

Sanderson Farms Championship

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Country Club of Jackson

Sergio Garcia

Press Conference



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CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the 2020 winner, Sergio Garcia, to the virtual interview room here at the Sanderson Farms Championship. Welcome back, Sergio.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.

Q. You'll be making just your second tournament appearance here after winning in your first. What's it like to be back here? Any specific memories that kind of came rushing back?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, it's fun to be back. The course is in great shape again, like it was last year. Probably even better than it was. So very nice to be back here, obviously defending my title after a fun week last week. A week that kind of takes a lot of energy, but at the same time it was amazing. So I'm excited about it and just wanted to get my season off to a good start and see where we are.

THE MODERATOR: How important was it for you last year with that start getting the win, starting your season off strong, just to set up for the rest of the season.

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, it's always important to have a nice decent start and get a win like I did. Obviously it takes a little bit of pressure off you gives you a little bit extra boost of confidence. So definitely it was nice to be able to do that and kind of set up my season for a good solid season, making it back to the TOUR Championship, and finishing top-15 in the FedExCup, so I was very pleased with that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Curious, what is your energy level what, is your physical and mental state right now after going through last week like you said, how much energy it took and now you're defending a title, where is both your mental and physical state?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I mean I feel good. I'm not going to lie, obviously didn't get much sleep on Sunday night. But Monday and Tuesday it's been good, I was able to rest a little bit in Austin with the family, got here last night and I feel pretty good at the moment. Obviously you all know how much I love the Ryder Cup and even though, yes, there's a lot of energy involved in it and that you put on it and stuff, I still love it every time I play it. So at the moment I feel quite good, I don't think it has hit me yet and hopefully it won't hit me until I get back to Austin next week so I can have a good solid week here.

Q. How tough is it, do you still think back a lot to what happened last week or does it wane as you go forward?

SERGIO GARCIA: I mean you obviously think about it a little bit, it's very fresh, but at the same time I'm obviously 41 now and I played, I've been fortunate to play many Ryder Cups and win many and also loss some so, we just got out played, it's as simple as that, they played better than us and we gave it everything we had. So we can't really ask ourselves for more. Obviously we would have loved to do a little bit better and probably be a little bit sharper on those key moments where they were sharp and we were just a little bit off and they took advantage of that. So but other than that it's fine. I think the way I look at it there were so many positive things coming out of it, even though we lost, that you just got to look at those things.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Viktor Hovland. Do you think he's been traumatized with whatever happened in your team room with Tommy Fleetwood? Do you think he'll ever recover?

SERGIO GARCIA: (Laughing) No, he'll be fine. He'll be totally fine. It was great, it was great to experience so much with all the guys and with Viktor being a rookie and Shane and Berndt and the way they saw the team, how we open up and how everybody opened up and tried their hardest and there were a lot of emotions going on and a lot of fun. So that's, I think it was a great experience for all of us and for Viktor, Viktor is going to be, everybody, hopefully, but Viktor is going to be there for a lot of years to come. So I think he got a great taste of it and he can't wait

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to get back in that team and end up on the other side of, on the winning side of a Ryder Cup.

Q. Jon Rahm's performance, obviously you got a close-up view of just how good it was. We shouldn't be surprised because he's the world No. 1 after all, but I mean were you even kind of surprised about just how impressive he was under that kind of pressure?

SERGIO GARCIA: I mean maybe a little bit, not much to be totally honest, because we all knew and I knew how good he is. You don't get to world No. 1 and do all the things he's done just by luck or by chance. So it was nice to be a part of it, it was nice to be his partner and kind of combine nicely between the two of us. So I had a great time with him, he had a great time with me, we made a good team and hopefully we'll be able to do it again some time soon.

Q. How pleasing was it the way that you won this tournament last year, I think it was the eagle on 14 and also the approach shot into the 18th?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, obviously I was up there all week and Peter Malnati, he had a great final round, I think he shot 9-under, so all of a sudden when I got on like the 12th or 13th tee I was chasing. So I knew that I had to do something coming in, obviously hit a great 5-wood on to 14 and got a nice bounce and hit it very close for eagle and then the shot on the last was extra special. But it was a great week and I'm excited to hopefully have another good one here this week.

Q. I remember last year you said that the way COVID kind of shaken things up you were able to play this tournament last year and obviously now it's more of a regular schedule coming into this year and you're just coming off the Ryder Cup. What was it beyond defending your title that made you want to make sure that you were back here for this tournament?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well it was quite simple, obviously, yeah, defending a title -- I try to defend my titles every time I can, I haven't been able to do it every single time, but I love to do it every possibility I have. Second of all, the way everyone treated us here and was just amazing. And the golf course is just a great golf course. So it's the kind of golf course that I enjoy coming back to playing and I wish we would play more courses like this on TOUR. They're the kind of courses that make you think a little bit and if you hit a good shot it's right there, it's not like tricked up or anything like that and if you don't hit a good shot then you're going to struggle to make your par. So it's just a solid golf course and a great tournament and I'm excited to be back.

Q. Were you surprised, because, I mean, this tournament's kind of only just recently been a full FedExCup point tournament, were you surprised that, beyond winning, how challenging the course was and how much fun you had with this tournament last year?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I mean, I was surprised but in a good way. I heard good things about it, but until you come out here you don't know if it kind of suits your eye or not. But I was very pleasantly surprised about how good the golf course was, how great shape it was in and how good the greens were and stuff. So this year's no different. Probably the golf course is at least as good if not better than it was last year.

Q. Do you take any pride in being one of the bigger-name golfers to make time for this tournament and maybe help it grow incrementally each year?

SERGIO GARCIA: I mean, that would be nice, without a doubt. Do I take pride? No, I'm just thankful that I have the possibility of playing here and doing my best and I'm obviously very thankful to be a champion of this tournament. So that's all I can do, just try to help grow the game and make it better as the years go by and that's always been my goal.

Q. As mentioned the tournament is growing, the field has also grown with such talent. Can you comment on the field that we have this year?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, it's quite simple, I think as people come and play and they see the quality of the golf course and the quality of the tournament it just goes from mouth to mouth and then probably more of the top guys want to come and play. Obviously it's as simple as that. If the golf course is so-so, then it kind of pushes back some of the guys, but if you know the golf course is a great golf course and it's a real nice tournament, then people make a little bit more of an effort to try and come and see it and compete in it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you Sergio. Best of luck this week.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.

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