

# Chubb Classic presented by SERVPRO

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Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

## Notah Begay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Notah, thank you for joining us for a few minutes. Making your first start of the season out here. Just some thoughts on being here this week. I know you've been in the pro-am, so you've had a chance to get a lay of the land.

NOTAH BEGAY: I mean, anytime you're a rookie in anything, you're trying to just get a sense of what's happening out there. I got a sense of the competition, and now I'm just trying to get used to the golf courses. It's a new golf course for me basically every week. Playing in both pro-ams is a bit of an advantage, which I'm happy to do, and just looking forward to the competition. First event of the year, so don't have a whole lot of expectation, which means I'll probably play well.

### Q. How does this course set up for your game?

NOTAH BEGAY: Well, it's a second-shot golf course. The teeing areas are pretty generous, so players are going to have to really take advantage of hitting a lot of fairways and getting the ball in close. There are subtle breaks in the greens, and they're holding their speed pretty well right now, so just a matter of getting a few putts to drop and keeping the ball in play.

When you do miss the fairway it is pretty penalizing. If you happen to hit a couple errant drives, there's some big numbers out there.

### Q. How are you feeling about your game? I know you're still kind of knocking some rust off --

NOTAH BEGAY: I don't feel great. My kids had a two-hour school delay this morning for the snow in Albuquerque. I don't know what to expect. I haven't had a whole lot of time on the golf course. I was lucky I played two warmup events. I went down to Mexico and played in two Mexican Tour events, which was wonderful. They were great. Trying to scoop up some of those World Ranking points they have now down there.

### Q. Where did you play down there?

NOTAH BEGAY: I played in Querétaro, just north of Mexico City, and Cuernavaca last week. I made some friends in Mexico City over the past couple decades and just traveled down there to support their tour, number one. I'm just a supporter of developmental tours to get young players more access and just more opportunity, kind of in alignment with our junior golf initiatives.

There are a lot of young talented Mexican golfers, and I think it's important to have Mexican representation on the the U.S. PGA TOUR, so we lost that when a couple of our players moved to LIV, and it would be great to have a couple of these young guys to move on.

### Q. Looks like you have some bright young talent coming through?

NOTAH BEGAY: Absolutely. Quite a few of them are playing elite level Division I Power Five conference golf, and that's always a good indication of success to have a chance in playing on the PGA TOUR.

### Q. You say you're not really sure what to expect. What would you consider to be a successful first season for you out here?

NOTAH BEGAY: Well, I mean, this is a tough tour to keep your status. Just solidify my place out here with enough quality golf to maintain my playing status, and of course the overall objective is to win. I know that's something that is as crazy as it might sound, that's Tiger's goal this year, this week, and we had a couple chuckles about it. I said I wanted to come out here and focus on the ultimate prize, which is getting the trophy at the end of the week.

### Q. As far as your playing schedule versus your TV schedule, how is that looking?

NOTAH BEGAY: Will, I have a great relationship with NBC and The Golf Channel, so I'm going to continue to support their events when I can, and I love being on that broadcast team. We do a great job of covering golf, and we start next



week, and I'll be there for the first event in our Florida Swing.

**Q. Were you able to compare notes with Justin, seeing you guys are on a similar path?**

NOTAH BEGAY: Justin and I have become really good friends through our television experience. We have a lot of good times, and yeah, we do compare notes and we support each other, and I want to see him do well.

**Q. Did you guys play a handful of rounds early in broadcast days or on the road?**

NOTAH BEGAY: Yes, with modern television, the TV window is never ending, so it kind of cramped our golfing time. We did get out, and it was great. We were both not very good at that time, so we needed some work. Hopefully we're a little bit sharper now.

**Q. Do you know what events you're going to be in?**

NOTAH BEGAY: For TV?

**Q. No, for playing.**

NOTAH BEGAY: Pretty much all of them. Fully exempt position, so there might be a couple where I might need some help, but like they say, and it's been said for decades, good play solves all those problems.

**Q. What was your takeaway from the handful of starts in the fall?**

NOTAH BEGAY: Just the low scores. You've got to get off to a quick start. 72 holes you can sort of work your way back from the middle of the pack but not in these events because the players continue to shoot low scores deep into the tournament. If you get off to a slow start, you really have to come up with a big round to contend for the event. Just look at the consistency of Langer; Steven Alker did a wonderful job the last regular season event; the SAS Championship got off to a slow start and then finished strong at the end. Only Freddie was able to come back with that incredible round.

**Q. There was a lot of interest in the early pro-am round at Riv today and everyone is talking about expectations for Tiger. You're as close to him as anyone. What are your expectations?**

NOTAH BEGAY: I think a successful week for him to be to complete 36 holes somewhat comfortably on that leg. If he's able to make that cut, I think that's a huge bonus, but just to sort of see where the stability is at. The last time we

spent some time together was at our junior golf national championship when Charlie played. He wasn't playing but was watching his son, so we had a lot of chance to just talk about some of the physical challenges, what his strategies were to address some deficiencies in stability, movement and strength, and we're three months removed from that, so he's had 60 to 90 days to implement that strategy. He looked good moving yesterday, and now it's just a matter of how much endurance does he have in the leg to sort of sustain 72 holes plus a pro-am.

**Q. Do you still get excited seeing his name in the field?**

NOTAH BEGAY: Oh, my God, I just get as excited as anybody else. Just because I know that at any given moment, something special could just break open. I've seen it so many times. Some of the best shots that I've seen from Tiger Woods was in rounds that it was just him and I out there, and I looked at it and how he did it, and I'm like, nobody else could do those sorts of things.

It's just spectacular for golf, especially with where we're at and just sort of trying to reestablish our identity with this Tour moving forward, and to have him sort of at the helm and with a lot of the other wonderful players that have really supported the TOUR through all this I think is amazing, and the way he's really stepped forward has demonstrated a lot of charisma and leadership on his part, which hasn't always been the case historically, but to see him sort of mature into that leadership role has been just wonderful for me.

**Q. Do you have one tough shot from a fun round, just the two of you that he pulled off?**

NOTAH BEGAY: Yeah, we were playing at the Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes and he had a half buried lie in a fairway bunker that I thought he was only going to be able to advance about 200 yards. He took a 2-iron out, and it was like the hand of God smacked the back of this ball because he flew it on the front edge about 236. I went over and I looked at the divot, and I just was like, nobody else could have done that with the skill and the power and the accuracy. I think he went up and made the putt, which made me even more mad because I lost the hole.

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