

Travelers Championship 2015

Thursday, June 25

Press Conference

Bubba Watson



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THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Bubba Watson into the interview room. Past champion here, you got your first win, and what an incredible start today. Great crowd support out there. Just talk about it. Nine birdies on the day.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, it was a good day. Before I started the day I was looking at the weather and the weather is favorable for play. It was also looking bad for tomorrow, so I wanted to go out there and shoot a pretty good score, so I could somehow struggle tomorrow and still make the cut. But I started off good. I hit my driver well. I was putting good, worked on putting hard last week and pretty hard this week. Trying to focus on certain things in my putt. So last week doesn't really show you how good or how bad you're playing. You get bounces one way or the other way. So for me, I knew I was playing good. I knew I was thinking well and so today just showed that. Doesn't mean the rest of the week will, but it means today I did.

Q. Obviously a big gathering following your group. If you were a fan, would you follow your group today?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, obviously, I'd follow my group. Yeah, I mean, Zach, Hunter, those are great players. They've done some great things in the game. They're still not even halfway through their career, so, yeah, how would you not want to come and follow us. The group in front of us is pretty good too. So you had a couple groups you could follow and go to the next hole and watch a couple groups again. So, yeah, it was very nice. Obviously, the fan support here obviously treated me very nice, even when I've played bad. So it was great. It was great to come back here and enjoy the game of golf and trying to make birdies around here.

Q. You've had a lot of success on this golf course. Why do you think that is?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, coming off a U.S. Open every golf course we play is going to feel easier. So coming off that golf course, it doesn't matter what you shoot. It's hard to make birdies around there. Around here you can make birdies. You have perfect greens. The greens are running the best I've ever seen them, and you're going to have shorter irons. No matter how far

you hit it off the tee, it's shorter irons than a U.S. Open, so you have a chance to score.

Q. 18, what did you hit in there?

BUBBA WATSON: It was 2 yards up, so I had 139 hole, 129 over the bunker, and I had a 52° gap wedge.

Q. You had a couple of opportunities right off the start on the back nine, 10 and 11, to make a move. Didn't happen. Then you made that putt from off the green on 12, did you get a sense when you made that putt that it was going to start something?

BUBBA WATSON: No. I'm just playing golf. I'm just thinking one shot at a time. You miss a putt, you lip it out, you go to the next hole. If you don't do that, you're going to struggle really fast. So, for me, I just kept my head down, just kept doing things. My tee shot on the par-5 went into the first cut of rough which was pretty thick. What was that? 13, I think. Had 7-wood out of there. It just jumped a little bit, went over the green, made it tough. So, no, I mean, I didn't really think about down or up. I just kept grinding it out. Whatever shot was called for, I tried to hit it, and somehow today I hit it good.

Q. Obviously a great track record on this course. But it's not the longest course you play out here. Did your length have more of an impact on a shorter course or longer course, which one is more of an advantage for you?

BUBBA WATSON: It all depends on how it's set up. My track record, I only played Hilton Head once, didn't play very good, so I didn't go back. Colonial, I haven't played very well there, so I don't go back. So it just depends on what the course is, what kind of grass it is, all those variables. So that's what I check at the beginning of the year. Where I want to play and what kind of course I want to play. This golf course, like I said, coming off the U.S. Open, this golf course feels like it's gettable, and we all feel that way. So the guys playing in the U.S. Open maybe feel about their game when they get here.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

BUBBA WATSON: First hole, third hole, fourth hole, sixth hole, 7th hole, the 9th hole, 10th hole, 12th hole, 13th hole, 14th hole. Sometimes 15, and then 18, so quite a bit. I went through the round last year, I go

through the same stuff every year that we talk about this stuff. I had a lot of wedges. Today, probably 6 holes that there wasn't a wedge into it on regulation. Now I might be hitting a 3-wood or long iron into a par-5. But the third shot is where I'm saying the wedge. So when you look at that, only five or six holes at the most I don't have a wedge into it in regulation. So pretty good golf course for me.

Q. 16 always seems to be a little bit of a glitch for you. You recently had 5-over?

BUBBA WATSON: It's tough. I don't know how you play it, but it's a tough hole.

Q. When you go into those last four holes, are you thinking I need to make birdie on 15? I need to make birdie on 17?

BUBBA WATSON: No, I'm just trying to play golf. When I won in 2010 I birdied that hole in regulation and then I parred it in the playoffs. So I mean, I can play the hole. It's just guessing the right club, guessing the right yardage, guessing the right wind. Today my 8-iron went a lot farther than I was expecting it to. Thought it was a little bit of a breeze into us from the right, so I had 174 hole. It flew 175 and rolled over the back. Tried to become the hero on the chip shot, and it wasn't the right shot. So, yeah, it's just one of those things. Could be a different hole, it just happens to be that hole.

Q. So much of the game is mental. Nick Faldo said to me, even about clubs, if you look down you have to like the club that you're hitting. We make so much about your history here and all that stuff. Does it get overrated about winning at a place, or is there a lot to the fact that your mindset in coming back here and liking what you see, does that get overplayed or is there complete truth to that?

BUBBA WATSON: No, there's definitely truth to that. Think about it. We play the same tournaments every year because we like them. We like the atmosphere, we like the sponsor. We like the fans. We like the golf course. Again, I'm going to wear it out, but just coming off the U.S. Open, this golf course seems a lot more gettable. There were a lot more birdies today than at the U.S. Open probably, I'm guessing.

Q. Today how you played No. 9? And last time you were a first round leader, if you can remember?

BUBBA WATSON: I'll go with B, I have no clue. No. 9, today was the perfect, where the pin was, where the wind was, everything was perfect for me to hit the shot like that on 9. I just felt like it was better. Me from the fairway from 150 yards is a tough pin to get to. Same reason that all three of us hit driver. Hunter hit it down there as far as he could hit it. Zach didn't hit a good

tee shot, but he tried to hit driver down there too because that pin is so tough to get to. Especially it would have been downwind today from 150 yards. It would have been tough.

Q. Is it safe to say this is a very special place for you, getting your first TOUR win here? In saying that, when you finish 8-under today, that year that you won in 2010, you were 5-under after the first round. Do you ever compare to that season when you come back here year after year?

BUBBA WATSON: No, you never compare. It's different weather, different conditions, mindset. Hopefully I've grown since then so I'm calmer, I guess you could say. But, yeah, it's special. It's my first win, and it's the same time that I announced to the world that my dad was passing with cancer. So special in different ways, but obviously the fans have treated me great here. Travelers has taken over. They've pushed the limits. They've given us more and more so how could you not want to come back to a golf tournament.

Q. You had some tough bounces. 13 you mentioned where you ended up with your feet both in the bunker on 13. 15 as well you had a tough stance there. How do you not let those situations get to you after those kind of bounces?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, you can easily let it get to you. I knew that the one on 13, par-5 was death. I knew I couldn't even keep it on the green unless I went sideways. So it was about hitting it in a spot where I thought I had a chance to get up and down. So I thought hitting it past the pin gives me a chance to get it up and down for par. That one. 15, that one was doable. I knew it was doable even though one foot was in there. Because I was going upslope, hitting the 66-degree lob wedge, I knew I could get it up in the air, and the lie was halfway decent. So that was a lot easier. It still wasn't easy but it was a lot easier than the other one. I could still get it up and down somehow.