

John Deere Classic

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

Quinn Riley

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Quinn Riley to the interview room here at the John Deere Classic. You're making your PGA TOUR debut. Just want to get some initial thoughts about the excitement entering the week.

QUINN RILEY: I'm super excited. I would like to thank Clair Peterson and John Deere for giving me the opportunity. This is a dream come true. So I'm really looking forward to this week.

THE MODERATOR: For those who are unfamiliar with kind of the background and the story, can you explain about the letter you wrote to Clair and coming to find out how you earned a sponsor exemption.

QUINN RILEY: Yeah, I just told my story pretty plainly and I think they really enjoyed my writing style and, yeah, I kind of just said how much it meant to me and how much it might mean to a lot of other people who are watching for me and following in my foot steps and they really took that to heart.

THE MODERATOR: Can you speak to the significance to that, to Clair, this being his final year here at the tournament, about giving these sponsor exemptions and starts to players and yourself.

QUINN RILEY: Say that again.

THE MODERATOR: About what the importance this is gaining the sponsor exemption.

QUINN RILEY: Oh, it's huge. Players like myself, I'm coming out of college, we're just looking for opportunities. I've played on the APGA Tour and the whole name of that game is opportunities and trying to give back. Things like this for players who are coming out is huge. It's very important.

THE MODERATOR: I saw you mention that out of all tournaments this would be where you would want to start your PGA TOUR debut with players like Jason Day and

Jordan Spieth having their debut here. Can you talk about what you like so much about this tournament and why this would be your choice?

QUINN RILEY: Yeah, it's had a lot of appeal to a younger crowd. Obviously I watched Jordan Spieth hole out for his win here and just this tournament like atmosphere seems really laid back and really family oriented and welcoming. So it's been super special just being able to start here.

THE MODERATOR: A little while ago you played at the Rex Hospital Open. What did you learn from playing out there and what were takeaways from the week?

QUINN RILEY: I kind of got my first taste of heartbreak coming down the stretch of a tournament. Just kind of learning about dealing with pressure. And right now I don't have any status, so I'm not really playing for my livelihood, but I'm trying to make a story and create some story lines.

So putting myself in a position like that and then having it end up the way it did, it was hard to deal with for a couple days. But I think going through that and dealing with it only makes you stronger for the next time.

THE MODERATOR: For those unfamiliar with your game, how would you describe your style of game and where your strengths are?

QUINN RILEY: I hit it pretty far, so really just being in control off the tee. And then my iron play and my putting kind of just takes care of everything else.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it for questions.

Q. Welcome to the Quad Cities. Talk to me, I know you got some ties to the First Tee Program, have some commitments here this week with First Tee. What was the event like yesterday with the luncheon?

QUINN RILEY: Oh, it was awesome. It was awesome because I've been on the other side of that. I've been in the audience watching professionals that I look up to kind of answer questions and kind of give their two cents on how it is to be a pro. Doing that for the kids is pretty surreal for me, because I've been there, I've been looking up to literally myself. Being in that position is just cool to give back.



Q. Is that something you will continue to do as your professional career progresses?

QUINN RILEY: Absolutely. Yeah. Really my journey through golf kind of started with the First Tee and that organization has taken me to a lot of really cool places and I've met a lot of really cool people. So I'm forever grateful to them. They have given me life skills that I've kind of practiced and take with me everywhere I go. So I'm very thankful to have been a part of that and easily give back to them, like not a problem.

Q. You said that you liked, that you thought the tournament officials here liked your writing style. You're not after our jobs, are you?

QUINN RILEY: No. (Laughing).

Q. If you could write your own story for this week, what would it be?

QUINN RILEY: If I was writing my own story it would be sponsor exemption ends up playing in the final group Sunday and having a chance to win and giving a good run and kind of getting my name out there, some national recognition. I feel like I've kind of been a late bloomer and an overlooked player for a lot of my amateur career. So having my name out there would be very helpful moving forward at the next chapter.

Q. You're thinking pretty big here. Does that add any pressure to what you want to get accomplished this week?

QUINN RILEY: No, I don't feel anymore pressure than some of the guys who are here who have stuff riding on it. It's kind of all or nothing for me. I got a PGA TOUR start coming right out of my senior year in college, so I'm just out here trying to make the most of it.

Q. What is your schedule moving forward?

QUINN RILEY: I have a full kind of schedule of APGA events and then I might throw in some Monday qualifiers here and there. But otherwise it's just APGA events up until Q-School in the fall.

Q. And you're content with that at this point or are you looking for some other sponsor exemptions?

QUINN RILEY: I've definitely reached out and I'm hoping to hear back from some tournament directors. And I can only be thankful for what I got and I'm super pleased with what I have already. So Monday qualifiers, just like

everyone else, is kind of the way I see it.

Q. With the gratitude that you just spoke of in mind, what's been the biggest adjustment from college life to being out here grinding every week?

QUINN RILEY: Well there's a lot of things that are kind of taken care of for me, which is awesome. This is like a huge treat for me. Having all the volunteers and everyone out here being super friendly is awesome. Because you don't get that in college.

Also just kind of running my own show. It feels a little bit more comfortable not having to tag along with anyone. So that's pretty much the biggest thing for me. I just feel kind of more comfortable being out here.

Q. You seem like an empathetic guy. What was your reaction when you saw what happened to Sahith over the weekend, what happened to himself, self inflicted, but the result was gut wrenching for a lot of us fans out there.

QUINN RILEY: Yeah, I mean I just think of kind of -- I saw highlights of it, I didn't watch the whole tournament. I kind of just put myself back in my shoes on the 17th hole at Wakefield and knowing that you put yourself there and you didn't get the job done. There's some bad luck involved and I know that's probably going to make him -- who he is, it's probably going to make him hungrier. And I know what he's up to this week and I'm kind of doing the same thing.

Q. I just wanted to ask you about the role of representation. Obviously Charlie Sifford's 100th birthday would have been recently and obviously that's a big part of this game moving forward. So I just kind of wanted to ask you how you feel about that.

QUINN RILEY: Yeah, so a better answer to that is being a representative of that out here for a sponsor's exemption is cool. Obviously I would like to be a full-time player so that I can better represent week-in and week-out.

I always looked up to Tiger and Harold's been kind of a beacon for me, just watching him get the job done. I met Cameron Champ the other night. It's just cool to kind of meet these guys, because they're the face of what's to come and I can only hope and stick to my plan. But I hope to be a part of that moving forward. I know there's people who kind of see me in that light and I have to acknowledge that. I'm very much kind of just -- I keep my focus on just playing well and being a kind person. I know that I carry a lot of people's, I guess they relate to me a lot, and I'm just on the lookout for being kind to everyone I meet and making sure I set a good example for everyone who is

going to come after me and follow in my foot steps.

So Black or white, I think it's just, to me it's just being about being a good person.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to some of the older guys, some of the older players who have been through this before and maybe pick their brains a little bit?

QUINN RILEY: I'm sorry, could you repeat that.

Q. Have you had a chance at all to do any relationship building, communicate with anybody who has had, who's been through this experience before of doing this for sort of the first time?

QUINN RILEY: I know I have an ex-teammate who is here, Alex Smalley, and then Kevin Streelman has kindly taken me under his wing, given me some advice on kind of what to do, when to do it, what maybe works better than I had thought.

So having that kind of coming out here for my first start is very helpful and I'm super appreciative of them kind of guiding me along.

Q. What's been the most eye-opening thing so far this week in your first week on TOUR?

QUINN RILEY: Pretty much how good the conditions are around the course. This is a huge treat for how well it's kept and I take my hat off for the superintendent and all the greenskeepers and everyone who works hard. Because I've never played a golf course in this kind of condition. This is fantastic.

Q. What players or people, PGA TOUR players who you have looked up to kind of wanting to model your game after and part two of that question is, what would be considered a success for you this week?

QUINN RILEY: A player that I've looked up to is, well that I admire, is Xander. I really like kind of how he stays within himself and really gets the job done just with what he has. He's nothing flashy, but he's hyper talented and that's kind of what I want to be.

Then what was your second question?

Q. What would be considered a success for you this week? Making a cut, winning the tournament, under par, all of the above?

QUINN RILEY: I think I have my own expectations for how

I'm going to go about with my blueprint for the course. And success is just committing to every shot and making sure that I follow through on the game plan for every hole. And I think that should, you know, results-based, that should make the cut and that should contend, honestly.

THE MODERATOR: All right. With that we'll wrap it up. Thanks for taking the time. Good luck this week.

QUINN RILEY: Thanks.

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