

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday

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Muirfield Village

Brandt Snedeker

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Brandt Snedeker to the interview room of the 2023 Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday. Brandt is making his first start on the PGA TOUR since the Fortinet Championship in the fall. Brandt, if you could, just kind of walk us through injuries that you've been dealing with over the last few months.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: So I had surgery. I had a sternum injury called -- been dealing with it for six or seven years -- called manubrium joint instability. So a really rare thing. But managed it the best I could and got to the point where I couldn't play without pain anymore and got tired of dealing with it. So had surgery December 1st in Nashville with my surgeon named Dr. Burton Elrod, kind of an experimental surgery, to say the least, to see if it would. Luckily, everything kind of went the way it was supposed to. Took a bone out of my hip and cut my sternum open and kind of created a new sternum in a sense. It is way more stable and hopefully does not cause me pain. So, so far, so good.

So didn't start hitting balls until April 1st. So had about five months of rehab. No golf. Feel like I kind of accomplished what we set out to accomplish, which was to try to swing without pain and so far, so good.

So at some point you have to jump into the deep end and see if it worked or not and this felt like a good week to do it. So I didn't want to kind of dip my toe in at an easy place to do it, I wanted to find out at a tough place and I figured this is the best way to do it. So excited to be back, excited to be back here on TOUR and couldn't think of a better place than Jack's place. And obviously Workday being one of my biggest sponsor, one of my best friends in life, it seemed special for me to be back here. So excited for the week, excited for what's ahead of me.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. So how long was it before you could even start hitting balls?



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BRANDT SNEDEKER: 16 weeks of just sitting still pretty much, not doing a whole lot. So just letting the bone heal. Takes about 16 weeks for about 85 percent of the bone graft to take and that's kind of where they set the standard before I could really do anything of the.

Q. So then once you got back into it, what was it like? I mean --

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It was odd.

Q. Were you able to even, like were you able to physically, like work out?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It took time. I was able to work out. After about week 10 to 11 I started getting back in the gym and doing some light stuff. It's amazing what you lose when you don't do it. I lost a lot of the mobility. I lost a lot of strength in places I didn't know I had strength. So trying to recreate that and build that back it's a slow process. I'm getting back to where I feel like I'm getting my strength back. My speed's coming back slowly, but it's coming back. So it's one of those things where I am able to do the things now to put the time in away from the golf course, put the time in in practicing and preparing and all that kind of stuff I couldn't do before. It's been such a limited regimen of ball hitting and days taking, having to take days off to let my body recover that it just got to the point where I couldn't compete doing that.

So now I'm at a point where I can put in the time and I can play without pain, I can practice without pain, and so makes it a lot more enjoyable.

Q. So there was a point last year when it must have really been affecting your game?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Last three years really. Yeah. Been dealing with it for a long time. Did everything I could non-surgical to deal with it and just wasn't, it was not getting where I needed to be. So this was a quality-of-life decision. Whether golf worked out after this, great. If it didn't, at least I did everything I possibly could.

Q. So what exactly did they do?



BRANDT SNEDEKER: They took a bone about the size of my thumb out of my hip and they cut my sternum open and kind of cut across it and made a huge incision. They dialed out about the size of my pinkie on my lower part of the sternum and upper part and put that bone in the middle of 'em and kind of created a dowel almost like thing. And then wrapped it with bone putty and paste and tried to kind of let it heal and reattach itself. So kind of broke my sternum on purpose, cut my sternum open and then kind of reattached it.

Q. And you say it was experimental?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It's only been done one other time.

Q. Really.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah.

Q. Were you worried about that?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: No. Not worried, because the doctor I have I had tons of faith in him. He's been my ortho forever and he's a genius. I know he wouldn't do anything that would hurt me. He didn't want to do it, but all the other options involved steel plates and rods and screws and all that kind of stuff and he was and big time anti that I was anti that. I didn't think that would solve the problem. I thought it would just move the pain elsewhere. So he was, it took some convincing, because he didn't want to do it again. He did it one time. Finally convinced him to do it and I think it's the best case scenario so far.

Q. And one last question, do you remember the first time you played 18 holes and what it felt like?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, it was April 21st. Three weeks after I started hitting balls I went out and played 18. As I told him when I started hitting balls back it was not -- the playing part was going to be the easiest part. Because you only hit so many shots in a round of golf. I was like I need to be able to have the practice sessions that I had beforehand. So I need to be able to hit 400 balls in a setting for four hours straight. And know that it can hold up to it. That was impossible the last three or four years. I just couldn't do it. I would be in so much pain I had to stop. The playing was the least of my worries. I was like, I can do this, it's only, you know, 45 full swings and a bunch of putts. I can do that. It's the continued hitting of driver after driver or 7-iron after 7-iron trying to work on something. So I didn't really have one of those until kind of the 1st of this month where I really kind of like got freedom to go, Okay, I'm going to hit 300 balls and just see. And I didn't have a setback. Kind of kept getting better and better and never

really had any pain or any kind of -- I'll have some stiffness and soreness and that kind of stuff that's to be expected. I mean, I got my chest cut open, so it's going to be sore. But no pain or no sharp tingling or anything like that.

Q. Are you on any pitch count now?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: He would like for me to be on a pitch count. We don't necessarily agree on that. (Laughing.) I feel fully confident -- I mean, pitch count in a sense of I'm not putting in eight-hour sessions like I used to. But I can go out and hit 300, 400 golf balls. He's just like keep it at 300 to 400. We don't need 800 golf ball days or those kind of days anymore. So that's kind of where we drew the line.

Q. How is your putting?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Actually really good. Really good. It's funny, I got to do that a lot. Kind of that was my first way back was about eight weeks after surgery he let me start hitting some putts. So when you have nothing to do and your kids are in school and you're looking around, Okay, I'm going to putt for an hour or two and see how it feels. Started kind of getting into a routine doing that. And then kind of started into chipping and another routine of like, Okay, now this is how I can spend my days. And kind of got my feet wet where I felt like, Okay, I can do this. I can get back to doing this.

Q. And do you know when it first started bothering you?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, the British Open in 2017 was when I withdrew that week. I felt it at the end of 2016, I had some pain issues, but it wasn't bad. Then the British Open in 2017 I felt like I broke my sternum. I came home and had X-rays, MRIs, all that stuff done. And that's where I started, they started seeing the problem. There was no solution. It was like, Okay, we're just going to manage it for as long as we can. And so that's what I've been doing for the last five and a half years, six years or whatever it is, yeah.

Q. Is it golf related? Was the injury golf related?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It was, there was no like traumatic event. So typically there's like -- I researched all this -- about 12 cases in the world in the last 15 years or something like that and they're all traumatic injuries. Typically from car accidents from like a steering wheel hitting you in the chest and breaking your sternum and you have this kind of trauma to it. Mine was the only one that was on record of non-trauma related. Just kind of, mine was, I guess, I assumed it to be repeated trauma of hitting

a golf ball. And I had a bone spur in there that was causing I think most of the issues. So as I hit more golf balls and the bone spur kept getting bigger it kept moving my sternum apart. And everything I was doing was trying to create -- I did some stem cell therapists in South America and PRP in Jacksonville was trying to create a solid joint in there. Well it just made the bone spur bigger and bigger and bigger and never solved the problem. So that's kind of where we got to the point where we are at.

Q. How long through is your exempt status?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I have minor medical for the rest of, or for I think five or six more events. And then I kind of go through sponsor exemptions the rest of this year. And then I have, my status will be, I'll have no status, depending upon how I play, obviously. And then I'll have past champion and lifetime Money List exemptions if I want 'em. We'll kind of cross that bridge when we get to it.

Q. But for the rest --

BRANDT SNEDEKER: This season? I have an idea of playing two on, two off the rest of the season.

THE MODERATOR: I'll get the information.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I got five left on my minor medical and then we'll go from there.

Q. What was the most serious surgery you had before this one?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Probably my hip surgeries were pretty intense. I had had some -- both of those were 12-week process of kind of getting back. I had a hand surgery, but that was not traumatic. It was just a finger surgery. It wasn't anything terrible. The hip surgeries were pretty serious, but this was a different level. It was just, you know, never had open heart surgery, it's pretty close, so...

Q. And then I was reading that you called yourself unemployable.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I did.

Q. You found out you were unemployable?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I am.

Q. What did you binge watch and what did you read?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I read a lot of books. So got into mainly non-fiction books. I read some fiction books. Just

kind of all over the wall. Different authors. I'd kind of go down the list and read a bunch. I didn't really binge watch a whole lot of Netflix or anything. It was more live sports kind of stuff. So I watched a lot of golf, watched a lot of football, a lot of baseball, a lot of college basketball, that kind of stuff. So got to do some trips with my kids I never got to do before. I got to do some stuff like that. I'm really good at dropping kids off and picking them up from school. I got really good at doing that. So it was fun. I experienced what it's like to be a Mr. Mom for awhile and I enjoyed it a little bit. I think my kids like having mom around a lot better than me. So it's good for me to get back to work. (Laughing.)

Q. How close did you or how worried were you that you wouldn't be able to play again?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I don't think it ever got to that point. I think I had faith in my doctor. But it was, the decision I made at the end of last year was either this is going to work or it's not. I can't keep doing what I'm doing. So if it doesn't work, then I'll find something else to do. And if it does work then hopefully I can come back here and do this. So that was kind of the thought process. I can't keep hitting my head against the same wall. So I had faith it would work, but you never know.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Hopefully, this is my first time in here, so in all the times I played here I never played good enough. So it looks gorgeous, it's really nice. Hopefully, I'll be in here on Sunday. (Laughing.)

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