

# RBC Heritage

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Patrick Cantlay

### Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Patrick Cantlay to the interview room here at the RBC Heritage 2023.

Thanks for making some time for us. Eight-time winner on the PGA TOUR, 2021 FedExCup champion. Coming in here off a busy week at Augusta National. What's it like making that transition from Augusta National to RBC Heritage just down the road? What's the feeling like when you get here?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, the course is obviously much different, different grasses and a totally different feel. This golf course this week is very much about position, so length isn't as much of a factor as it was last week, and the greens are some of the flat test actually that we play on TOUR. It's a little bit of an adjustment, but something we do every year.

**Q. You've had a lot of success here. This will be your sixth start. You played five times, top tenned four times. Why do you perform so well here? What shapes up for you with this golf course?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think you have to be able to work the golf ball both ways around here because it's so confined and the trees shape pretty much every hole and demand that you have to hit either a little left-to-right or a little right-to-left shot, and that's something that I really like about this place. You just have to be really smart and leave your golf ball in the right spot and have great control of your golf ball this week if you want to contend.

**Q. Talk about your energy levels coming off last week.**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, last week was a busier week than usual, and with the weather and the early starts, a little tired, but I took yesterday off, so I should be fine.

**Q. Just this event, it's always been that kind of decompression after the Masters. Now being elevated, is there any -- how will you adjust to it being a massive tournament as opposed to a working holiday sort of thing?**



# RBC Heritage

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I've played this tournament pretty much every year because I really like the golf course. I'm not treating it too different than any of the years past. For me it's always been a great tournament with lots of great champions over the years, so I'd love to have a chance to put my name up on the list.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk about this sort of being the end of a grounding stretch of a lot of big events. How long did it take you to find a schedule rhythm that worked for you, and how much has what we have this year changed that or impacted that?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, for me, I play really the golf courses that I like to play, and fortunately it worked out this year that a lot of the elevated events were tournaments that I've already played and golf courses that I've liked. It hasn't changed the schedule too much for me.

It is a busy stretch. There's lots of big tournaments. It's pretty much March to pretty much August there's big tournaments. You get a little break middle of the summer before the Playoffs start up. But I think that's on purpose. Ultimately, I think it's a good thing for the game, and you just have to be really wise about making sure you take enough time off in between some of these big tournaments this spring and summer.

**Q. Do you think it makes more sense to have a designated event the week before a major or the week after a major?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think it makes too big a difference either way. I think we're going to see another week after with U.S. Open and Travelers, and there may be a little major letdown after the major, having a little lull coming into this week just because everyone gets so amped up for the Masters.

All in all, I don't think it's too big a deal, and a lot of guys prefer playing a couple weeks in a row as opposed to one week at a time. I don't think it's necessarily a good or a bad thing.

**Q. Do you think we'll see that next year again? Is that right they're going to try to keep designated events**

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

## **clumped together with each other?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it's important not to have a tournament like Honda that we had this year where there were so many big tournaments on the bookends of that tournament that basically no one played that tournament, or should I say a lot of the top players play in that tournament.

I do think it's important to be smart about how you get the cadence of the schedule, and something that I know everyone is very tuned into.

**Q. Brooks Koepka shared some comments just kind of pointed at your group about the final-round pace of play at Augusta. I was just curious what your experience was with the pace out there.**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I mean, we finished the first hole, and the group in front of us was on the second tee when we walked up to the second tee, and we waited all day on pretty much every shot. We waited in 15 fairway, we waited in 18 fairway. I imagine it was slow for everyone.

**Q. Obviously last year at this course you played great, got into the shootout at the end. Looking back on that and with the experience you have here, is there anything that you've changed coming into this course compared to how you handled it last year? Was there something you looked back and said, if I played this hole differently I would have come out on top? How are you approaching it this year?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Nothing has really changed. I feel like I have a good game plan for this golf course. I think it's really important to leave yourself in the right spot off the tee, and if you do get in trouble off the tee, I think it's important to get it back into position as fast as possible. I think mistakes can compound around here because once you get off the beaten track, it can get hard to get back on track.

This golf course really rewards patient, solid golf, which I think is one of my strengths, so it's a golf course I really like.

**Q. You've had a couple of good finishes here. Does that send you into this week maybe expecting a little bit more, hoping for a little bit more?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it's definitely one of the weeks on the schedule that I look at and look forward to because of how well I play the golf course and how much I like it. I feel like it's one of the better stops on TOUR for me and

gives me a chance to play well.

**Q. Following up on what you were saying about the designated events, is this an event that you think most players would like to see continue as one moving forward?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think so. As I alluded to earlier, I think there's been a lot of great champions here and a ton of history, and it's one of the iconic stops on TOUR.

It's also a different type of challenge this week given that it's so positional and it's so tree-lined and the landing areas are so small. I think it's a nice change of pace from the normal TOUR event that we play.

**Q. To follow up on the one question, it's hard to believe that 50 guys would have a hard time getting around in twosomes at Augusta National, but they did. Slow play seems to be an issue out here all the time. How do you look at that? Do you see that as a problem, and if so, what's the solution?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, one thing that's interesting sitting on the PAC is you get all the numbers and the data, and rounds have taken about the same length of time for the last 10 or 20 years that they currently take. When you play a golf course like Augusta National where all the hole locations are on lots of slope and the greens are really fast, it's just going to take longer and longer to hole out.

I think that may have been what attributed to some of the slow play on Sunday, and then also when the wind is gusting and the wind is blowing maybe inconsistently, that's when guys will take a long time, too. I think that's just the nature of playing professional golf, where every shot matters so much.

**Q. You are one of the great names on the PGA TOUR; I want to ask you about Jon Rahm's performance last week. What impressed you more, the first double bogey on the first hole or how steady he played on the last day with Brooks Koepka?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I wasn't able to watch really much. Jon and I, I think, had similar tee times. I think the most impressive thing is he had the worst side of the wave like I did and still won.

**Q. You're in a featured group on Friday morning with Collin Morikawa and Corey Connors. When the tee times come out do you pay attention to that to see which side of the draw you get and who you're playing with?**



PATRICK CANTLAY: I feel like the side of the draw usually evens itself out over the course of a number of years out here. I don't like one way or the other, early-late or late-early but you always sneaky hope that you get the less-wind wave.

**Q. A lot of guys when they talk about courses on TOUR, they reference whether or not they seem fair. They use that word "fair" a lot. Does this strike you as a fair golf course?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think some golf courses are more fair than others. One of the reasons why I like Riviera is I think it's maybe the fairest test that we play all year.

Fair means probably different things to different people. To me, it means that a large number of the shots aren't more important than the other shots, so we'll play a place like TPC Sawgrass where the wave that you get or a wind switch could be two shots. At Riviera, a wind switch usually just means you're playing from the front apron and you have an easy up-and-down, if it were to be coming at you and pick up. That's why I think Riviera is fair.

This golf course has a lot of fair holes, but then you get like 14 on the back nine, which you can see carnage there, that par-3, because there's such a small area, and if you play in perfect conditions, it's totally fair. You know exactly what you need to do. But if you're playing on a blustery day and then the wind is up or the wind is down or the wind switches, you could look like a fool on that tee shot and hit what you thought was a perfect tee shot.

I don't think it's the most fair golf course that we play like a Riviera, but it's definitely fairer than a lot of others.

**Q. Just to finish off your exit interview from the Masters, what grade would you give yourself from the week, and is there anything that you learned?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think a lot of my game was really good. I think I had pretty high marks across the board except I didn't putt well. So I'm a little bummed at that.

I think it's just good to see Augusta in every condition. I hadn't played it when it was raining that hard or that soft before, and so it definitely makes it a different challenge. We've had a number of years there now with less-than-ideal weather. It's a golf course that probably plays best when it's firm and fast.

If we get another rainy year, I think that the memories from this last week will help if we have another year like that.

**Q. You talked about this golf course. We hear players talk about using their imagination on shots. Can you do more of that here, or do you have to resist that temptation because the corridors decide what you do?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think you have less options but you still have to shape the golf ball, so you need imagination, too, because you're always having to hit shots that are turning, even on some of the straight holes because there's trees that are in the way, and then add in a little wind. You do have to have some imagination about how you're going to shape your golf ball. But it's less of a blank canvas and more of a color between the lines.

**Q. When you look at your performances here, are you encouraged by your play, or is it at all frustrating that you haven't won this event?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, it's definitely encouraging. I think the more chances you get to win golf tournaments, that's eventually how you do win lots of golf tournaments. The guys who win don't just win and then finish 10th. They have lots of top finishes, and then some of the weeks they win.

It's definitely a golf course that I like, and all the good play that I've had here I think is great for the future for me around this place.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Patrick. We appreciate your time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports