

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Bubba Watson

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Bubba Watson to the virtual interview room here at the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide. You are about to start your 15th Memorial Tournament, highlighted by your third place finish. You had a chance to see the course. Some thoughts on being back here and some of the changes that may have stood out to you.

BUBBA WATSON: Wow, it's wild because it's very difficult. The changes that stood out to me, No. 5, I really don't see many people going for it. They're going to lay up -- to me, that's what it feels like, and it might be because I played in the rain today, it seemed longer. But the golf course is just very tough, very difficult. I think it didn't make it easier. It made some of the greens complexes a little bit easier maybe, but the whole golf course is very difficult. It's like you're playing a major championship. The rough is thick as I've ever seen it. You hit it in the rough, it's definitely going to cost you a little bit.

DOUG MILNE: One of the things we certainly wanted to talk to you about this week is your involvement with Play Yellow, the Children's Miracle network. If you could just kind of run us through that story and tell us how that came about and exactly what it is and what you are looking forward to doing with them.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, I'm part of the Studer Family Children's Hospital and so -- in Pensacola, Florida. We just celebrated two years of the Studer Family Children's Hospital in Pensacola Florida. And so for me it was a no-brainer, Children's Miracle Network. We're a part of that. And they wanted to raise money, a hundred million dollars over the next 10 or so years, and they asked me to be a part of it, and I said, it's a no-brainer. I want to support my community. I know how much a hospital, especially a children's hospital means to a city, a small city like Pensacola. It adds jobs, but it also adds security from other businesses coming in and developing in that area. And so, for me and my community, it's a big deal to have that in Pensacola. And then, again, anything with Jack, to partner with Jack and the team that he has around him,

the Memorial  Tournament

PRESENTED BY



what an honor and a privilege. But, again, the children, the children are the winners here. Jack Nicklaus, what's done off the course, what Barbara has done off the course is quite amazing. And, again, to have my name close to their name is pretty special and when it comes to giving back and the children, and all these hospitals all around the U.S., not just in my hometown, but that's why I'm supporting this Pensacola, Florida, and this Studer Family Children's Hospital. But, yeah, it's a dream come true to partner and, again, help my local city.

DOUG MILNE: Okay. Very well said. We'll take a few questions.

Q. I noticed you put something on social media about Naomi Osaka and her situation this week at the French Open and I know this is something that you've kind of dealt with in the past, and just I guess out of the gates, what are your feelings on this?

BUBBA WATSON: Let's just start with the good one right off the bat. You know, I mean, I can sit here and draw up a whole story for you. I'm sitting in a room right now with cameras looking at me, only one guy in here, but, I mean, I don't like enclosed places. I don't like elevators. I don't like heights. I mean, there's a lot of things that trigger a lot of my mental issues. And so I understand what she's saying, but it's part of the job. I mean, you got to do interviews. People are sponsoring an event. People are having prize money because they're sponsoring. I mean, there are all these sponsors. So that's part of the job. But if you don't, if you're not there mentally, then, yes, you need to go home and get better. And whatever that looks like, I can't, I don't know her situation because I haven't talked to her one-on-one, but I feel for her. Again, I would be there for her in she needed help because I've been through it. The media part, yes, it's part of the job, so we have to talk, we have to share with people around the world, and I get that part, but if you're not feeling up to it mentally, physically, whatever it is, then you need to go home and get rest and find a place to cope with what you're dealing with. That's the same thing I had to do. I dropped down to -- last time I weighed myself was 162 when I was dealing with it, and it's going to come back at some point. I mean, this is not something that goes away. There's not a miracle drug that it goes away. I mean, I'm still going to have issues. I have anxieties. I have doubts. I have pride issues. I have ego issues. I've got them all.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

I've got every issue you can think of and I'm still dealing with it, and hopefully I get better with it and hopefully she gets better with it too. So I see it both ways. From the media side, it's something we're supposed to do, but from her side as a human, we need to help her and help other people, not just her, but other people in that situation going forward.

Q. Have you become more comfortable in these situations over time?

BUBBA WATSON: No. Social media -- social media, you know, again, this, I don't know how to answer this in this short period of time that me and you have right here on a screen to face, but we all want to be loved. That's what our human nature. We all the want to feel love -- whatever the love looks like to you, I don't know, but for me, I want to feel love, and on social media I get blasted for no reason. I'm trying to do great things over the course. I'm trying to play good on the course. And sometimes headlines and things get to you, too positive, too negative, whatever way, it makes you go the wrong way. So for me, I just quit looking at the answers. I quit looking at social media. I quit looking at my interviews or quit watching me on Golf Channel or ESPN, whatever station is playing it, because I wanted to get away from it because it was, mentally it was messing me up. And my worth was coming if I was 3-putting or if I wasn't 3-putting, and really that shouldn't be my worth, I just play golf for a living. So I'm always going to deal with it. Even if I quit golf today, people are still going to ask me, why did you quit? And it's, like, because I wanted to. You know, so it's like there's always going to be something because I became so-called, I guess, celebrity, being Masters champ and being a winner on the PGA TOUR I'm always going to deal with stuff. And, you know, there's other people dealing with stuff that's not in front of a camera that we need to help and look for and I think me talking about it helps me, but I got to, if I share, then somebody else might be willing to share and I think the more you hold it in, especially for me, the more I hold it in, the worst it eats at me.

So I've got to share, I've got to be able to communicate first of all, with my wife, and she's got to be able to communicate with me, and then I'm going to have to communicate with Teddy, who I'm with seems like more than my wife, because we're at the golf course all the time. But I've got to share with my people around me, my close circle, and that's going to help me. But I'm still going to deal with it no matter what year it is or what month it is, it's not going to go away, I just got to keep battling and keeping my head up and going forward.

Q. I had a question for you. Tom Watson made some comments about how the American team in the past

maybe didn't jell well, how the Europeans jell well in Ryder Cups. Just wanted to know, you played with Webb for awhile, who you were close, are close to. Did you find that playing with somebody you were close to was easier than playing with someone that you didn't really know very well?

BUBBA WATSON: That's a great question. I mean obviously you're going to choose your buddy or your -- the one you're a little bit closer to. You know, I see it differently. And again I could be totally off, I could be totally wrong. I see it as an American player, for me, when I made the team, that's what the top-12, right? So when you made the team, that was pretty much it, that was your goal. Your goal was to make the team. It's never -- for me personally it was -- I made my goal of making the team and I never really saw the finish line of winning the event. Even though I gave it my all and I won points and we were so close, for me personally it was so hard for me to see us winning because once I made it to the team, I thought that was it, like that's the mecca for us as Americans to be top-12, to make the team. And so my mindset, I never really played very good in the individual part, I haven't won an individual match yet on Sunday or the last day. That's why I thought I was the best vice captain, because we won when I was vice captain and we have lost every time that I was a Ryder Cup teammate. So, no, I just see it differently. The pinnacle for us as Americans is to make the team and then you kind of exhale. Not all of us, just some of us and for me for sure. So I see it different that way.

I can play with anybody. I can get along with anybody. But again, Webb, J.B. Holmes I played with in a couple, and it seems like I can get along with anybody. But, yeah, just for some reason I stay with my friends that I had some time with, some friendship with or maybe everybody else didn't want to play with me, I'm not sure how to word that.

Q. One other thing, following up, yourself and players that you know, how often does what happens off the golf course, not just the issues you explained, but just in general maybe something with your kids or a business partner, whatever, how often do those things affect what happens on the golf course?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, wow. I mean that's a -- you asked, there's a lot of things in that question. Kids and family are first and foremost, so obviously if your family life is not where you want it to be or like it to be, then, yeah, that's definitely going to affect you on the course. I've never had a problem -- I've never focused -- I probably shouldn't say this out loud -- but I never focused on any of my businesses while I'm inside the ropes. But obviously my family, I want to make sure I'm the best husband for my



wife, I want that relationship to be there for years and years to come and with that relationship that's going to give my son and daughter perspective of love and what love means to your spouse later in life. So I think they're going to learn from that. So, yes, that can definitely affect the golf. If something's going on with -- I think the last year -- not I think, it was happening last year at an event - my daughter was at the children's hospital in Pensacola, so I was worried about her while I was playing, didn't know what was going on, I was checking my phone to make sure that she's okay. It was just a simple thing. So, yeah, I mean family life is definitely going to affect the golf.

Business life, unless you're going broke, I that would be the only thing, but luckily I have a good team around me so I've been doing okay.

Q. First, about your involvement with the hospital in Pensacola, can you kind of detail what that is?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, they asked for money and I give it. (Laughing.) No, I mean truthfully, it's crazy, so it's one of my, it was my plan to move back to Pensacola. How do you -- I didn't want to just go back to the city of Pensacola being Bubba Watson Masters champ. I wanted to go back as a citizen, I wanted to go back as a helper, I wanted to go back to a community that helped raise me. They taught me so much about life, so much about the game of golf, they helped me aspire to be better than just staying in Pensacola. And so I've been able to travel the world because of the game of golf and so now I wanted to go give back to Pensacola.

And this idea was floated about a children's hospital. Children's hospital of that size in Pensacola, needed about 1.5 million people. We have, gosh, we have under 200,000 people, so we're like, yeah, let's build it anyway. So you're talking about 85, 84, 85 million dollar project. I didn't give it all, there was a lot other people behind the scenes. And so the company, Ascension said -- it's one of their hospitals, many hospitals -- and so they said, if you can get this much money, it was somewhere around 30 or 35 million, if you could raise that much money, we'll pay the rest.

And so obviously why not just dream big. I mean, Bubba Watson's a Masters champion, that's past my dreams ever. And so me and my wife and everybody that I partner with they have all been a part of it the Pink Drivers have been a part of it, the children's hospital in Phoenix, the children's hospital in Pensacola, Florida, with the Pink Drivers, with Ping, Richard Mille, my wife's company, they give a hundred plus a year that we give to the children's hospital in Pensacola. And we given somewhere north of, you know, over 200 -- or 200 -- over two million dollars. I was

there last week at the children's hospital and the next thing that we're going and giving money towards is they're trying to build a new ambulance for kids, just for kids. So like -- I mean we're talking anywhere in a radius of 250,000 -- or I mean 250,000 -- 250 miles, from the Pensacola area. So you're talking about driving an infant, a kid in need, at least 200 miles.

So they're trying to, it's 350 grand for this new ambulance for kids and so we started off the donations with a hundred grand a couple weeks ago.

And so, I mean, you know, it's part of my life, it's where I was born, it's the heart of Pensacola, my dad's last cancer treatments, my sister was born there. And so it's a big part of our life, but it's a big part of the growth of Pensacola itself. I mean, having a children's hospital, you never want to go there, but you want it there just in case, right? And so it's one of those things that it's a dream come true of my legacy of my the Watson name is always going to be associated with that hospital.

So it's been a blast for me and my family, taking my son there, passing out Christmas gifts -- obviously during COVID we couldn't, but the year before, the first year of it, we were passing out Christmas gifts to the patients, it's been a blast and a treat.

Q. And the golf course, you played here obviously a long time, what's the challenge and you know how to play each of these holes and now it's a different course. How do you kind of adapt to that?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, if I knew I would be holding the trophy at some point. You know, it's one of those things, it challenges you -- you have wide targets, you have wide fairways, greens are a little bit smaller this year, but you know what to do, it's mentally being there. I think Phil did it the best a couple weeks back. I mean, he talked about his mental focus, he was trying to save energy by just walking slower, breathing different, doing all these things because he knew the mental grind was going to take.

This golf course, what Jack has created is an amazing place, you can hold any kind of major you wanted to here and he's got the rough up. So I mean it's just it's a challenge in your head to know that sometimes missing the green might be the right play, but who wants to try to miss a green? So there's certain areas you're trying to hit the ball and it's just mentally grueling and you got to somehow stay focused and stay committed on each shot at every second. And again, I haven't been able to do that very well, but I made some strides, I've got to do it for four days though.

**Q. What did you take from Phil's win at the PGA?
Anything that you saw that impressed you or surprised
you?**

BUBBA WATSON: You know what really impressed me is that his drive and dedication. I mean, you think about -- I mean I'm 42 now, he's 50, I played with him in Charlotte and I saw that he was working heavily on the mental side, the focus over the shot, over the putts, whatever it was. They were talking through things with his brother. It was just me and him on I think a Saturday in Charlotte. But his dedication to play all those tournaments in a row, even after he won he played the week after. Obviously tired then. But I saw his drive and dedication and he was more focused on recovery mentally, physically and all those things, which he's been talking about. And so it gives me hope. It gives me inspiration. It's inspiring to watch him do that at a high level for many many years. Gosh, it's pretty inspiring. I think a lot of people around the world were inspired. Just to, whatever your job is or whatever you're wanting to do, to get more focus and it was just special to watch and again, witness history.

**Q. You got any thoughts on his partnership with Brady
against Bryson and Aaron Rodgers?**

BUBBA WATSON: Well, yes, I have a lot of thoughts. I would love to be there and be the commentator for that. You know, it's one of those things where, gosh, he's such a good, we'll call it a chirper, and Bryson, I think he can get in Bryson's head real fast. So, and again, I can already think of some of the comments that Phil will make, but, you know, it's pretty entertaining, that group of guys. It will be entertaining. But, yeah, I think Phil's already in the head of Bryson, so I think it might be a win for Phil again.

DOUG MILNE: All right, Bubba, well we would be remiss not to offer you a thank you for the media gift that you and your team has provided the on-site media here this week, which is a surprise to everyone, so thank you for that and we appreciate all your time doing this and wish you the best of luck this week. Thank you.

BUBBA WATSON: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports