

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Commissioner Jay Monahan

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Commissioner Jay Monahan, for joining us for some moments with the media here at the Memorial Tournament. It must be nice to be back on-site. Perhaps you could just run us through the uniqueness of playing two events back-to-back at Muirfield Village before we take some questions.

JAY MONAHAN: Sure. Thanks, Mark, and thanks to everybody for being here today, and to your point, this is the 45th playing of the Memorial Tournament, a tournament with a great history, a great tradition that's hosted by a great family, the Nicklaus family. Obviously to be back here with Jack and Barbara, to do so two weeks in a row is very special for the PGA TOUR and for all of our players. I think you just have to look no further than the quality of this field to recognize how important, how special this Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide is.

I also want to say thanks to Jack and Barbara for always being there for the PGA TOUR and for our players. I just came from a lunch with Jack and Barbara and folks from Nationwide, and I think I've said this before, but shortly after we left TPC Sawgrass and completed THE PLAYERS Championship, or canceled THE PLAYERS Championship, one of the first calls that I got was from Jack who said, Listen, when you have a sense of where you're going and what you need, just let me know how I and we can be helpful.

So to come back here last week and to have the Workday Charity Open and have Aneel Bhusri with Workday step in and for Jack to make Muirfield Village and for the members to make Muirfield Village available to us was pretty remarkable.

To Dan Sullivan, to the entire team here, I want to say thank you on behalf of all of our players, and should be a great afternoon in front of us with the Nationwide Skins Game and a great four days as we crown a 2020 Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide champion.

the Memorial  Tournament

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Q. If you had to guess, what's the next tournament that has fans?

JAY MONAHAN: If I had to guess... (laughter)

Q. Buy some time, Jay.

JAY MONAHAN: You know, obviously we've canceled -- we're not going to have spectators and we're not going to have pro-ams through the TOUR Championship in Atlanta. Right now you look at the PGA TOUR schedule, the next event up is the U.S. Open, and I know that the USGA continues to work with the state of New York and is making plans to return fans. If I had to guess, that would be the first week that we would do so.

I think to give a little more texture to your question, we're spending a lot of time in each of the subsequent tournaments or each of the tournaments in the fall working on a number of different ways to stage the event, which includes full capacity, partial capacity, and obviously the way that we're operating now, which is no spectators, and that will be largely dependent on what we hear from the communities where we play.

Q. As much as you touch base with your own medical advisors, for lack of a better word, do you get a sense we're making progress? Are you at all optimistic that golf and sport in general is moving toward a better place?

JAY MONAHAN: I think we are. I think you look at the way the PGA TOUR has returned, and when I say that, I mean PGA and Korn Ferry, and we've talked a lot over the last couple months, last three or four months, about our return, and now that we're returned, we came forward with what we thought was the best, safest, most responsible plan for our players, our caddies and everybody on-site. We've learned; I think we've made the right adjustments at the right time. We're going to continue to be open to it.

I think we were together in Hartford, and as we sit here today, our testing numbers have increased. We're now over 6,000 total tests that we've given to our constituents, and if you look at players and caddies on the PGA TOUR or Korn Ferry TOUR, we've had 21 positive tests, six players on both tours, three caddies on the PGA TOUR

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

and six caddies on the Korn Ferry TOUR. Now, each one of those 21 -- you don't want to have any, but I think as you look at where we are and the trends for our overall program, and again, the tightening that we've done, I think that the results are very good, and we're certainly encouraged by that. We're proud of that.

I think our players deserve a ton of credit for not only what they're doing here on-site in terms of social distancing and masking and being entirely aware of what we need to do when we're on property, but also as I've gone market to market seeing players in hotels and other places, I think we're doing -- we're executing a plan that we set out, and we're confident that if we continue to do that we're going to be in a really good place as we go forward.

Q. As it applies to the tournaments that will begin to be played this season without a pro-am or without fans, can you just talk about the challenges to those individual tournaments and maybe what the TOUR is doing to help them out?

JAY MONAHAN: Yeah, I think when you think about where we were when we were returning, so we announced our schedule I believe April 19th. We announced no spectators, no pro-ams for at least the first four weeks, and with the uncertainty of the virus we had plans in place should we not be able to return spectators and not be able to return to pro-ams. I think it's no secret to anybody that one of the beauties of our business model, and you take this week in particular, you come here to Columbus, Ohio, we've raised close to \$23 million since inception for Nationwide Children's Hospital. I was just at a virtual luncheon, they raised \$1.45 million, and the pro-am has always been a big driver of the support that we get from Nationwide and from this community.

So when you take that out, the beauty of what's happened here is that our partners have tried to figure out, and we've worked with them to figure out what are ways for us to replace that revenue, what are ways for us to make certain that we're doing everything we can to maintain or grow the level of support that we have in each of the markets that we play.

But that moment in time which is so unique to our sport with players playing with amateur participants over 18 holes on a PGA TOUR golf course, creating a lifelong experience, something they'll never forget, that's something we want to return to as soon as possible because it's part of the great energy that we have that results in the significant dollars we return for charity, and I think it really does demonstrate how anybody can play our game alongside the greats of the game.

You know, to be able to characterize the impact, that's a lost revenue source, that's a lost client relationship opportunity. There's some obvious negatives to it, in a world where we're dealing -- we have to respond to negatives or things that we just can't do right now that we'd like to do, and I would just say that we're fortunate to have great relationships with the tournaments, with our title sponsors, and I think we're being a very -- I'm very proud of the way we're responding and the way that we're working together to get through this point in time.

Q. I'm sure other leagues, I'm thinking Major League Baseball specifically, have been paying attention to what's happened on the TOUR. Have you had any interaction with the commissioners from those leagues about what maybe has worked and hasn't worked in this comeback?

JAY MONAHAN: I have.

Q. Can you expand on that maybe a little bit? What are they mostly curious about?

JAY MONAHAN: I think we've shared what our plans were going into our return. I think what they're most curious about is what are you learning now that you're in operation and that your plans are underway, and what are some of the things that we could benefit from. I think a lot of those things, to answer your follow-up question, are tied to the adjustments that we've made, and just being able to explain to them what we saw, what we experienced and then why we made the adjustments we've made, and how that may or may not apply to what they're going to experience when they return to play themselves. It's also what am I doing and our movements and some other things, but that's predominantly it.

Q. Jay, two things. Obviously the discussion most of the time seems to be on COVID, but the other part of the equation has been a lot on the length of Bryson DeChambeau. I know that you've had what I assume is the policy in the past of saying you're very comfortable with the golf ball, where it's going, so forth and so on, but slowly but surely you're starting to hear the critics say, this is something that we have to address again. Just to confirm, what is your position on the length issue?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, my position hasn't changed. You asked really two questions. You raised Bryson, I think, what Bryson has done. Bryson was able to use the time off in a way that I don't think anybody could have envisioned, and what he's done has been remarkable, in a short period of time. I go back to what he accomplished at the Rocket Mortgage Classic, and there's a ton of focus on

how far he's hitting the ball, and rightfully so, and how he has disrupted himself to be able to put himself in the best -- himself and his game to put himself in the best position to compete and to win, but look at his putting statistics, finest putting week I believe on TOUR this year, and to me it was a great demonstration of his skill.

As it relates to distance, I think the fact of the matter is that we always have looked at distance. We look at it over a longer term horizon, not in a short-term horizon, so if you look at our data right now, average driving distance is up slightly year to date, it's down relative to two years ago, and I think that the USGA and the R&A came out with their report, they issued that report, they said that they're going to work with their industry partners, including us, to identify solutions.

That process has obviously stalled. When it takes itself back up, we're going to be a part of that conversation and make certain ultimately that we represent what we think is in the best interest of PGA TOUR, our players and our fans.

But I think that any time you have a player that is doing what Bryson has done, I think it does call attention to driving distance. But I think you have to look at the manner in which he prepared himself to do that, and some of the remarkable things that he's doing in the process, some of which other players talked about over the last couple days.

Q. COVID related, is there any place in this country that you would be reticent to go to in the situation that they have right now?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, one of the things that we learned when we returned is places that we thought -- safety and where we are with testing numbers and where we are with all the data we're looking at changes and changes rapidly, and so right now, all I can tell you is -- all I can look at is the schedule that we have, and the schedule we have, based on conversations we're having in every market, with governors, with mayors, with local health authorities, with our sponsors, based on the program that we have in place, we're comfortable with our ability to go into that market and to be able to present PGA TOUR events with every event that's on the calendar through the TOUR Championship.

Q. With regard to the no fans here this week, we were talking to Jack yesterday, and he was making it very clear that the governor was okay with fans and that this was very much a TOUR decision. I'm kind of curious what went into that and how much input the players had involved with that, with having no fans here at this tournament this week.

JAY MONAHAN: Yeah, let me start off by saying that Jack is right. We had worked with Dan and the tournament team. Dan led our efforts with the governor and his task force and built a plan that was as thorough as it could possibly be as it relates to returning spectators at roughly 20 percent capacity and building a plan along with our team to be able to return a pro-am. So we were in a position and we had all the support coming into last week to be able to do so.

But I think the reality is that you look at your plan and you look at the changing nature of the virus, and with caseloads rising nationally and with players having some concerns, with me having some concerns about our ability to not just this week but in the weeks that follow be able to sustain if we weren't able to do this in the right manner, we just felt like it was the right decision at this point to say, you know what, we have an unbelievable event in the Memorial Tournament, let's continue to operate as we have operated; let's give fans an incredible competition, incredible content. We're going to return our spectators, we're going to return our pro-ams when we feel it's the right time.

So that is the decision that I made and that we made, and when you talk to Jack and you talk to Nationwide and you talk to all the folks that are so integral to this event, to make this event happen, we're all on the same page as we sit here right now and were when we made that decision. It's the right thing.

Q. To be clear, Jack said he felt it was the right decision. It wasn't like he was questioning you guys. I am curious what level of player input had to do with this. Did you have conversations with people, with players about that, and was there a concern that maybe it was too soon?

JAY MONAHAN: I have conversations with players every single day, and we do as an organization. Anytime we make a decision, it's made with as broad player input as we can possibly get. You've heard me talk about it over the last couple months, but we're fortunate to have two four great player directors, a PAC chair in Charley Hoffman and a great Player Advisory Council, and just based on the nature of what we're dealing with, we're getting really good feedback in real time. I think player feedback ultimately was supportive of the decision that we made alongside a number of other constituent groups that we relied on to make that decision.

Q. With regard to Tiger, obviously he's been conspicuous by his absence the first five weeks. What has been your anticipation level of him coming back, and what does it mean for you this week for him to be

here?

JAY MONAHAN: My anticipation level has been high, and I think my anticipation level mirrors that of fans all over the world. It's great to have him back. I saw him earlier this morning as he pulled into the parking lot, and I think -- it's not just me -- it's not me. Look at the other players that have been out here that are playing, that are playing this week. I think having Tiger back creates an unbelievable energy to it. It's additive, it's positive.

To have Tiger back here at Jack's tournament, the two greatest champions of all time I think is a special moment for the game of golf as we return to golf and as we inspire golfers all over the world.

Q. I'm wondering if you had a chance to compare notes with Rob Manfred and Adam Silver at all.

JAY MONAHAN: You know, I have. I haven't over the last couple weeks, but yeah, certainly through this pandemic and our return to golf, I've had a number of communications with other commissioners, including those two.

Q. What do you think are the lessons for those sports that they can learn from golf?

JAY MONAHAN: Listen, I'll let them -- I can speak to the lessons that we've learned. As I said, I'm trying to convey those to anybody that's about to face them and anybody who's about to return, whether it's another professional sport league or a business itself. You know, I think that we're all different. Like the reality is what we're doing here, some of it applies to what they're doing but not all of it. They're all going about it in a different way based on the advice that they're getting.

Typically our conversations focus on areas where we're doing things similarly or comparably to the way they're going to be doing things and what we've learned.

Q. Can you just update us on the status of the Asian swing events?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, we have three events in Asia that are on our calendar right now. We have three great partners in Asia in ZOZO, CJ and HSBC, and we're well aware of some of the challenges that we have in every market that we're playing, and we're working through those challenges with our partners.

At this point I don't have anything to offer other than that, but as soon as we've been able to determine what our answers are going to be, you guys will be the first to know.

Q. Is one of the possibilities moving those to the U.S. as a potential scenario, if you will -- I know you don't like hypotheticals necessarily, but is that an option that's looked at in terms of maybe California or Las Vegas?

JAY MONAHAN: I don't think that that's unique to those three tournaments, and I think that's been part of the way we've looked at every single event, because again, we're dealing with a lot of uncertainty, and if we get into a position where we don't think it's safe and responsible to stage an event, we don't want to take a week off, we want to have alternatives in place. And that certainly would apply to those three events, and it applied to last week. Unfortunately we couldn't play the John Deere Classic, but thanks to Jack, we were able to come down here, play two weeks in a row, and thanks to Workday, be able to present a great product alongside our players. If we're confronted with that situation, that's the approach we're going to have. But as you work through these situations with partners, it's fairly complicated. We still have a ways to go to assess what all of our options are going to be.

Q. I know you touched on fans earlier, but are there any expectations that you would have fans at any point this year, of the calendar year?

JAY MONAHAN: Any expectation? Yes. I mean, we're doing everything we can to be prepared to have fans at our tournaments certainly in the final quarter of the year post-TOUR Championship. The way it works, just so you guys all have a sense of it, is at this point we have enough time to be able to continue to assess what's happening on the ground in the markets where we play, speaking to governors, speaking to mayors, speaking to health authorities. We've already in most cases communicated what our options are, and we have various approval levels to return, whether it's with fans, without fans, a set number of fans, whether or not we can play a pro-am, and we continue to have those conversations, and I think as we get into early August and mid-August, then we'll start making some decisions about where we're going to be post-TOUR Championship with our events.

We're hopeful that you're going to see fans at our tournaments when we get to the back half of the year, or quarter of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Commissioner, thank you very much for your time and updating us at the media. We really appreciate all the hard work you've been doing. Thank you.

JAY MONAHAN: Thank you to all of you. Thanks, Mark.



