

RBC Heritage

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Wyndham Clark

Press Conference



RBC Heritage

THE MODERATOR: We will get started. We'd like to welcome Wyndham Clark to the media center at the RBC Heritage. Just some opening comments on what it's like being back at Harbour Town this week.

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's one of my favorite weeks. I love this golf course and really enjoy the island, and the fans are fantastic here. It's always been an enjoyable week.

Q. Just the challenge of this golf course in general, being very different to maybe the layout from last week. Talk about what stands out to you here at Harbour Town.

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I really like -- I think everyone loves this event, and it's really refreshing for everyone because typically on TOUR and in major championship golf it's about a lot of distance and hitting it far and you have a lot of long irons in, and then you come to Harbour Town and it's all about placement and accuracy, and you're not hitting many drivers.

Yeah, it's a really great week, and it's fun, and it's kind of classic golf. You just enjoy yourself out there. It's a fun walk, and you find yourself shaping shots. I really enjoy it.

Q. Is it difficult to make that transition so quick from what Augusta demands compared to what this golf course demands?

WYNDHAM CLARK: No, I don't think so. Augusta last week on Thursday and Friday was at the extreme that any golf course could ever be at, especially with the conditions of the wind, and getting back to playing this golf course is more what we're used to. The green speeds, everything about it is just a little bit more of what we're used to as far as the conditions.

Q. What do you take away from how last week went for you?

WYNDHAM CLARK: You know, I learned a lot. It was obviously frustrating. I didn't go in thinking that was going

to be how my week went.

I was just really bummed that my first Masters experience was under such extreme conditions because I felt like I was playing good golf, but going off late on Friday was very challenging, and the wind honestly spooked me on the greens. I hit a couple putts that were uphill, downwind, and I hit them four, five feet by, and then ever since that happened on the 3rd hole, I wasn't getting putts there.

I was just a little spooked. My game was there. That's what was frustrating is I hit a lot of great shots, I just didn't score.

I'm just putting that as a tough draw. Didn't putt well, but that's one week, and moving on to this week.

Q. Other than the conditions, is there anything that surprised you about Augusta, anything you were expecting that was different from what you thought it would be?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I would just say it's amazing the condition from when you play it in a practice round let's say four or five weeks prior to then what it is in a tournament. I mean, it's like they turn a switch on, and then the golf course is rock hard and very fast. When you just play there just for fun, it's a totally different golf course, a lot more benign. That was probably the only thing that really surprised me.

Outside of that, I was pretty prepared for it. I grew up watching that tournament a ton and I felt like I knew what was going to be thrown at me. It was just more the condition of it was surprising.

Q. I was reading yesterday that the ratings for the Masters were pretty significantly down. I was curious from a professional's angle, are you still connected to the average fan at all, whether it's through friends or people like that, and if the answer to that is yes, have you noticed a difference in how they feel about professional golf since everything that's been happening with the schism between the TOUR and LIV?



WYNDHAM CLARK: See, I just find it really hard to believe that ratings are down. If you're at the tournament, it's fantastic. I think people that I do know that are watching it loved it. I think golf is growing. I think golf sales have grown. I know golf memberships are growing. It makes no sense that the professional level that the viewership would be down.

In my thought, is it because everyone is streaming and people are watching it from different avenues than maybe the normal telecast? I think that's in my opinion a little bit of a skewed stat because it makes no sense that every part of the game is growing but yet the professional level isn't. That's kind of my opinion on that.

Q. Putting last week aside, you've been the closest to Scottie this last month and a half or so. We've talked to a bunch of guys who feel like there is a bit of a gap between him and what everyone else is doing. Do you feel like there's a gap between him and everyone else?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, yeah. Scottie is the best player in the world right now, and he's been so consistent. That's one thing that I've really -- I've been trying to get better at. I think when my game is on and his game is on, I think we both can battle it out, and I believe I can win tournaments against Scottie when he's playing well.

But the thing that I really am impressed by him is just the consistency that he's always in contention, and either he wins or he finishes kind of top 5. I do think there's a little gap right now, and I'm hoping as I progress as a player mentally and physically and everything that maybe by the end of the year or sometime next year maybe I've closed that gap a little bit.

Q. You obviously want to beat him, but do you feel like it's good for the game to have a dominant force where everyone feels like they're chasing someone?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I think it's better for players like myself because it's challenging us to get a lot better and play better, and I think it just brings the overall quality of play up significantly when someone is playing that good all the time. I think everyone looks at themselves in the mirror and goes, what do I need to get better at because you feel like you're playing good golf and you're not beating him.

I think it is good. I think it would be great if we could have multiple guys that are kind of battling it out all the time.

I don't know if that's me or could be someone else, but I would love for it to be me, and I'm working as hard as I can to be that person.

Q. What exactly do you have to do, do you think, to get better?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I know exactly. I've got to improve my putting consistently. I think my short game at the beginning of this year until now has not been at the level that I think is has been in the past and can be, and then I think for me, I've got to be a little bit more focused on the golf course. I have been hitting some shots and making some kind of -- just dumb plays not based off of course management or anything but just simply hitting shots without being focused and losing shots there.

As I look at my game, those are probably the three things that I think I can improve on that if I'm shaving one shot a day, I win maybe -- maybe I'm in a playoff against him at Bay Hill and then I win THE PLAYERS and then maybe it would be a different conversation. That's stuff I've got to work on.

We'll see. It could happen overnight or it could be a year or two from now.

Q. You mentioned obviously being at Augusta. There were two former Masters champions that were over 60 and made the cut. Can you just talk about how difficult that must have been to be over 60 and make the cut at that tournament?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I imagine they went off in the morning on Friday, but no, that's amazing. That's actually very impressive that they did that. I didn't know that that happened.

It was probably one of the worst cuts I've ever missed. I bogeyed so many holes on the back nine and made some dumb mistakes. But yeah, Augusta, the good thing about Augusta is I think you can play it at all levels because it is pretty forgiving off the tee, and then if you're really smart on where you place the ball, you can always have a shot to get it up-and-down, and I imagine that's what they did. But yeah, very impressive.

Q. To follow up on a previous comment, do you equate or can you make an equation between amateur golf and municipal golf and people that just play golf for fun and the PGA TOUR, and do you see that what happens on the PGA TOUR actually equates to what happens in regular golf?

WYNDHAM CLARK: What do you mean by that?

Q. You're talking about fans and their interest. Is it possible that fans lose interest to some extent because they might be interested in playing golf and

being a golfer but they're not as interested in watching professional golf anymore?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I mean, it doesn't -- I don't think that equates to any other sport, so I don't know why that would happen in golf. In my opinion.

I would really like to know if the stats that they have for viewership going down in professional golf, if that's just from normal NBC Sports, cable television. Then yeah, no one at my age right now is consuming TV via cable. They're doing it on streaming -- if that's Amazon or whatever it is. They're streaming it. I would just like to know if that stat is from that because if it is, then I think it's a skewed stat.

Anyone that I know that plays at municipal golf courses or private golf courses that are not professionals, they love golf, and they love to consume golf, and they're always constantly cheering me on or sending me texts, and they know everything I did.

I'm a small sample size, but from the people that are around me that are my friends, they seem to watch a lot of golf, and they also play a lot of golf.

Q. Have you noticed a difference in how people treat you or how many people know you or how fans interact with you since your Netflix episode came out?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, it's been really nice. From my understanding, my episode was really good and people enjoyed it, and I've received that from the fans when I'm out here even just in practice rounds. People have said nice things or brought up -- one of the most rewarding things is people have brought up stories that maybe -- similar things of them going through tough times, and for me, that's been really nice because I get to share those moments with those people, and maybe I can encourage them or we can both reminisce on people we've lost or whatever it is. It's been really nice.

Q. Did you watch your episode?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I still haven't watched it.

Q. Is there a reason or just haven't gotten to it?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Honestly, I don't like hearing myself talk or watching myself I think is really just weird to me. Then also I lived it, so I don't -- some of that stuff you don't really want to relive. It's in the past.

Q. When you look up and down the wins that you've had, Quail Hollow, LACC, Pebble Beach, they're not

really the same type of golf course. When you experience a week like last week or this week or just in the normal cadence of the season, does it feel like your game can travel to any sort of course? I know some people say this course isn't great for me, but it would seem like based on your track record there's not really a prototypical type of course that you'd be good at.

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, that's always something that has bothered me is when people say this course is perfect for you when I go to the tournament because one, it puts expectations on me and I feel like okay, if I don't win then I'm really not doing well. In golf, it's so hard to win.

The other thing that's bothered me about that is I feel like I've worked so hard at my game to be able to play at any golf course, and so you come to a place like Harbour Town and yes, it is not a bomber's golf course, but I would like to think my game is more refined than just being someone that hits it far and then wedges it somewhat close and plays the par-5s good.

Yeah, so courses like this kind of give me a little chip on my shoulder to try to go prove that I can play any kind of golf course and I can be really accurate and hit it straight and do things like that.

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