

# BMW Championship

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Castle Rock, Colorado, USA

Castle Pines Golf Club

## Wyndham Clark

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Wyndham Clark to the BMW Championship. Colorado native. Give us some thoughts on playing here in your home state.

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's amazing. I wish we played here every year, to be honest. This tournament hasn't been here in 10 years, and then at Castle Pines, almost 20 years. I grew up coming to this place and always dreamt of playing this tournament. When they stopped playing here, it was kind of a stab to the heart for me because it was so fun coming out and watching it.

To be back here playing in front of my home crowd is pretty special.

**Q. Successful amateur career here in the state. Castle Pines used to have The International here. Did you used to come out as fan and watch?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, my first tournament I ever attended was this event. I think I was seven or eight years old. I remember being on the 9th green watching guys like David Duval and Retief Goosen and Ernie Els and David Toms come up the fairways and just visualizing and imagining myself being here one day, and it's kind of crazy, fast forward 20-some years and I'm here. It's pretty amazing. I'm excited to be back.

**Q. Obviously this is kind of a different homecoming for you. I know you come here to work with Greg and you're in and out for different reasons, but this is really your first opportunity to play in a PGA TOUR event in your home state. What are you most looking forward to this week, and what does it mean to be playing in an event of this magnitude in your home state with lots of friends, family and fans? It's going to be a big home-course advantage, so to speak.**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, the first part I'm really looking forward to. Honestly, it kind of answers both the questions, just being here playing in my home state. I've never played a professional event in Colorado. The last time I played a competitive event of some magnitude was the Pac-12



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championship at Boulder Country Club, and that was eight, nine years ago.

It's amazing to be back here, and I'm just excited to see friends and family that I don't get to see that often, get to play in front of people that have watched me my whole life, and it's kind of come full circle of teachers, golf coaches, trainers, friends that have kind of been through this whole thing with me from a young age, and now we're here playing at the highest level at a course that I've played quite a bit growing up, so it's pretty neat.

**Q. What have you found lately? You've been showing up on leaderboards lately. I was wondering what you'd found in your game. Secondly, Xander and Scottie have both had historic seasons. Which one, if you could choose to have one of those two, which one you would choose and why?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: First part, I've gone back to a little bit more of a process. I think I was getting a little too outcome focused. As I had some early success in the year and was playing amazing golf, I think I just got -- just falling short of Scottie a couple times and then you're thinking, okay -- I just got too much into winning and trying to break through and win in some of those big events.

Then I got away from everything that made me successful, and I feel like recently kind of in the last probably four weeks I've gotten back to the process of focusing on the things that got me here, playing good golf, and I've started to play good golf.

I've had some poor rounds to start, but I feel like I'm overcoming that and doing a lot better. So I think my game is trending in the right direction.

Then the next question, it's hard to answer. They both are so good. I enjoy playing with both of them, and they're both good buddies. It's hard to argue with how good Scottie is playing right now and what he's done this year. I know Xander has had an amazing year, and most years that's the best year anyone will ever have, but Scottie is on a run that we haven't seen since Tiger.

I don't know if that answers your question, but I would choose both of them if I could.



**Q. I was wondering what kind of expectation are you putting on yourself this week, and also, how many ticket requests did you get?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Expectations, I'm trying to put zero. Obviously I want to do great. I want to perform in front of my home crowd. But at the same time, there is a lot of expectation put on me and a lot of pressure. I'm trying to just enjoy it more than anything. We might not come back here for a long time, so I really just want to soak it in. If I play great, awesome; if not, I know I'm going to next week. I'm really just trying to enjoy the moment.

As far as ticket requests, a ton. I've kind of had to limit it to mainly really close friends and family, otherwise we'd be giving out hundreds and hundreds of tickets. But I hope all those people still come out because it's fun seeing friendly faces.

**Q. How much of an advantage is your course history here, and where will it show up the most?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I mean, not a ton. Obviously I've played more than anyone else. But I didn't grow up playing this course per se like every day. Yes, I know some of the nuances that maybe other people don't know.

And then maybe where it shows up, altitude is tough to play at, and I'm not here that much playing golf. When I come back, I'm either seeing family, friends, I'm fishing or working with trainers. When I'm back, I don't golf that much. So I'm a little rusty on my altitude game.

But the good thing is I am used to it, and I feel like I have some tricks up my sleeve when I get into certain situations. Maybe it'll come with shot selection and distance control.

**Q. How much of a boost did your weekend rounds at the Olympics give you? You kind of shot yourself out of it the first day almost, and it's obviously a different tournament, but you brought it back nicely. I'm wondering if that's sort of where you saw the turnaround that you were talking about.**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I felt like the turnaround started more at the Travelers Championship. I kind of back-doored a top 10 there, and then back-door top 10 at the Scottish. Unfortunately didn't play well at Troon. Just didn't fit my eye and didn't play great there.

Then I went into the Olympics, and yeah, I was really bummed with that first day. But I played amazing golf. Even that back nine on that first day, I just hit it in the water and missed a couple of short putts, otherwise it probably would have been an even par or a 1-under round, and we

might be talking about a bronze medal if that back nine was a little bit different. Then obviously I played great the last three days.

That definitely was a huge confidence boost for me because I know there was a lot of media talk about me being there and how bad I played and whatnot, and I wanted to prove to myself and my country that I'm a top American player.

I played awesome golf. I don't think anyone other than maybe Scottie played better golf than me those last three days. I just shot myself out of it the first round.

Then last week was really solid golf for four rounds. I feel like my game is trending in the right direction at the right time.

**Q. Do you read much or listen to much stuff about you?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: No, not usually. I only heard it at the Olympics because some people were talking about it and I overheard it. But no, I don't.

**Q. What kind of grade would you give yourself this year with two events to go?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I mean, a very good grade. It's kind of been two seasons. Maybe even three I'd break it up. The first half I felt like I was an A+. The second half mentally is kind of where I grade myself. I felt like I was a little bit in the B range, and now I'm back in the A category. I had an amazing year. I had two or three runner-ups. I won a tournament. I've had multiple top 10s. I'm 5th in the FedEx. That's a great year for most people.

Obviously what Scottie and Xander are doing, I think everyone is holding all of us to a really high standard compared to them. But it was an amazing year. Last year I was roughly in the same spot coming into this event; I was in fifth. Last year was an amazing year, too.

It's been an amazing run of two years, and I'm really pleased, and I'm hoping this is just an upward trend.

I shot 60 at Pebble. That's another highlight.

**Q. Would you be a little more specific about what you got away from in your game?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah. I really feel like when I'm playing my best, it's very process. All I care about is my routine, doing the best I can before I get into the ball mentally, post-shot mentally, post-round, before round.

That's all I cared about, and that's all I judge myself on.

I think I just crept in a little bit too much of looking at the scoreboard and trying to force things to happen rather than just let them happen.

**Q. Can you take me back to those early days at the Family Sports Center and what that meant to you and getting involved in golf?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah. My agent and some friends were here, and we went to where I train now with a guy, and the course I originally grew up on and hit balls for the first time was Mountain View, which is right off Bellvue and I-25, and that is no longer there, and it's five skyrides. It's kind of crazy to see that.

Obviously Family Sports Center I used to work with Derek Tolan's dad originally, and I remember my dad and I would go there for four or five hours and I'd just hit balls and then I'd go short game and play those nine holes. It's amazing to see where I started at a kind of local muni and then go into the college ranks and being here, it's pretty awesome.

It's always fun coming home because I can see where my roots were and keep me grounded.

**Q. We already saw Rory on the driving range hitting the ball over the netting into the yards across the street. Would you expect you and your peers to have -- by Thursday, will everybody have elevation figured out, or would you expect it to be a challenge for everybody throughout the whole weekend?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I think everyone starting Thursday will have a good -- they'll feel comfortable with it. A lot of guys, we play a few events at altitude and have played them.

The tough thing with elevation is it's not as consistent as sea level. So if you hit your 7-iron always about 185 at sea level, it constantly goes 185. Here at altitude, now let's call it 205. Well, it can go 205 one shot and then 210 the next shot and then 200 the next shot. There's a little inconsistency in the thin air and altitude depending on how high you hit it. If anyone seems to err, go long or short, it's probably because of trajectory. That's going to be the challenge. Everyone is going to have a good idea of how far they're hitting the clubs, but you can sometimes just hit one forever in Colorado.

**Q. Given two months ago you said you played roughly 30 times out here, only a couple guys have played this ever before this week. Between coming to the altitude and coming to a totally new course, how much of a**

**challenge, putting yourself in the shoes of most of these players, is it going to be for these guys?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: We're all so good now and our books are so good, our information is so good, our teams are so good that I think guys just one time seeing the golf course have a really good idea for it. Now, some of the nuances of maybe angles into certain pins or maybe certain breaks that maybe I'm more comfortable with because I've been out here, they might not have.

There's a lot of major courses that we go to that we've never been to, and after two, three days of prep, guys feel really comfortable on it.

I don't think guys are going to be too far behind the 8-ball, but I like to think I have a little bit of an advantage, at least with being comfortable hitting the ball at altitude and the ball not curving as much and things like that.

**Q. At what age did you first start hitting balls at Mountain View? It was fairly humble; at that age did you see yourself sitting in this chair right now?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I mean, not at that age. I was three. That was in '96. I wasn't thinking at that age -- I think where maybe I started fantasizing trying to be a professional golfer was closer to nine, ten years old, and at that time I think Mountain View had already been torn up. That's when I was over at Family Sports Center. At that age I for sure envisioned it, but at the same time, you never really know what it's going to look like, and this has honestly kind of surpassed my expectations and dreams.

**Q. Tag along at age three or are you bugging the family at age three to hit balls?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: So the story, my dad was out of town on a business trip. My mom was home with me, my sister who was six and my newborn brother, and I was a lot of energy, active, and my mom was like, I've just got to get Wyndham out of the house. So she started driving thinking she was going to go to some fun play area and then saw the golf course that was pretty close to our house, and she just pulled in and said, maybe this will distract him for a while. I ended up hitting two buckets of balls for like two, three hours and just loved it. I just was fascinated with hitting the golf ball. That's kind of where it started.

**Q. When I talked to you a few months ago, you had told me that this course typically plays fast and firm. Things are different now. It's the longest course in PGA TOUR history at over 8,100 yards. It's different at elevation, obviously, but you just played a practice round. What's your take on the course right now?**



**What are your expectations? What do you have to key on as we start the tournament on Thursday?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, the course is very healthy. It's very green and lush. It's pretty soft, so it's playing all of that 8,100. Obviously with the altitude it's shorter than 8,100, but it's playing about as long as it could right now because the ball is not rolling maybe as much as it normally does, then the greens aren't firm, either.

Depending on the weather, and people that know here know that the thunderstorms come up in the afternoon. If they don't come up and it's dry, this course is going to play really firm and fast, which makes it pretty tough, which is how it normally plays.

But with how it is right now, the rough is more challenging than maybe it would normally be, but after seeing it, I think scores might be a little lower than maybe people wanted, some of the members here, just because it's so soft. But you can't control human nature.

**Q. Are you going to focus on anything specific?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I mean, definitely probably a little bit more of carry, not hitting -- sometimes here you can hit it low and get a lot of run, but because it's so soft, it's kind of all about carry.

Then typically when I've played here in the past, if the flag is at 150 you want to land it 140 and that gets to 150. It really is that firm usually. Right now I'm landing it right on 150. If it doesn't change much, guys are going to be throwing darts at the flags.

I expect some lower scores.

**Q. What's the difference between playing in front of your home crowd, being that there are few golfers from Colorado? Is there an additional pressure you feel having to rep the state in this tournament?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: I'd be lying if I said no. I definitely feel a little more pressure that way. But at the same time, I think people just want to come watch me play and all of us play, and I think if I give my best effort and feel like I did everything I could and whatever the outcome is, I'm hoping people just enjoyed that we're all here getting to play.

I'm trying to not put as much pressure as I can on myself, and I'm just really trying to enjoy the moment.

**Q. A few weeks ago you spent opening ceremony with Colorado native and professional basketball player Derrick White. I want to know the relationship there**

**and when it dated back to?**

WYNDHAM CLARK: D and I have known each other, ooh, starting probably at like nine-, ten-year old basketball. We used to play against each other, and I was on the Cherry Creek team, he was on -- they were called the Dolphins, but I forget what kind of district they were in. We used to play each other and we were both point guards so I would guard him, and we had a lot of battles. It ended up always being the championship game was us versus them. D and I played against each other a lot. Then in high school we competed quite a bit in basketball, as well. It's really neat to see D's career going from -- going to a junior college and then playing at CU and then obviously getting drafted and now is an NBA champion for the Celtics and an Olympian.

It's really neat to see kind of Colorado sports coming on the map with Derek, myself and Christian and some of the other Olympians. It's a good thing for Colorado. I feel like the sports are in a good spot here.

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