

Workday Charity Open

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Bo Hoag

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: I would like to welcome Bo Hoag into the interview room here at the Workday Charity Open. Thanks for making a few minutes to join us. Bo, it's a home game for you. You've got a lot of experience here from a lot of different perspectives, being a kid on the range, a spectator earlier at the Memorial Tournament when it was here regularly and now you're making your playing debut at the Workday Charity Open. I think you've had experience here playing one Memorial.

BO HOAG: Yeah, yep, played one Memorial.

THE MODERATOR: So this is your first tournament since then. Just some thoughts on being back in your hometown playing, and unfortunately not in front of spectators and a home crowd.

BO HOAG: Yeah, no, it's definitely a dream come true. This is my first year on the PGA TOUR, having a card and being a rookie out here, and one of the things that I first thought about when I earned my card was, man, I'm going to be able to come back to Columbus and play at Muirfield as a PGA TOUR member. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Q. People talk a lot about no fans, fans. I'm just curious from your perspective, yes, they bring energy and most players prefer having fans out there, but is there any element of it that feels like a practice round and you can play a little looser, less pressure from your perspective?

BO HOAG: Yeah, definitely different. I guess from a performance standpoint, I mean, if you took the average 72-hole score for this week with fans and without fans, I don't think it would -- probably wouldn't change. But just kind of that energy of having -- a lot of guys feed off of the fans after hitting a good shot or getting that energy and that momentum. So it's definitely a little different. But on the other hand, from my perspective, I've played a million rounds out here, and I haven't had fans most of those rounds. I'm just playing with my dad or some buddies. For me, it'll be a little more similar to what I normally play at.

Q. Without naming names, kind of along those lines, are there TOUR guys that light it up in practice and then get in a tournament and things tighten up? I guess it's a personality thing, but have you seen that ever?

BO HOAG: That didn't play as well in a tournament and they did in a practice round? Yeah, it'll happen. It happened yesterday, it'll happen today, it'll happen tomorrow, too. That's one of the hardest things in golf is taking your game from the range to the course or a practice round to the real deal. I think we're all trying to simulate that as much as we can to kind of get that feeling. It's different. There's no doubt about it, when you have a 10-footer on 18 today versus a 10-footer late on Sunday.

So I think the good players, best players in the world find a way to kind of make that similar so when you get that putt on Sunday when it really means something that yeah, I've kind of hit this before.

Q. You mentioned when you got your TOUR card last year when you thought about it as a dream come true. The fact that you're not going to be able to have your family here, how many spectators, how many family and friends do you think you would have had if fans had been allowed? How much would you have wanted to have had all that gathering with you?

BO HOAG: Yeah, well, I would have loved it. There's no doubt about that. It's just kind of -- I think I had so many family members and friends that were -- that I was in communication with and they were just really looking forward to kind of having one thing so far in 2020 that they could be a little -- some kind of normalcy, hey, we can go to an event and we can take the precautions, socially distance and wear masks and watch you play and watch the best players in the world play. So I mean, I'm almost more upset for them than I am myself.

But you know, I think that the TOUR -- the safety issue is just kind of paramount right now. But it really is -- I mean, I can't tell you how impressive it is from the tournaments and Muirfield and state of Ohio, tournament director Dan Sullivan. I know that they did a whole hell of a lot to try to get it to where you could have fans. It really is pretty incredible that they could set that up and put the manhours in to figure out a way to have fans out here during this.



Just to have that in place was pretty impressive. But yeah, it was a little sad when I heard it yesterday, but I know that it's probably the right thing to do. We've just got to be mindful, safety first right now, with everything going on.

Q. And you are playing next week, right?

BO HOAG: Yep.

Q. What are your memories of 2012, the other time you played here?

BO HOAG: Yeah, I was just kind of a young kid out of college. It was a heck of an opportunity for me to play in one of the very best tournaments on the PGA TOUR pretty soon after graduating. You know, I don't think that my game personally, I wasn't ready to play, to compete at a high level on the PGA TOUR at that time, but it gave me a great chance to see where my game was, what the best players in the world were doing and what I had to do in order to get back here. And I owe a lot to that experience. It's kind of cool to come full circle and kind of earn my way back here now and really just gotten a lot better since then.

Q. Where is your game right now? I know you finished tied for ninth in Hawai'i at the Sony Open. How have you been playing?

BO HOAG: Yeah, you know, game feels good. I feel good. Just haven't been able to play a whole lot, obviously, with the shutdown. Played pretty good earlier in the year, had the good finish in Hawai'i, and played okay the last couple weeks. It was the first time I'd played in a little while, so a little bit of competitive rust, I think, the last two tournaments, Travelers and Detroit. But I feel like I'm getting better each week right now, so that's the good news.

Q. What's your earliest remembrance of Muirfield Village? Was that something through your dad, through your grandfather, through Jack? When did it dawn on you that you were in this family that was going to be kind of immersed in this tournament?

BO HOAG: Yeah, I mean, I learned how to swing a golf club on this range here, so that's kind of where it started for me. My grandpa basically put my hands on the club and would watch me hit some from -- we had a little spot on the range that had some shade and he would kind of hang out in the cart and just kind of give me some pointers. So that's really where for me it started.

And then I guess the inspiration to hopefully one day be a pro golfer definitely came from coming here as a six-, seven-, eight-year-old and seeing -- and it was the coolest

thing just seeing the best players in the world play a course that I had played a lot and trying to get their autographs and just seeing how hard they hit it and just how far the ball went. That was the inspiration for me to become a pro golfer for sure.

Q. How old were you when you were with your grandfather in that first story?

BO HOAG: I mean, I probably hit my -- yeah, with him, probably hit a couple shots maybe five, six years old with him. I'm sure I was out here a little bit younger than that, but seriously kind of learning how to -- the proper grip and how to try to hit a real golf shot, probably about six years old.

Q. How will you be spending the two weeks here, and are you able to stay at home given the PGA TOUR bubble process?

BO HOAG: Yeah, I can stay at home. My wife and I have a place here, so it's nice just to be sleeping in my own bed, and it's kind of cool to come back when I'm done at the course. I can really kind of let it go and forget about the golf and just kind of be at home for a little bit, so that's nice.

And yeah, I mean, with how I'm going to spend the couple weeks, play just -- I played a practice round today. Obviously know where I should hit it around here. I've played it so many times. But I think the big thing for me these couple weeks is just seeing how firm or soft the course is playing and also what kind of speed we're going to have on the greens. Those are the only two adjustments that are really going to matter for me. I know the lines and how the holes play. That's the big thing, just getting how it's going to play.

THE MODERATOR: We really appreciate you making the time to come in and share with us, Bo. Thanks again.

BO HOAG: Thanks for having me on.

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