

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday

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Muirfield Village

Billy Horschel

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Billy Horschel to the interview room here at the 2023 The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday. It was a great year for you last year and it must be fun to come back and defend your title. You won seven times, what do you need to do to make it an 8th this week?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I surely need to hit the ball better than I have this year. Yeah, it's always great to come back and defend. Reminisce about the memories and it's special to think about having my kids there for the first time, my wife there for the first time seeing me win. Running out on the green. Something that I always wanted to finally accomplish in my career.

But this course, it's always tough, the rough is not nearly as I would say healthy in a sense. It's a little spotty in areas. It's not as long, it's not as thing. But it's still, it's still a challenge. And they have added some new tees to some new holes that is a little interesting, but this course always requires you to be a great iron player, have a lot of touch around and on the greens. So it's always a great tournament to come here and see where your game is at and hopefully my game is, shows up a little more than it has this year.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, how would you assess your season? You've had a couple of top 10s, still looking for that first victory this season. But what's the issue with you right now? What are you looking to try and fix?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, the season's been pretty bad, pretty abysmal, to tell you the truth. I haven't driven the ball very well. It's always been my strength. The iron play hasn't been great. It's been, it hasn't been great the last couple years. But when you drive the ball well in the fairway you give yourself more opportunities. I've been playing from spots I'm not used to. Iron play hasn't been good and it's been putting a lot of stress on the short game and putting to make up for all the issues with the ball striking. But thankfully Todd and I have been working hard



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at it, it's sort of just been trying to put the pieces a little bit together. We tried to make some changes in the off-season to get better and unfortunately it didn't work, went back to some of the old stuff and it's just, it's taken a little bit longer. But I'm starting to see some life, starting to see some more quality golf shots. My bad golf shorts aren't nearly as bad anymore. So, yeah, it's getting closer, it's still not where I want it to be, but there's life in the game finally.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. How well do you know Jack and what are your thoughts about him kind of as a person, not so much as golfer, if you can just talk about your relationship with him.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I don't know Jack that well. Obviously I've had a few interactions with him here and maybe a little bit down in West Palm. Obviously last year winning the tournament. I'm not the kind of person that, I don't know, I guess if the, if it doesn't work and I'm never going out of my way to sort of seek out advice or anything like that. Sort of if it's in the right time and it works and I sort of ask questions, whether it's Jack or some other people, but I just obviously know Jack as a golfer, I know what Jack's done since his career's been over with all the charity, how great Barbara is. You hear a lot of great stories about Barbara. Obviously he tells 'em. But listen, I know there's other guys on TOUR that have a closer relationship with him. Patrick Cantlay I think being one of 'em. Rory I know has a little closer relationship. He's an unbelievable guy in the game of golf, he's done tremendous things on and off the golf course and he's a guy that a lot of us are thankful he did play the game of golf because he's allowed us to do what we do today and be more financially rewarded for what he did for the game of golf and the PGA TOUR.

Q. He was in here yesterday, talking about when he played, guys whose swings he admired and guys who were like he couldn't believe they could hit the ball. How about you? Are there guys out here who you watch their swing and you go, man, I wish I had that or, I admire it, and other guys are like, how does that happen? How can he even advance the ball?



BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I mean it's --

Q. And names, please.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I'm not -- I'll give you names of swings I like. I won't tell the other guys. Listen, Max Homa's got a beautiful swing. I think his swing's the model, not the model, but I think his swing is unbelievable in today's game of golf. I think Nelly Korda's swing maybe is one of the best swings in the game of golf since Tiger early in the 2000s. I watch a lot of YouTube swings and a lot of highlights of Tiger's swing in the early 2000s and it was absolutely beautiful. Positions are technically sound.

Listen, there's always guys, it doesn't matter what sport it is, you're sort of shocked that they're able to compete and compete at the high level and be successful at it. So it doesn't matter whether it's in golf or another sport, there's always people that sort of shock you that they're on a playing field with other guys when the talent level looks the gap the size of the Grand Canyon.

Q. You were just sort of talking about your struggles. Did you try to fix something that wasn't broken in retrospect or and you said in the off-season you tried to make some changes or?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: You know, it was one of those things where we try to get better in the game of golf. There were certain things in my swing that led to a few issues and so we thought if we could make a little bit different loading pattern, sort of how we loaded in the back swing, it would fix some of the other issues. It worked at home, it worked in practice, it just didn't work in tournaments under the pressure. Actually the beautiful thing is when we went back to the old stuff what we were trying to fix sort of got fixed. So it was just one of those things where in the game of golf to continue to get better, to continue to improve, to continue to try to raise your game to an even higher level you got to be willing to take chances. I've always been willing to take chances to get better. I think my success rate at doing that has been very, is very high. And this is one of those where we lost a little bit. But we were smart enough to realize soon enough that the, it wasn't successful and we went back to the old stuff. Now, did I think it was going to take this long to get back to where we want to be and a few other things? No. But it's been a very difficult year. It's been the hardest year of my 14 years on the golf course. I mean, the amount of work and the consistent work I've put in this year is probably up there with any of the years, if not more. I've had my fair share of sort of mental breakdowns, which I never had before. It's sort of tested me mentally to see where I, you know, what do I want to do in the game of golf, what -- do I really

want to keep pounding away at it and not get results I want. I think that's what happens is when you work so hard you put so much into it, so much love, passion, sweat, everything into it and not getting the results and you're not playing to the level you expect it wears on anybody and it's worn on me a lot. But I've got great perspective, I understand why I play the game of golf. I've got great life off the golf course with my wife and kids. So, yeah, so like anything, it's one of those years that I didn't expect in my career, but I'm learning how to deal with it and I feel like I'm in a really good place and I'm excited to continue to work hard and continue to get the game in a better spot and compete again. Compete for tournaments, compete for titles. It's what I've done my entire career. I'm missing out on that right now and it sucks a little bit, but I know that my time will come again.

Q. What's your comfort level with your game right now and getting back to that? Are you sort of in the middle it have still or getting closer?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I'm getting closer. I'm on finally an upward trend. I got a little bit better foothold. I would say, listen, if 10 I was absolutely comfortable with my swing -- and my putting and short game has been really solid all year so I'm not really too worried about that. I would say I'm probably about a six. So I'm on to the better side of that now. It's still not -- we know what we need to do, I know what needs to be done and how to do it, it's just not always happening the way I want. It's still a little bit of a challenge, but I'm not having to grind as hard to find something anymore. Like we know what the pieces are, we're putting them together now, it's just sort of continuing to work on the right things and I think I'm about a week or two away from really being comfortable with the swing going forward.

Q. You use the word abysmal to describe a season with struggles. So how do you grow confidence heading into tomorrow?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, the last, I would say since Zurich Classic the my game's been coming around. I played well at Zurich, with Sam, I hit a few bad shots unfortunately that cost us from having a better week. I played well at PGA. I hit some really quality golf shots. I'm still shocked I missed the cut. I mean, I had my wife and my brother-in-law and my team there watching, a few other people and after Friday's round we just sat around like shocked that we missed cut. I played really well, I made absolutely nothing. I lipped out every possible lipout you could have, I had in a two-day round of golf. So those were good signs.

Last week I played a really good first round and played

solid on the weekend. Friday was just one of those days I didn't play well.

So, listen, the game's coming around, there's life in it finally. I'm excited. I just have to sort of stay patient and not get ahead of myself. Understand that it's still a little bit of a grind and still not as easy as I want, but it's heading in the right direction and I just have to -- I keep repeating myself -- it's patience, which is something that I've never been great at but I think as I have gotten older and as I've had three kids I've learned how to grow some at least.

Q. Is your family with you this weekend?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, yeah. So my parents and son came up yesterday and my wife and two girls are on their way up here later this afternoon. So they will be up here again.

Q. Does that add any extra motivation for you?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: No. I mean, there's not -- you can't go much higher with how motivated I am on a weekly basis to play well and to win tournaments. So them being here doesn't add anything else to it. It's just nice to have 'em here and sort of be a distraction when I get off the golf course after a round.

Q. What was the low point?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Well I had two low points. Bay Hill after missing that cut we had a discussion with Mark Horton, my stats guy and Mark Fulcher, who was caddieing for me. And it was a lively discussion for about 45 minutes in the parking lot. I went back to the room -- I think even before I got back to the room, just in my car, just thinking about the discussion and thinking about where the game was and where I want to be and where I'm not at the moment. I sort of just broke down a little bit. As much as people have seen me get upset and a little angry on the golf course, on the flip side of that, I'm not very much an emotional guy that way. I'm not a sappy guy -- not, I wouldn't say sappy not in a bad way -- but I don't cry very often -- not that people cry a lot, I don't know. But I broke down and I cried a little bit. I had tears. I had another one at Hilton Head after missing that cut. I played a decent first round and was in a good position after the second, going into round 2, and didn't play a good round. And I mean it was just an emotional, it was just a mental sort of grind and stress and fatigue and just on the range there for about 30 seconds just bending down, I had my hands in my head -- or had my head in my hands, just sort of, just trying to hold back the tears for a little bit. Because this game means so much to me and I love the game of golf and I'm so passionate about it. Not just myself, but to get everyone,

get other people involved and to see other people succeed. It's just one of those things that the love I have for it that when you're not getting what you want out of it sort of sucks a little bit. Those are just two points that I just, it sort of hit me and I just had to sort of take it and relax and realize the earth isn't falling, the earth isn't going anywhere, nothing's coming crashing down on me. We're going to be okay. We're going to figure it out.

I think the other thing too is I have such an amazing group of people around me that they work so hard as well and listen, and they have told me before, but I want to reward them with how well I play. I want to reward them for winning golf tournaments and letting them get recognition as well for all the hard work that they do. They're behind the scenes and they don't want any recognition at all, but I want to give them that recognition by playing well and winning tournaments and just I'm always thankful for them. But just a little more icing on top of the cake.

Q. Can you speak specifically to TA's role in what you guys are trying to do right now?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, Todd's been an unbelievable person for me for a 15 years. My swing coach. A great friend. One of my best friends. An unbelievable mentor. Right now the biggest thing is that the way the club goes back and hasn't been going back the right way in the sense the plane of the golf swing doesn't look too bad, I struggle with my setup a little bit, so the setup is always 85 percent of my issues. So the other 15 percent right now is that the left arm is overworking in the back swing and then what happens is I get very narrow, I get a lot of pull in my swing coming down with the left arm and I get very narrow and the face stays wide open and it's a lot of a timing having to square the face up. Whether I hit it a million miles right or I flip hook it left. So right now we're just trying to feel like the right arm is more in control, the right arm, the right shoulder, the right side's more in control of the back swing so it can be shorter. Then from there I have to maintain the width on the downswing to and not get narrow. Maintain that width so the face squares up when it needs to. I'm able to hit that little cut that I love to hit. So it sounds a lot more complicated, it's a lot harder to do at times and like yesterday I hit it really good in practice and out on the course and today I warmed up okay and I went on the golf course and it wasn't very good. So, like I said, it's getting closer, but it's still a little bit of a challenge and it's just some bad habits I've gotten into that we're just trying to work out of.

Q. You're 36 and you talk about perspective and how life's great off the course. But can life beat you up a little bit off the course? When you're 23 years old you're so focused on just golf. How does that impact



your game? Like just life getting in the way in a sense. I'm thinking of guys in their 30s who maybe haven't been as successful as they have been in the past. How do you juggle that?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I mean, listen, time, as you get older you have more priorities, you have other things that come up in life. I mean, when I was 23 I was newly married and I didn't have any kids and I could go spend an entire day at the golf course. My wife was totally fine with that because she played golf in college so she understands the sacrifice it made, that you had to make to be great.

Now I'm 36 with three kids, an eight-year-old, a six-year-old and a four-year-old. Two of the girls, both the girls are into competitive cheerleading. I love to go watch their practices and when I can go to their competitions. I got a four-year-old boy who is absolutely in love with his father right now. He loves to go out to the golf course and hit balls. And he loves to, he loves to watch West Ham when I'm watching on TV and he's got -- he's a big Declan Rice fan and he wears his Declan Rice jersey and gameday gear that Declan gave him. So, you know, there's just, there's not enough, there's plenty of time in the day for me to get everything I need to do to continue to be successful in the game of golf. But there's just a lot of things that come up that sort of disrupt some practice and disrupt some things. And it's fine. We all have to deal with it. We all have to manage it. I don't think life -- life itself hasn't beat me up. I've had a really good life. I've been very successful. A lot of people know where I've come from and the situation that I didn't grow up with a silver spoon and I made my way to where I'm now. So I'm very, very lucky to be where I am. Life has been very good for me. I have, I've been fortunate enough that I have healthy parents and healthy in-laws and nothing that can grind you that way that people can deal with sicknesses and illnesses and family. So I've been fortunate enough that I've had a really good life and the only thing that beats me up from time to time is golf. But I got to realize it can always change from day-to-day and there's always another day to get better and improve.

Q. Is your son going to be heart broken if Declan leaves this summer?

BILLY HORSCHEL: We've already told, my wife told him I think a couple weeks ago that Declan is more than likely leaving. So he goes, Can we still support Declan when he leaves? And we're like, Yes, we can support him, we just won't support the team as much. West Ham will still be our No. 1 team. I think his new player is Lucas Paquetá the Brazilian mid fielder.

Q. He loves to dance, that guy.

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, yeah. So, yeah, so I think that's his new favorite player on West Ham's squad.

Q. The golf question was, you're the defending champion here. You've won Wentworth, you've won big events. But I'm looking at your major record and I think you finished tied for 4th in your first one as a pro and then I don't see any top 10s since then. For a player of your caliber who is accomplished so much how do you explain that?

BILLY HORSCHEL: That's a great question. It's very explainable. It's pressure I put on myself. There's no doubt about it. We always have goals that we set and as a kid I always wanted to be one of those players that won the career Grand Slam. I always had that as a young kid because very few guys have done it. I want to do things that guys haven't done before. I think maybe I put too much -- I always obviously put way too much pressure on myself. I'm not, I can't be that naive about my game sometimes as other players can. That's a talent that they have and I don't have. If my game's not very good, I know it and I'm not very confident and I don't believe that I'm able, I'm going to be able to compete that week.

I got to feel like I got to be perfect and realized I don't have to be perfect in majors. But at Augusta for so many years I felt like my short game wasn't good enough to play there. And then, you know, in the Open Championship I love the imagination but I just didn't understand completely how to play links style courses. The PGA Championship was different. I made more cuts in PGA, in a PGA Championship than any major. The U.S. Open I always thought was really good for me because of my ball striking and I think that's why that's my only top 10. But last few years I felt more comfortable with where my game is. I felt more comfortable with not putting so much pressure on myself in the majors. My attitude's been a lot better, the way we prepped has been a lot better. Now it's just I got to execute golf shots better. And I think last year I think I finished top 20 or top 15 at the British Open and I had ten 3-putts for the week. So you look at that and you're like, wow, you take about four of those away -- I think I take two of those away I think I finish top 10. So it's just one of those things that is, listen, I'm very, I, I hate that my major record's not better, but the only thing I can do is continue to try and play better, try and put myself in more positions to try and play well in majors. I love 'em, I want to win a major, I believe I am going to win a major before my career is over. I was having this conversation with my manager, John Heaton last week, realizing that, you look at players like Adam Scott, he's got one major. Justin Rose, one major. D.J., two majors. Justin Thomas, two majors. And you realize it's really tough to play well in majors right now.

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I mean, it's not tough, it's tough to win majors. As you said, I won at some really cool places and I won some really good events and maybe just if I can get that one major I think that will, I'll be very satisfied with the career I've had and can say, hey, that's something I can hold my head up high and I can hold my head up right now if my career was done. But I would really love to be able to knock off a major and I just need to finally execute golf shots and get it done. It's just as simple as that. So we'll see what it has in store over the next five, eight years for me in majors, but I think it's going to be a lot better than it has been.

THE MODERATOR: Final comment, I guess the Gators did something pretty special in the NCAA's against Florida State. Any comment on that?

BILLY HORSCHER: Yeah, it was pretty cool. I was obviously staying very close and watching the last five holes. I thought we had no chance. I sort of gave up on the boys, to tell you the truth. Not that I didn't think they couldn't pull it out, it just didn't look like it was going our way. And then Ricky was able to win his match and then John DuBois to be able to win his match. And then Ricky to flip his match being 2-down with three to play was impressive. And then him going to extra holes, I think they played four extra holes, and for him to make a birdie on the 22nd hole to push us through. Listen, those boys work hard. I'm fortunate enough to be called a coach, a volunteer assistant coach and be around them. Obviously I'm not around them as much as I would like to. But they're a great group of kids that have worked very hard and represent the University of Florida in the way that we all would want and I'm excited that these guys have the opportunity. And listen, I'm going to send them a little video message just tell them I'm proud of them. And whatever happens today, it happens. It doesn't make anything they have done any less significant. They have been great. And I'll be watching this afternoon and I'll be on pins and needles and be more nervous watching them than I was at any other time trying to win a golf tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Excellent. Thanks for your time, Billy. Appreciate it. Good luck defending your title this week.

BILLY HORSCHER: Thank you, guys.

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