all the fans that are there that are so amped up, it's just, it's easier for it to come out naturally, it doesn't feel forced.

Q. Secondly, and way off topic here and I hate hypotheticals, but I'm going to throw one at you anyway: If you didn't like Pebble so much, would you have at all been tempted to go over to Saudi Arabia for a very nice payday for the week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think with the amount of money they're talking about it's always very tempting. I think it's tempting for everybody. And to deny that would be, you know, maybe not true.

But I'm really glad that I'm here this week and I love Pebble Beach and so that definitely factored into my decision.

Q. Have you had any, have you taken a public position one way or another on how you feel about any type of a super league that may or may not be in the works?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I haven't. I don't think I've been asked. Which I didn't even, I don't even think you asked me right there.

Q. I will.

(Laughing.)

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it's a complicated thing and I don't think there's an easy answer. I think there's two sides to every coin and if people want to be more interested in golf and want to put more money into golf, I think that's a good thing. I think it's tricky because it's not always in the fashion that people would have expected or wanted and I would say at this point I'm definitely a curious observer as to see what happens and who decides to play.

Q. When they talk about -- I mean I heard this said over the last couple years, that if that's where everyone's going, if that's where the best players are, then that's where you need to be. But if you look at how many of the best players would it take for people to want to join them, yourself included?

PATRICK CANTLAY: It's a good question. I think definitely there's a want of the best players in the world to play against the other best players in the world and so it's hard to quantify exactly, because it's also not just a numbers game of how many, top however many players in the world, but individual people. Because some move the needle more than others and some are at the top of the game more than others.

And so it's a complicated equation, but I would say that people -- I wouldn't be surprised if people's tune changed quick if the best players, if a majority of the best players in the world wanted to play anywhere. Because if they did, I think there's a real desire of the most competitive people out here to play against the best players in the world almost no matter what.

Q. Last thing on that topic, do you get a steady diet of that already?

PATRICK CANTLAY: For sure.

Q. At Riviera or the majors or THE PLAYERS, etcetera?

PATRICK CANTLAY: You're saying in professional golf do you get enough?

Q. What you do now.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Oh, a hundred percent. I think we could play with each other more. I think there aren't actually that many times that all the best players in the world show up to the same event. Especially outside the majors or THE PLAYERS. So I think it would be great if they were, everyone was there more often.

But more of my point was, it almost doesn't matter who or what or where or how, if the best players in the world, a large percentage of them are playing, and the stakes are high and like all of them are there and I'm not there, I'm going to be disappointed, because that's exactly what I want to be doing.

Q. You do realize that part of the reason why you may not get as many good players together each week is because you're making too much money the way it is now. I mean, you take a look at back in the day, Jack

Nicklaus, Gary Player, Arnold Palmer, they didn't make anything close to this, so they had to play most of the time to play, to make money, to make a living. So, you're not suggesting that maybe you should get less so that you all play together more, are you?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Could you ask the question a little more specifically?

Q. Do you think that you make enough money out here as is?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Based on what?

Q. Well, I don't know, based on your living standards.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, of course. I mean, I have a great life out here on TOUR and I would say most guys out here that are playing only TOUR are very fortunate and grateful for playing on TOUR and being able to make such a nice living playing this game as a job. Because I think a lot of us would love to play golf even if it wasn't our job.

So being able to do it as our job, I think most everybody out here is overwhelmingly excited to wake up and do this every day and I think that's one of the great parts of being a professional athlete. Because you grow up and that's what you've always wanted to do and now we're out here doing it and you're doing it.

But it's an interesting stance to take that you think there's too much money in golf and therefore that's why people aren't all playing the same weeks against each other. I don't think that's true, I don't think that's the simplest answer to that question.

I think everyone shows up for THE PLAYERS Championship because all the best players are there, it's a premier venue, it's not a major, but it's a premier venue, they take care of everyone extremely well and the purse is higher, so everyone shows up to that week.

It might be a function of no tournament sticks out like THE PLAYERS Championship, other than THE PLAYERS on the schedule and if a few did, more of the best players in the world would play that week.

Q. What would you have to do to, if you were talking to a tournament director, what would you have to do to stick out as you say, to be considered something like that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think Jack Nicklaus at Memorial does an excellent job of that. Definitely when you step on property you feel a more personal touch at that

tournament. You feel almost like a member of the club. You drive up to valet, the gentlemen that work at the club valet your car. You walk in, you can always order off the menu, the food that week is fantastic. Jack's usually in the clubhouse, he's there saying hi to the people that he knows. You can, even if you don't know him and you're a rookie, you can go up and talk to him. The course is in almost perfect shape every single time we go there. The golf course is very, very good. You can go to the club and eat dinner at night if you would like.

The whole golf tournament, you know, it just feels a more personal touch and feels like they take care of the players better than other regular stops.

Q. Doug asked you about if you would have gone to Saudi. Were you approached or was your team approached about you going to Saudi?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yes.

Q. And so either the number wasn't good enough or you didn't want to travel all that far or you wanted to come here. What was it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well there's a, it's not one or the other, it's a multi-factored decision. And like I said, I love Pebble Beach and so I'm really excited about being here this week because it's one of the best golf courses on TOUR and one of my favorites.

Q. You mentioned your love for Pebble, but obviously this is one of the few weeks of the season where you guys play multiple courses. You mentioned your process. How do you adapt your process this week, if you have to, being that there are multiple courses and only so many days for a practice round?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it helps that this is my sixth start and so I don't necessarily feel like I have to go see all 54 holes before I play.

But, for example, I'll see what my tee time is tonight and I'll probably go play nine holes at whatever course I'm going to play Thursday to have a little more every week consistency as far as playing two days in a row on the same surfaces.

Q. You were asked earlier about sort of how a non-major stands out. In this event it obviously stands out because of the format and the program. But it struggled until the last few years to get a strong field. And it seems like it had gotten better and then this year obviously Saudi hurt. What can Pebble do, what can the AT&T do to get more top-30, top-20, top-10

players, do you think?

PATRICK CANTLAY: A date change would help. I mean February's tough up here and, you know, this is going to be a great week of weather and I'm always looking at the weather for this week every year because I know one in three is usually a downpour every day. So it always looks nice when the Champions Tour comes to town.

But I mean, I think there's a lot of good events on the West Coast and so any time there's a part of the schedule where there's lots of really good events it's tough to get premier fields.

Q. You mentioned earlier in response to the Ryder Cup question how nice it is to have fans and that atmosphere. Obviously this tournament last year no fans, no amateurs, seems like the atmosphere's going to be back, what are you expecting from the course and the fans this week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it should be great. I think part of the identity of this tournament is the amateurs and the fans and so last year was odd to say the least. Although I really enjoyed only playing Pebble and Spyglass and Pebble three times. But, yeah, I think this is what the tournament's all about. So I'm excited to have that buzz and that atmosphere around this week and I know the local community really supports this tournament and so do all the great amateurs that play. Because if you look at the list of amateurs that play this tournament, it's quite an impressive list.

Q. Coming back to California golf, you mentioned obviously also Riviera. Now which golf courses, what's your preference and why, between them?

PATRICK CANTLAY: That's a great question. I actually, I'll answer it this way: I would say if I could play any golf course with my buddies I would play Pebble Beach or Cypress Point because the walk is just unparalleled, the ocean's right there.

For tournament golf, I actually think Riviera may be the best tournament golf course in the country. There's no hardly any out of bounds except for maybe the 12th hole, there's no water, they don't actually really grow the rough up or narrow the fairways for that tournament week, it always has 14, 15-under as the winner, sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less. And they give you the first hole as kind of a 3-wood and a 6-iron par-5.

And so as far as golf courses go, the fact that there's no real, an amateur would say, scary shot. There's no shot where you have to hit it over water and if you cover by this

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much it's a birdie and if it hits the wind and it goes in the water it's a double bogey.

So tournament golf like that's really fun because it feels like your strategy's more important and yet no shot is more important than the other. And it's also a really tough test of golf.

Q. Did it take you awhile to get used to the length of the rounds and the fact that you're going to three different courses except for last year and do you know who your partner is this year?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, definitely. I would say the first year I played it definitely was a shock to the shuttles to all the different courses each day and I started at I want to say I started on the 10th at Monterey Peninsula, like early in the morning. So getting out there is not like normal tournament golf. But once you play it a few years I think you get used to it and you know what to expect.

And I'm plan to go play with David Solomon this week.

Q. I want to go back to Riviera for a minute. Does it surprise you that it's the longest standing 72-hole record, tournament record, you know what I mean, on TOUR?

PATRICK CANTLAY: What? Record for what?

Q. Low score. Low 72-hole score. That record hasn't been touched longer than any other one TOUR?

PATRICK CANTLAY: At Riviera?

Q. Yes. Does that surprise you and do you know who set it and do you know why it hasn't been broken since everything else has been?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't. What's the answer?

Q. Lanny Watkins. '85? 264, 20-under.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Wow.

Q. But if you look at how good everybody's getting and how much depth there is and a whole lot of things, every record is falling, why hasn't that one?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well Lanny must have been really on that week. (Laughing.) That's really good playing anywhere, especially Riviera.

Q. It was raining.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Okay. Conditions always play more of a factor to score than I think anybody gives credit for. Hawaii would be an example this year. It rained 11 inches the couple weeks before and then we got historically like hardly any wind and so conditions play more of a factor to score relative to par than the general person maybe thinks.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you for the time, Patrick.

PATRICK CANTLAY: All right. Thank you.

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