

Sanderson Farms Championship

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Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

Davis Riley

Press Conference



SANDERSON FARMS
CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Davis Riley to the virtual media room here at the Sanderson Farms Championship. Welcome back. You'll be making your third tournament start here. What's it like to be back here and as a Hattiesburg, Mississippi native having a tournament here in your home state?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, it's really cool, it's always really cool when you can play at a place that you're pretty familiar with and this is right up the road from where you grew up. So it will be nice to have some old friends and family back in town to watch the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Like we said, making your third start here, but what is your background with this golf course, having played in high school and just your familiarity around with the course?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, I played it a bunch in high school, probably played it 10, 15 times. So I'm very familiar with it and had some success, I won a few high school tournaments out here. So that was really nice. As far as the past two years, I played okay my first year, I think I finished top-30, around 30, and last year I missed the cut by a little bit. But, yeah, I've had some success out here and can hopefully make it even better and make it a really good week this week.

THE MODERATOR: What confidence can you take away from your victories on the Korn Ferry, what did you learn with those and competing on what it takes?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, yeah, I've been fortunate to play a handful of TOUR events so far and it's just kind of doing the same thing, not thinking that I need to change me or change what I'm doing and just continue what I've been doing on the Korn Ferry and really taking that comfort and confidence out here and just believing in myself and knowing I can play with the best.

THE MODERATOR: Now quite a few Alabama guys here

out on TOUR, what were things that you learned while your experience at Alabama and kind of what guys do you keep close in contact with.

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, so one of my good teammates that I played with two years, Lee Hodges is out here and he had a really nice couple seasons on the Korn Ferry as well. So, yeah, and especially this class in general you see like Greyson Sigg and a bunch of SEC guys. So it's really cool to see familiar faces and just the guys go from the ranks that you just grew up playing with in high school and college and stuff like that, but just the guys at Alabama it's really cool to see and we're pulling really hard for each other we love to see each other do well and it's cool to see a teammate of mine, Lee Hodges, that I played with, do real well and hopefully we can have continued success out here.

THE MODERATOR: Your first start here at Sanderson Farms Championship in 2019, how has your game changed from that first start until now?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, yeah, one of the Sanderson Farms in 2019, that was probably one of my first couple TOUR events to play, so, yeah, I was a little bit more nervous, eager to play, just kind of I feel like my game has matured a lot, I cleaned up a lot of aspects of my golf game as well and I just think the biggest thing is the level of comfort that I'm playing with now. Out here when you first turn pro and you're playing these big events it's kind of easy to want to do everything, play the golf course as many times as you can and just the whole aura at a TOUR event can be a little overwhelming. But I just think the level of comfort that I'm comfortable playing with the fans, the big infrastructure buildings and just that level of comfort I think is just different and that and just being better in every aspect of my game, just continue to clean that up over the years as well.

THE MODERATOR: For those that are unfamiliar with your game, how would you describe it? Big on putting, ball striking, what area?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, yeah, I would definitely say the strengths of my game are my ball striking. Pretty long



hitter, so I guess if I were to describe it would be pretty powerful. So distance is great for me, iron play has helped me get to this point, so definitely leaning on that and just trying to continue to improve in every area as well. So I would just say my ball striking has probably been the biggest factor to help get me to this point.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions, please.

Q. With playing at a TOUR event in your home state, how do you make sure, obviously, that you spend the time with the family and friends that you haven't seen in a while but also kind of tune out the distractions that can come with coming back home?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, yeah, I'm sure I'll have a few shenanigan old friends out here making some noise, so I'll have to try to block that out. No, there's a fine line there, right, like I know what I need to do during the tournament week, the prep days leading up to, I know what I need to do, so I'm just kind of checking all those boxes and from there just enjoying it and taking it all in. I think that's the biggest thing, when you get done from the golf course, try to just get away from it and not stress out about the week or over prepare because that definitely is a thing. So I think the biggest thing for me is knowing what I need to do the prep work during the week, check all the boxes and just enjoy that time with friends and family and have fun with it.

Q. How cool is it that there are five Mississippi natives in this field this year?

DAVIS RILEY: Oh, it's really cool. I know for myself I've been out here a few times but I'm pretty sure there's Chad Ramey, Hayden Buckley and a couple other guys who I'm sure have been out here as well, so it's nice probably for them too to come to a place that they have seen before, but it's really cool, it's cool to see how the game has grown in Mississippi and just the young talent that's coming through Mississippi, just the new guys coming from the Korn Ferry class, so it's really cool to see the level of play and how the game is growing in the Mississippi area.

Q. I'm sure that obviously there's pressure that comes with any TOUR event, but is there any added pressure when it's in Mississippi?

DAVIS RILEY: Not really. Not added pressure. I'm just trying to enjoy it and there's no added pressure. Obviously I want to play well for my friends and family, but at the end of the day they love me and they just want to hang out with me and just be a good friend. So I think that's the biggest thing is just play my hardest and see what happens and then just enjoy having people out there making a little noise for you every now and then and I think that's the biggest

thing.

Q. Maybe does it motivate you when you have friends and family right there cheering for you, stuff like that?

DAVIS RILEY: Oh, a hundred percent. Yeah. This would be, this is one that I saw on the calendar as one of the one TOUR events that I would love to win, just being right here and I know I'll have a lot of family and friends, but, yeah, there's no added expectation or added pressure, there definitely is more motivation to do well, but that's not pressure, it's just like I'm in my home state and I got my fans, friends and family here, it would mean a lot more than some other TOUR events would to win for sure just being so close to where I grew up.

THE MODERATOR: Talking about motivation, have you set any specific goals for this season?

DAVIS RILEY: I have, yeah. There's a couple of goals that I've sat down with my team and came up with. One of the biggest ones would be making East Lake. That's a big goal of mine. Rookie of the Year is up there too. And then just putting myself in the last two groups three plus times this year is another goal of mine. So just giving myself a chance to win and being consistent, making it to East Lake and those are probably my three biggest goals for the year.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned as a goal wanting to be Rookie of the Year. At this time last year you were living with our reigning Rookie of the Year, Will Zalatoris. What was it like living together, was it kind of help for motivating and pushing each other?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure, yeah, I'm sure he'll tell you too, our matches at home are more intense than they are out here. So I mean, at the end of the day we're pulling for each other out here, but we're trying to get under each other's skin when we're at home. It's a lot of fun and it's been really fun. We definitely pushed each other and I think COVID was, could have honestly been a really good time for us, so I don't think that was any surprise as to why we came out, especially him, came out so hot after the quarantine, just because we were staying sharp, we were playing all the time together, battling back and forth and we were lucky that our course was able to open up and follow the guidelines accordingly. But, yeah, we played a bunch and we were competing. So we were just staying sharp as you might have seen other guys come in not as sharp, not playing as much, not competing, so I think that was a really good time for us and I think that's a big factor why we had a lot of success right after the COVID.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Appreciate you taking the time and we wish you all the luck this week.

DAVIS RILEY: Awesome. Thanks.

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