

The Sentry

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Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA
Plantation Course at Kapalua

Nick Taylor

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Nick Taylor to the interview room here at The Sentry. Making his third career start. Nick, welcome back. It's always a great reward to be here. Just talk a little bit about how much, how excited you are to start the season here in Maui.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, there's no better place to start. We got here a little bit early, on the 29th. Kind of make a little vacation of it. Love starting here. It's nice to kind of reward yourself from a great season. So, it's cool to look around. Obviously, everyone here has earned it and played great last year so looking forward to the week.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of the great season, I think you were near No. 300 in the World Golf Ranking rankings coming into last season, and then just played phenomenally the whole year, including the win in Canada and a couple runner-up finishes. Just talk a little bit about the season.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, start to finish was really consistent, my best year by far, I think. I think week-in week-out I felt like the game was there, very consistent. It was nice to get in contention more than once. I feel like when I've been in those positions in my career I've been pretty comfortable. To be able to win a tournament like the Canadian Open that I've wanted to win for a long time, in that fashion, is obviously the cherry on top of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Before questions, not many players have a logo designed for him them. If you can talk about how much that means to you for the RBC Canadian Open.

NICK TAYLOR: It's very unique. When I was told about it I was kind of taken back, pretty surprised. Then the graphic, with the video and the call, is pretty spectacular. So, yeah, it was very cool and something I can hang my hat on, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: All right.

Q. When the new schedule or the new structure was

announced at Hartford, I want to say it was 2022, I guess. For a guy who has occasionally been in that 70 to 100 spot on the FedExCup, what did you think of it when it was announced? Only 70 make the playoffs, only 50 get to the next one.

NICK TAYLOR: I think it almost was a motivating factor. I thought some years I definitely got caught up in that 125 number, I needed to get that to keep my card to get into playoffs. To kind of move your sights up to something different I think helped me. Obviously, it's very difficult. You can have a great year and finish 80th, 85th. So, I probably had a bit of mixed emotions to start, but I think again it kind of raised my goals, raised my focus on what I needed to accomplish. I think it helped me personally, but you can have a great year and miss out on the playoffs, which is unfortunate.

Q. Do you think more people should look at what kind of year you had, what kind of year Eric Cole, Adam Schenk, that you still have ball in hand, you can still make it to the places you want to go? It's still up to you, I guess.

NICK TAYLOR: Definitely. There's obviously plenty of guys here that are world beaters, that are top 20 in the world consistently, year-in, year-out. But there's room for guys like me that don't bomb it, aren't that kind of the new-age golfer. There's plenty of golf courses that I can still play really well only. I think I can play well on a lot of golf courses, but there's certainly a few that I prefer. Yeah, there's plenty of guys I think in that top 70, top 50 that are still really good players that might have surprised a few people, but there's still plenty of room for us.

Q. When you had a really good start to last year, followed by the Canadian Open win, do you have to recalibrate your goals halfway through once you've reached a certain level, or do you just keep the same mindset all the way through?

NICK TAYLOR: It's a bit of both. I've recalibrated plenty in my career, but I think last year what I knew I did really well was have those process goals every day of trying to get better. As results started to come in the first four, five



months of the year, I knew, obviously, what I was doing was translating to the golf course.

This year there's a lot to look forward to for me, with the Olympics potentially, with the Presidents Cup being in Canada, with Mike Weir the captain, there's a lot of emphasis on that for me, but also when I think of that stuff I got to reel myself in and kind of do what I did last year, kind of control what I can control. I'm in a lot of unbelievable tournaments this year. Pick my schedule, the first year I've really been able to do that. So I got to focus on what I'm doing but, yeah, definitely recalibrate and look at that stuff as well.

Q. Was there anything that you changed or anything before last season that led to the success or was it just a continuation of the progression?

NICK TAYLOR: It was a bit of both. There wasn't any drastic coaching changes or anything. Dave Markle, a great buddy of mine, started caddieing for me at the very tail end of the 2022 season. For a long time I kind of, I think I avoided having a friend as a caddie. I think I wanted to kind of keep that, just a little bit of separation. So, when the opportunity came for him to be on the bag, he's just such a positive guy, his golf IQ is extremely high. So that definitely was a factor there, for sure.

Kind of changing a bit of focus on what I was working on. A minor grip change that really helped with certain stats we're trying to work on, one was speed control, and that kind of stuff really helped, but a lot of my game had improved, so I think it was a combination of both.

Q. Phoenix, did that maybe change expectations for the season, just holding your own against those players, or changed what you thought maybe you were capable of in 2023 at all?

NICK TAYLOR: It gave me a lot of confidence, for sure. I think, arguably, I almost played better in that tournament than the Canadian Open, the one that I won, versus finishing second. But being in the final group with those guys, I've been in similar situations where I definitely probably was counted out, but in those situations I feel comfortable, I feel confident that I can just do my own thing, I can still compete.

So, I think that opened a lot of doors for tournaments that I was going to play in for the rest of the year, but also gave me a lot of confidence. So it was a huge, huge stepping stone last year.

Q. Given the compact schedule we have this year, January to August, have you, I know you probably set

your schedule and looked at it, but do you have any idea how it's going to play out, in terms of fatigue, in terms of too much, too little, whatever?

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, for me, I'm going to know what I'm playing in three, four, five months ahead that I've probably never really have. You kind of have a schedule tentatively and hope you can get in, say, Augusta, and hope certain events. I know I'm in all these events this year, so I'm going to be able to schedule two, three separate two-week breaks which I typically don't really have. I've played two tournaments really in the last four months, so I'm ready to go. I'm playing quite a bit on the west coast. I'm skipping Torrey, but everything else I'm going to play. So, yeah, it will be interesting how it plays out. For me, it's first time where I know I'm going to be essentially through the playoffs, so it will be nice for me.

Q. Probably understated and what you mentioned earlier is the trying to get into the Olympics. When you look at you and Corey and Adam and Svensson, and I'm probably leaving somebody out, how tough is that going to be?

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, it's going to be tough. Again, if I come back -- I can't control what those guys are doing, obviously. If I had a year like I did last year this year, I'm pretty confident that I'll be one of those top two guys. But we're all so close to there I feel like it's going to come down to the last putt whenever the cutoff is, I think maybe the U.S. Open or something. But, yeah, I would love to be there, no doubt. This is my best chance. Previous years I was on the outside looking in, probably had to have some really good finishes leading into it. But, yeah, I would love to be there. I think all of us probably are on that page, since it started in Rio, that we really wanted to be there. It wasn't really a, you know, if I go, I might go. I think all of us are really passionate and really want to go, so, yeah, it will be really fun.

Q. You've had the ups and downs in professional golf. Now that you've been on the up for almost a year now, what are some things you know now that you wish you would have known maybe a couple years ago when you were at a different kind of point?

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I think in the past sometimes I over emphasized maybe some poor rounds, some poor tournaments. Where, last year, like I said, I found things that were working for me, certain drills, certain swing keys, and just stuck to them. Even if I missed the cut by a couple, I looked at it to see maybe what was going on, but didn't over emphasize it, moved on and stuck to the same thing, same drills. A year later I'm still kind of doing the same stuff, obviously keeping an eye on certain things

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because things can change in this game very quickly, but just sticking to the things that work for me. Not looking on Instagram at coaches and certain stuff like that. There's a lot of distractions now. I feel like I've been pretty zoned in on what works for me.

Q. This is your third time here. Is it still a treat for you, or is it now more of a routine or things you kind of expect? Is there any difference in terms of expectation coming here?

NICK TAYLOR: It's still a treat. I try to really take time off in December. We typically go back to Canada for a few weeks over Christmas. So, I'm going to be as prepared as I possibly can be, but I've probably played my best at times with low expectations. So, I'm trying to win this week, but knowing it's the first event of the year there's going to be a little bit of rust, I'm sure, for a lot of people. I've been here since the 29th, I played nine every day, so that's going to help me kind of ease into the tournament. But, yeah, it's always a treat to be here, I don't care how many times you come.

Q. Besides the logo, what are some of the most interesting ways that people have kind of celebrated or recognized the Canadian Open win?

NICK TAYLOR: I've said this a few times in the past, I think just the amount of people that have either come up to me and told me where they were and how they celebrated and the emotion that they felt, just maybe being Canadian, if they were Canadian, but even people that weren't Canadian, the emotion that they felt just remembering where they were. Obviously, it was super emotional for myself and my family and my team and stuff, but for the country to kind of rally behind that I think still I get taken back with how many people have come up and just kind shared their story. It's pretty cool.

Q. People doesn't usually celebrate golfers winning titles like their team winning the Superbowl or the Stanley Cup. Were people celebrating it like their team had won a Stanley Cup?

NICK TAYLOR: It seems like it, yeah (laughing). There's a lot of Canadian teams that haven't won a Stanley Cup for a long time, so maybe that was there outlet for the time being.

One story, there was a guy -- I was doing a thing in Saskatoon, and he's a farmer there. He said he was watching it on his iPad cutting his crop. When the putt went in he jerked the wheel and he still sees the spot when he goes and reminds himself of that every time. Just, like, certain stories, it's really cool.

Q. Was there a spike in Canadian boys named Nick?

NICK TAYLOR: I'm not sure. (Laughing.) We'll find out.

Q. Are you someone that goes back -- have you watched that last round at all or are you saving that for another day?

NICK TAYLOR: I have, yeah. I've liked watching it, just to see where my swing is at. They replayed it within the last week or two, so my wife and I sat down and watched a bit of that.

There's just so many parts, honestly, throughout that day that are almost career highlights, and it all kind of happened in one day. So, yeah, it's cool to watch. I've seen it, people have shown me, sent me the putt plenty of times, so I've seen it plenty.

Q. Can you describe the sound?

NICK TAYLOR: What's that?

Q. Can you describe the sound at all of when the putt went in?

NICK TAYLOR: Not really. Like, deafening, but also, I think I've seen the putt so many times now that I've almost lost my perception of the ball disappearing. Like, my fondest memory is when the putt went in, like half a second of disbelief almost that it did drop, and then Dave charging at me. Then everything kind of after that is kind of a blur. I remember giving Tommy a hug, and other than that a lot of it is kind of chaos.

Q. Is that the loudest you've ever heard something, or have you been in final groups?

NICK TAYLOR: No. Honestly, there's moments throughout that entire day, I think when I made putts on 17, 18, were incredibly loud. Phoenix, like, that atmosphere was very unique for every tournament, and very comparable. So, there's no doubt that that helped me when I was there that week as well.

Q. Presidents Cup angle. You and Adam finished second at Zurich. What is it that makes you guys a good pairing and is it games or personalities that mesh well or both?

NICK TAYLOR: It's a lot. Our games are quite similar. I feel like last year we played really well, but we drove it nice, we were like three yards apart, just like our same distance. We hit similar clubs into greens. We have

known each other a long time. I don't know why it took us so long probably to pair up. I think we've skipped it on off years and this and that. But, yeah, it was a really fun week. We texted Weirsy after the week saying, Hey, this might be a good pairing in a year or so. And he said, You bet. So we're obviously both hoping to be on that team. We're going to play against again this year, and hopefully keep the mojo going.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Nick Taylor, thank you for your time.

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