

American Century Championship

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Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Nova

Jester

Press Conference



Air Force T-38 Flyover - pilot interviews

THE MODERATOR: We have a number of special guests with us here today to share their views with you. But first, speaking of views, let's take a look at this footage from yesterday. I'd like to introduce to you call sign Jester and call sign Nova -- and their significant others. Thank you, guys, for being here.

I'd also like to acknowledge a couple of gentlemen that intimately involved with planning this from American Century Investments, Uri Shansky. Thank you for your work. And we were also talking about a former pilot, I believe it's been 12 years.

And Bert Tomasino is here with us. Burt's been intimately involved with the flyover. He's the flyover coordinator, reconnaissance wing, at Beale Air Force base. Burt, thank you for being here. Being a pilot is in the family. His father, Vito, was a long time Air Force pilot.

Tell us what that felt like flying over Tahoe on this one.

JESTER: It felt absolutely awesome. We practice. We train, we want to be as precise as possible. It gave us a chance to show that precision and all that speed to a great crowd and show our patriotism as well. I think we all love Lake Tahoe. We all love the environment. We love our country and the opportunity to fly and showcase that was great. It felt awesome.

NOVA: Well, my view was Jester the whole time, just staring at him, trying to hang on. But flying over Lake Tahoe is a special place for us. Since we are based in this region, a lot of places that we can fly over. This is such a beautiful, beautiful place. So I did get a couple good snippets when I would look away from his wing a couple times and see the people out on Lake Tahoe, I was able to see the golf course moving past, it's really a great place.

Q. How fast were those T-38s going yesterday?

JESTER: Really fast. The T-38 is a great jet. It does not go slow. That's the one thing it does really well. It goes fast and hopefully you got to see some of that.

Q. You were at a 1000-foot altitude. That's the maximum you can be -- minimum you can be going over the lake?

JESTER: We have very strict rules how we do our flyovers, and we follow that to a T. And we were a 1000 feet above ground level as fast as we can go and low as we can go, and hopefully we gave you a great show.

Q. The folks out on 17, you saw the video. I know you hadn't seen that. You saw the Douglas County sheriff's Color Guard out there, they did a great job, abbreviated version of Jimi Hendrix's National Anthem, which was fun for everybody. I'll tell you what, when you buzzed by, the place went nuts. Everybody was chanting, "USA! USA!" I understand you've been buddies and flying for many years?

JESTER: Yes, Nova taught me to fly in the glider back in the day at the Air Force Academy. I've been learning from him for two decades and I'll continue to learn from him as long as he lets me.

NOVA: He was my boss.

Q. Where would you rank this location being able to do a flyover in terms of all of your experiences being able to do these?

NOVA: Fortunately, we've both had a nice long career, and we've had an opportunity to go to so many places all over the world. This is definitely one of the most gorgeous places to do it.

And the event here, especially the hospitality event showed us, that combined with the location, the weather yesterday was absolutely perfect. This is going to be one of the top memories in my career, I think.



JESTER: We usually fly places that, for mission requirements, aren't necessarily going through the best experiences at the time. We're trying to help people out in need.

This was a great experience because we were practicing for that, but we were doing it in an environment where everyone's having fun, everyone's feeling good. And we really love the camaraderie and the sportsmanship at this event. And it was great, absolutely top.

Q. You mentioned the precision. Essentially like that last note hits and you guys go right over the 17th. How do you guys do that and how difficult is it to pull something like that off?

JESTER: Well, it's a little bit of math and a lot of athleticism. So the little bit of math was just to make sure that all our planning we had done prior had the assumptions valid and the assumptions met. If they didn't meet our assumptions, that's where the athleticism comes in and we make it happen.

So the Air Force, airmanship is -- a big part of what we do every single day is precision and speed and this is no different. This really helps us practice that precision.

We're always going to make it as perfect as we can. And if we don't make it perfect, we're going to beat ourselves up until we do.

Q. You mentioned flying together for a long time. How important is that in terms of how close you guys were going through the air together?

NOVA: That's incredibly important. Trust is a big part of everything we do. In every aspect of flying, you have to have trust. Whether it's trust in the maintainers, trust in the engineers, trust in our life-support folks, everybody around us, there's an enormous amount of trust that goes into everything every day. So that also, in the cockpit, we absolutely trust each other.

That trust is built. And so we know that we're going to be safe. We're going to come home because we can trust each other.

Q. I'm curious how the assignment is drawn. Is it a pulling of straws, or how did you get this one specifically over there at the base?

JESTER: We've got a lot of great opportunities to fly. We're really fortunate to have flown this one. We got pretty lucky and we're grateful for this opportunity. I hope I get an

opportunity like this again.

Q. Have you guys seen this tournament before? Is this something you guys are super familiar with being close to the Lake Tahoe region?

JESTER: I've never seen it at 500 miles per hour. That was a new one.

NOVA: It's only been on TV. So this is cool to be here on the ground.

Q. It's obviously a great view, but do you get to enjoy it, or is it eyes straightforward as opposed to down at the lake or at the fans or the golf course?

JESTER: I think the view was spectacular. The ability to fly over such an awesome event with great people involved was great. And I think the teamwork probably made it the most fun and enjoyable part of it.

The view was great. I really enjoyed the teamwork and the camaraderie. That was the best part.

NOVA: Of course, my view, as the wingman, is him.

Q. We mentioned precision. How far apart were the planes?

JESTER: Three feet. His wing tip was three feet from my tip.

Q. At 500 miles an hour?

JESTER: That's what we do every day.

Q. I'm also curious, just for the record, this might be a double-secret probation kind of moment, but can you share your real names?

NOVA: No. (Laughter).

Q. So, it is double-secret probation?

JESTER: Maybe my parents didn't like me and they named me Jester. (Laughter).

Q. Is this a lottery system that you're picked for these flyovers in more of a public event, or were you just drawn at random? Is this a regular thing you do? You got assigned to this?

JESTER: There's a proper process, and the professionals that made this happen followed that process. We're very grateful for them. Then we were given the opportunity to



join this effort.

I need to do this training anyways. I'm working up for some pre-deployment stuff. I had to get the training done anyways. I need to fly a lot this month. So what a great opportunity to get my training done in an environment that's not just fun, but precise as well. So it was great.

Q. How many of these public events have you done?

JESTER: I've been very fortunate to do several. That's not our primary job. Usually I'm flying anywhere around the world and hopefully no one sees me. So to do something like this, where the plane's actually visible and being seen, that's great.

Q. Are you doing larger formations or just two? Or do you sometimes fly as a group, five or however many?

JESTER: So we were just practicing for the Beale Air Fest, which is going to happen next summer. We're doing a similar formation.

This great American probably has a lot more expertise on that. Do you want to talk to that?

NOVA: We regularly fly in larger formations, especially T-38, a four-ship formation is pretty common for us, so four airplanes up there.

Like he mentioned, one of the other things we do is we open up the doors of Beale Air Force for an open house to kind of bring the public in, show them what we do. So next April 17th and 18th we're going to do just that. We're going to have a lot of these flying displays.

So everything that Beale Air Force Base has to offer we'll showcase that, from the 135s, the U-2s and T-38s, you'll see those in the formation, in that four-ship configuration. We're actually likely going to see T-38s flying in information with U-2s as well, and a lot more to that.

But come out next April, we'll give a good display of all the ways we can fly formation with these jets.

Q. You guys look like some pretty guys. You've been flying for 20 years. That's pretty amazing. There's a lot of people out there, youngsters, who would like to know how much effort would they have to put in to get to where you are?

JESTER: It is a great deal of effort, but I think the effort was the reward itself. I wouldn't have it any other way.

I got interested in aviation watching a flyover. So it was

really cool to maybe, hopefully, someone out there saw this and thought, maybe I can get interested or involved in aviation myself.

The effort is great. But most things that are worth it take a lot of effort. So I think the effort was definitely worth the end result.

I see life as a journey, not a destination. So I have to always put that effort in because I'm still on my journey to be a better pilot. And I think I'll never get there.

Q. You have your wife and kids out here. That proves you can still have a family life and do this?

NOVA: Yeah. It's a balance of everything. In every aspect of life you're always juggling multiple things. What I've seen is there's very different chapters of life. And this one takes a lot more focus with family and the kids. But we're still fortunate that we're able to do this flying, do this job, but less the other hobbies.

JESTER: I was going to say my kids are awesome. I love them. I don't think they think what I do is cool at all. So I think I've ruined flying for them. They're probably like, oh, this is a normal dad, whatever. But flying is really cool, if you tell the kids.

Q. We understand there might be a possibility of you returning next year; is that correct?

JESTER: I can't promise anything for the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, but personally I would love to come back. I hope that's a thing. We would love to come back and fly.

I think we were maybe, like, a half second off. I want to make sure we nail that down to zero seconds off. But we would love to come back, and personally I would love to come back.

NOTE: For security, the pilots are not allowed to provide their real names.

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