

THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson

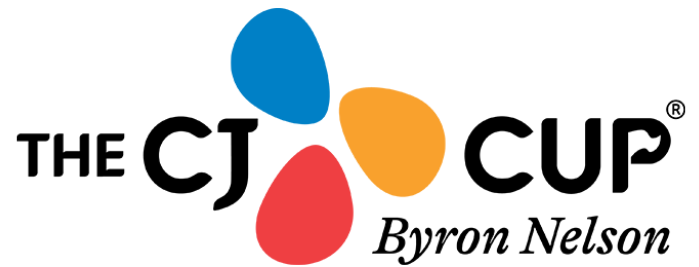
Tuesday, April 30, 2024

McKinney, Texas, USA

TPC Craig Ranch

Hayden Springer

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Afternoon. We would like to welcome Hayden Springer to the CJ CUP Byron Nelson.

Hayden, making your tournament debut. Just get some comments about obviously a place and tournament where you have fond memories.

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yes. It's an exciting week for me because I grew up coming to this tournament, and so I have a lot of memories from when I was really little.

My dad would take me on Monday or Tuesday, come out to a practice round, and so it's special for me now to get to be playing in this event.

Q. You have any specific memories coming out to this tournament? Maybe at what age was the first one or any specific players you remember or past winners.

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I want to say I was really little, like maybe five or six the first time that I came out. I bet we came for maybe seven or eight years in a row. We would come out and I just -- the main thing I remember is I would come with an empty hat and I would leave and my hat would be covered in autographs from everybody.

That's the thing that I remember most, just being excited to see all the guys and then try and get everybody's autograph that I possibly could.

This just came to me, but I think it's Tim Herron, he would play this event most every year. My dad really liked him. He was a popular guy because he would eat and drink some different things on the course.

I do remember seeing that as a kid, yeah.

Q. Any other player names that stand out getting signatures?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I feel like I remember, or I know for sure my dad remembers Corey Pavin. He I think ran back and I had fractured my ankle and I was hobbling around,

and he made an effort to jog back and sign my hat.

But I feel like I remember like Sergio and Vijay and some of the big name guys. I remember watching them hit balls on the range and being excited about that.

Q. Byron Nelson high school graduate, so Byron was probably obviously someone you looked up to or knew about a lot growing up.

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, he's obviously a big name in golf, you know, historically one of the best.

And then going to Byron Nelson High School and kind of getting to have that legacy carry over to my high school team. And then his wife Peggy was a part of some of our events and we got to know her as well. So that was pretty special.

But, yeah, it's kind of a cool story to have played at Byron Nelson High School and now to be playing in this event.

Q. We kind of touched in this a little bit walking up here. With the fine line of golf and how this time last year your status on Korn Ferry Tour and PGA TOUR Canada was a little uncertain, can you reflect on that journey in terms of big moments in the tournament in Wichita last year that helped propel you in a way to where you were now?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, I got conditional Korn Ferry status in December 2022, but that kind of comes with uncertainty. You don't know what you're going to get into and all that.

So I ended up getting a few sponsor exemptions and then one of those being in Wichita. That was the only cut that I made and I finished somewhere around 50th.

That reshuffled me up a little bit, but it was kind of in the middle of the season, later in the season, so didn't reshuffle me enough to get more Korn Ferry starts.

I played the summer in Canada out of the Korn Ferry category up there. Yeah, I ended up winning a couple of those events and finishing first on the Order of Merit, and



that got me to final stage of Q-School this past year and a TOUR card from there.

Q. Is it kind of wild thinking about how big the putt you made on the last hole Friday in Wichita could have been for you in the sense of the next year?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, I guess if I don't make that putt to make the cut in Wichita, I wasn't even in any Canada events, right? Thinking about it, maybe I wouldn't even have been able to play any events in Canada and maybe I'm starting at first stage of Q-School this past year. That's a pretty tough spot to be in.

Q. Playing Canada, the decision to go play Canada and give that full bore, kind of speak to what that decision process was like, kind of the things you weighed at that time to decided to go up and play there last summer?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I went back and forth talking to my wife and my parents and trying to figure out does it make sense to go play in Canada or does it make more sense to just keep playing Mondays. But Mondays are so hard. It's so hard to it Monday enough times to get enough points to really make anything of it.

We ultimately decided that let's go give Canada a shot and it ended up being the right decision.

Q. You won two out of last three starts in Canada. Incredible run. Was there any key swing thought or key or thing that clicked in those three weeks, and how would you describe that run? It was a good top 10 in between, too.

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, I had seen my coach. We had I think maybe a couple weeks -- I did four events. Couple weeks off and then the last three. So I saw my coach in between those two stretches.

We found a little thing and I start hitting it really good, and then kind of got myself out in the lead early in that tournament in Winnipeg, and the Friday round is really the one that stands out to me. It was probably blowing 25 or 30 and I think I shot 65 and like I shot out in front.

But, yeah, I mean, I definitely hit the ball really, really good during that three-week stretch and then was able to just kind of keep it rolling and kind of get it done once I got in the lead.

Q. With first season here seeing these courses, a lot of times first time around, have you played or been out to TPC Craig Ranch or first time playing this course?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I've been out a couple times this year already. Just living in the area it makes it pretty easy. Then I played here a handful of times in different junior golf tournaments.

That was obviously a long time ago. But at least sort of familiar with it. I think they've redone it maybe since then. I've been out here a couple times this year.

Q. Any sense of comfort having this and then again Charles Schwab Challenge, a lot of Texas events being from the area?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, it's nice to be at home and to be in Texas. Kind of familiar with everything, and especially as it gets hotter and all that. Used to the heat.

But I'm really looking forward to playing this week and then hopefully some of these other events in Texas.

Q. What friends and family can you expect to have out this week?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: We've got both -- I've got my parents and my wife's parents, and then I think I should have a pretty good group following me from the golf course that I grew up at, Trophy Club Country Club. I think there will probably be quite a few guys come out and watch me.

Q. What was your secret for getting so many autographs at this tournament?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: My dad shoving me and saying, you know, don't be afraid. (Smiling.)

But, you know, I don't know. That was a long time ago. (Laughter.)

Q. Can you remember coming to this tournament and thinking, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, I definitely. I mean, early on kind of this was a dream that was in my head to play professional golf, to do it at the highest level.

Definitely being able to get up close and just kind of be able to interact, even if it's just getting an autograph, you know, it definitely helped to fuel that dream.

Q. What's been the biggest surprise so far from your rookie year? What did you not expect?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I would say probably just the time



management and the energy management of playing. Even though I haven't necessarily played like three- or four- or five-week stretches consistently, this will be my tenth event this year, so just kind how much energy it takes playing out here with all that goes on, a little bit higher stakes, all that stuff versus maybe some other events.

I think that's probably been the thing that's stood out to me the most and something I'm trying to learn as quickly as I possibly can to be better moving forward.

Q. Canada, I know you were 51st with three events left. As you were climbing up, did it occur to you what could be by winning the points list, or were you just in such a flow that numbers and status things were kind of blacked out?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I definitely paid attention to where I stood and what was at stake. I tried to just block it out as much as I could. You know, it never really serves you that well to think about the results. It can be hard not to think about the results, but I definitely try to just put that in the back of my mind.

I was also playing well, too, which makes it easier, right? When you're in that flow and things are working right, it's easier to kind of block it out.

Q. What was the off course routine like in Canada? Did you travel with anyone?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: Yeah, I traveled with a buddy of mine. We pretty much did I guess really like the last six events. We stayed together, traveled together, all that stuff.

And so it's not too dissimilar to being out here. You're playing practice rounds and practicing as much as you can, and then trying to rest and all that.

But it is nice to kind of have somebody to travel with and guys to hang out with when you're not on the golf course.

Q. What was the routine of when you would call home? Emma and your family. Pre-round, post-round, what was that?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: It was kind of just whatever worked, whatever the timing was. You know, definitely at night would call and we would talk.

Sometimes if you tee off early or whatever with time differences and all that we wouldn't talk. But I would say after a couple weeks I'm ready to get back home so I was always FaceTiming and calling and all that stuff.

Q. And then last couple ones: Looking back at final stage, such a magical week to finish Top 5 and get your card. What do you think about when you look back to that week, final stage of Q-School and getting your card?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: It's kind of a blur honestly. I think just the emotions of Q-School are already heightened because you know you got 72 holes and if you don't do it, you got to wait a year to try again.

But then also coming off the last couple months and, you know, finishing first in Canada and all of that, looking back it kind of feels like a blur, but I think I take some -- there is some good takeaways from it.

Just, you know, you never know what's going to happen, so every week you tee it up there is a new opportunity, so just trying to stay patient and just continuing to move forward.

There will be times when everything comes together.

Q. Do you do anything for mental wellness in terms of meditating, reading, journaling?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I read a little bit. I think mostly when it comes to mental wellness it's more faith based for me. My identity is not on the golf course. It's not in what people might think of me or anything like that.

It's in Jesus, the truths of the Bible. So that kind of foundationally for me is where my mental health and wellness is based.

Definitely reading, exercise, those things are not only important for mental health, but performance on the golf course.

Q. What's something that you know about Byron Nelson that maybe others in the field this week don't from having gone to school there?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: That's a good question. (Smiling.) I don't know if I -- I think the only thing maybe is I've seen his -- there is like a medal from Augusta from winning the Masters that he has that Peggy has, so I've seen that.

I don't know if that's -- maybe other people have seen it. I don't know. She's shown the team. In high school she showed our team that.

Q. And one more if you don't mind: What clicked during the week of Puerto Rico that maybe hasn't the

rest of the season?

HAYDEN SPRINGER: I think it's mostly comes down to iron play. I hit my irons maybe a little bit better that week. You know, there is such a fine line in terms of playing well and then not playing well.

You know, I mostly think it's going to be hitting -- somewhere around hitting my irons a little bit better, hitting the ball closer, and getting more realistic birdie chances.

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