

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

Saturday, June 5, 2021

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Andy Levinson

Press Conference

MARK WILLIAMS: If you're ready, Andy, we will get under way.

ANDY LEVINSON: Okay.

MARK WILLIAMS: We appreciate you joining. Andy Levinson, senior vice president of tournament administration at the PGA TOUR. A little bit of an unfortunate circumstance, but I'm sure that we'll have a number of questions from the media here upcoming, but if you have anything to add to the statement that was received by us just 30 or 40 minutes ago, please go ahead and add, and then we'll just jump right into questions as I'm sure we'll have some.

ANDY LEVINSON: No, the statement, I think, said exactly what the situation was. It's a very unfortunate situation, obviously. The protocol that we have had in place for the last 50 events is being followed to the letter and unfortunately we are in a situation where we are this evening. And I'll be happy to answer questions.

MARK WILLIAMS: If you have questions, please just type your name in, and we'll call on you.

Q. What is the status on his playing partners for tomorrow? The players that he played with today, what is their status going into tomorrow?

ANDY LEVINSON: So any time we have a player that has become positive we'll conduct contact tracing to establish whether or not an individual meets the definition of close contact, which is in, generally inside of six feet for 15 minutes or more. And if that individual is determined to be a close contact, then they would enter our contact tracing protocol, but our contact tracing protocol does allow players to continue to participate as long as they are following our testing protocol and facility restrictions.

Q. Just to be sure, would Cantlay and Scheffler, who played with him today, and Morikawa, who played with him this morning, will they have to test tomorrow?

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ANDY LEVINSON: So they're being interviewed by our contact tracing team this evening, and we will make a determination as to whether or not they meet that definition of close contact, and if they do, then they will take a test in the morning.

Q. Can you say if Jon has been vaccinated and if he had been, would he not then have been required to test every day?

ANDY LEVINSON: I can't speak to Jon's vaccination status. That's an individual situation. But he was still part of our testing program, and he was required, under our contact tracing protocol to test as a result of that.

Q. So is it then fair to say that anyone who, had they been vaccinated still would have had to test every day like he did?

ANDY LEVINSON: Not necessarily. If someone had been fully vaccinated, and fully vaccinated under our protocol is, and it's defined by the CDC, is 14 days past the full cycle of a vaccination. They do not have to test as a result of being a close contact.

Q. If I could just ask one more. Thank you. Is there any consideration given to allowing him to -- allowing him to play simply because we're outdoors, the spacing, he wasn't being allowed to go indoors. I take it based on your earlier answer that the answer is no, but I just wonder if you could address that part.

ANDY LEVINSON: No, the CDC's protocol regarding people who are confirmed positive for COVID-19 is clear, and that is 10 days of isolation unless someone is asymptomatic and is able to produce two negative tests of a minimum of 24 hours apart. Unfortunately, the timing would not allow Jon to continue to participate.

Q. Will he have the option of taking, I guess, a second test would be the thing? I know that his first sample was retested, but after he had left here, could he take another test and if it comes back negative are there any ways he can move forward?

ANDY LEVINSON: Unfortunately, not to participate tomorrow. So the CDC's protocol regarding asymptomatic

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

positives is that they can get -- if they can get two negative PCR test results spaced a minimum of 24 hours apart, then they can come out of isolation early. But they need to, those tests do need to be a minimum of 24 hours apart. And we have followed those guidelines since the beginning.

Q. And to ask kind of a shop-keeping question, why was he informed right off the green? I mean, was there another way of doing this maybe?

ANDY LEVINSON: So he was informed by our medical advisor. It's an unfortunate situation and difficult to find an ideal opportunity to notify him, but our medical advisor notified him before he went into scoring and that was how it was conducted.

Q. I wanted to double-back on your protocols. If someone has been 14 days removed from, past the cycle of their full vaccination, second shot, whatever, are they required to go through contact tracing testing?

ANDY LEVINSON: No.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

ANDY LEVINSON: Unless -- I'm sorry, unless they develop symptoms. I should reiterate that.

Q. This might have been kind of asked a couple questions ago, but the timing of telling him, allowing him to finish his round, when did you guys know that he had tested positive and was there consideration of telling him in the middle of his round instead of waiting until the end?

ANDY LEVINSON: We received the original, the initial positive results at 4:20 p.m. Our medical advisor ordered a re-run of that test, of that original sample, and we were notified of that, I believe the exact time was 6:03 p.m. He was in the middle of the 18th fairway. I think he had already hit his second shot, and so our advisor notified him as soon as he finished.

Q. Housekeeping question. Who is the medical director for the TOUR that informed him?

ANDY LEVINSON: His name is Dr. Tom Hospel, H-o-s-p-e-l.

Q. I thought so. Just confirming it. And then who was the other person that went out there to inform Jon? There were two people.

ANDY LEVINSON: I don't know who else was standing next to him. I'm not sure.

Q. A couple questions: One, you said that, you indicated how it happened. We saw how Jon was informed of the positive test. In your release, you indicate that there had been four positive tests before in competition. How did you notify the other three?

ANDY LEVINSON: They were notified by PGA TOUR rules officials. This was, in competition meant it occurred during, say, after the competition began Thursday morning through Sunday. There has not been a situation, to my knowledge or to my recollection, that we have had a situation where we actually found a result while somebody was on the golf course. This is the first of those situations. In those other situation, those individuals had become symptomatic and notified us when they woke up and we tested them and had a result before they teed off.

Q. Secondly, do you have an idea what the percentage of PGA TOUR players are have been vaccinated?

ANDY LEVINSON: We do. We have been tracking full vaccinations, so not partial vaccinations, and on the PGA TOUR, I can tell you that the fully vaccinated population is north of 50 percent.

Q. And then in the release, it indicates that Jon had been in close contact with someone that required contact tracing. Do you, can you tell us, if not who, what the relationship was to Jon?

ANDY LEVINSON: I cannot. That's something that Jon will of to speak to. I won't speak to somebody else's situation.

Q. And then lastly, there's, if I remember correctly, there's some money involved for Jon, one way or the other, obviously not the purse, but I think the TOUR has some kind of fund that they will give Jon some money because he's had to withdraw during the event. Is that correct?

ANDY LEVINSON: There is a stipend program for players to assist them with lost earnings and potential costs of isolation and so forth.

Q. I wanted to, I have a question on false positives and if it was, I know you said that you retested the initial sample given, but was there any consideration to do another sample from Jon for another test to confirm that initial positive?

ANDY LEVINSON: So as I mentioned earlier, there is the

possibility of somebody being asymptomatic and testing positive and even a very, very, very small chance of false positives. And the CDC protocol for that, once somebody has positive PCR test result is to test them again, and if that individual can get two negative test results spaced 24 hours apart, then they can come out of isolation, whether that's a false positive or a very, very low level positive that didn't materialize into anything.

Unfortunately, in this case, there isn't time to establish that. What we do know is that we had an individual who had close contact, he tested positive, we re-ran the sample and came up with a positive result.

Q. Follow-up question. Given obviously Jon's position within the tournament having a six-shot lead and wanting to follow CDC guidelines as well as protect the integrity of the competition, would there be any consideration to perhaps changing some of those guidelines moving forwards? I don't know if it's even a possibility to have Jon play in a one-ball until that 24 hours had passed to the 4 p.m. deadline on a Sunday, if that might be a consideration in the future.

ANDY LEVINSON: You know, we have followed, we have followed our medical advisor's recommendations on this, and that is not something that any medical advisor that we worked with has suggested, that we would allow someone who is actively infected to participate in our competition, where we know that. And it wouldn't be in line with the CDC's protocols as well, so I don't see us changing that particular protocol.

Q. There was a couple guys, Cantlay and Scheffler both, who said they have already had COVID. Does that preclude them from any type of protocols following them in terms of testing in their interviews they have tonight?

ANDY LEVINSON: Prior infection does not preclude someone necessarily from being, you know, required to test as a result of being a close contact. We do have a policy regarding someone who is tested positive. They're not required to test for a period of 90 days, but that has to do with the fact that the PCR tests will continue very likely to show them as positive for a number of weeks, if not months, picking up dead remnant virus. But if they're beyond the three months, then that in and of itself would not preclude them from being tested.

Q. Do you happen to know how many tests Jon had this week? I don't know when he got here. I saw Wednesday. I don't know if he got here Monday, Tuesday, whatever. Do you ever a record of that, by chance?

ANDY LEVINSON: He has tested every day this week --

Q. But you don't know starting when?

ANDY LEVINSON: -- starting Monday all the way through.

Q. Couple questions. According to the statement, it says the TOUR notified Jon Rahm that he would have to be tested because of contact tracing around somebody with COVID. Did Jon notify you guys? Is that how you found out?

ANDY LEVINSON: We actually found out through our own testing program.

Q. So you found out that Jon Rahm had been near someone else through tests?

ANDY LEVINSON: Through someone else who had tested through our program.

Q. Secondly, getting back to the decision to notify Jon greenside, did that, the reasoning behind that, did that have anything to do to keep, with keeping Jon away from fans and having interaction?

ANDY LEVINSON: You know, I can't say to the exact reason for that exact point where the doctor notified him. I think the doctor notified him in a manner that he felt appropriate, prior to going into scoring.

Q. I know I asked you about Morikawa, Scheffler, and others. How many people are in contact tracing right now?

ANDY LEVINSON: Well, again, we're going through that process now for anybody who may have been a close contact with Jon. I can tell you that Jon, as a part of his contact tracing protocol, has been extremely mindful about his social distancing and so forth when he can. We know that being outdoors is extremely low-risk activity, and Jon has, again, been extremely cooperative and compliant with our contact tracing protocol throughout the week. So we're going through that contact tracing related to Jon. But as for anybody else, we have not had anyone else this week in our contact tracing protocol.

Q. I know you can't require players to be vaccinated, but what is your education process for them and how strongly do you urge them to be vaccinated?

ANDY LEVINSON: So, we have strongly encouraged our players, our caddies, our staff, and anyone involved with our competition to be vaccinated, and we have presented

educational materials and resources to educate them on that, completely understanding that it is an individual choice. We just want to make sure that people have the proper facts, the unadulterated facts related to that. We have also been out quite a bit at TOUR events having one-on-one conversations with people who have questions about the vaccine and are hesitant. And our advisor has been out every week for the last nine or ten weeks or so doing just that, having one-on-one conversations and that's I think been extremely helpful. So we have strongly encouraged but not mandated.

Q. Are you happy with, you said north of 50, which that leaves a lot of ground, are you happy with the numbers that have been vaccinated?

ANDY LEVINSON: We are. You know, of course we would like to see the number higher, but full vaccination is two full weeks past the completion of a cycle. So let's look at the Moderna vaccine, for example. That's a six-week process. And you're looking at a population of a lot of young people who may not have even necessarily been eligible in their hometowns until mid-April. So we're really starting to see that percentage of people uploading their full vaccination record, that's really starting to increase significantly over the last two weeks and I expect it to continue.

MARK WILLIAMS: Thank you for your time, Andy. Sorry if we didn't get to ask your questions, anybody that's still on there, but, Andy, we appreciate your time, thanks for making the effort to get on with us.

ANDY LEVINSON: Thank you all.

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