

# The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

## Tom Whitney

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Tom Whitney to the interview room here at The American Express. Tom, welcome, you're making your PGA TOUR debut as a member, but your second start here. Just want to start off with some opening comments, what it's like to be at a place where you grew up.

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, I was a little bummed I didn't get into the field in Sony, and get my year started last week, but the silver lining is I get to make my debut here in my hometown in front of hometown crowd. I'm pretty comfortable at this place, got to play here in 2018 on a sponsor invite. Now, I've earned my way here and get to play as a member. And, yeah, the courses are in great shape so far. Really looking forward to the week.

THE MODERATOR: Shortly after you turned pro after the Air Force you won here in the area, what golf course was that and what event?

TOM WHITNEY: That was Avondale Country Club, Avondale-something in Palm Desert only the E golf Tour and, yeah, I think that was like less than seven days removed from active duty. So, that was just pretty cool validation of me stepping away from a full-time job with guaranteed promotions, guaranteed salary, benefits, all that jazz, to chase the little white ball. For me to win my first tournament out was, yeah, validation that I was on the right path for the time being.

THE MODERATOR: Like you said, played here in 2018, but what's your familiarity with the courses around here and did you come to this event at all as a spectator growing up?

TOM WHITNEY: I don't think I ever came and spectated. I'm not the most diehard fan at home. I'm starting to tune into golf a lot more, now that my kids are getting into it and enjoying watching it. I got to play these courses through tournaments and I had friends in high school that worked in the cart barn that would let me out, but the kind of crazy thing about growing up here in the valley is I never had a membership at any of the clubs here. I gained access



through junior golf and SCPGA tournaments in the summer and giving buddies five dollars in the middle of July in the cart barn and then get free rein all day, and that's kind of how I've played most of the tracks out here in the valley, but, yeah, never had a membership anywhere.

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

**Q. If I remember correctly the last time you were here you were in a rush, you got a late sponsor exemption and kind of had to get here real fast?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, so I had flown to, I think Sunday morning, I had flown from Dallas to Miami to play in the qualifiers for the International Korn Ferry Tour events. So, they hold back-to-back qualifiers on a Monday and a Wednesday and it's for the Panama and Colombia tournaments. And I had just flown out Sunday morning, I think I had finished one of the practice rounds, and then Pat reached out to me Sunday evening, I mean, early here, late East Coast. It was pretty funny, I remember taking the call and I didn't say yes immediately, just because initially I was going through logistics, can I get there on time, what's it going to cost to get me out there. I had just flown out there a few hours ago. I remember just telling him, like, Let me call you back real quick. I did a quick search and it finally it dawned on me, like, What are you doing, Tom, this is what you asked for. I knew I was going to say yes all long, but it was just kind of silly that I didn't say yes on that initial phone call. And then, yeah, hopped on a plane back laying over through Dallas, straight into Palm Springs on Monday, and then I think I managed to get all three practice rounds in Monday afternoon, Tuesday, and Wednesday before starting on Thursday, so it was definitely a whirlwind.

**Q. When you're at La Quinta, I mean, you're going to go to the Air Force Academy, the Air Force Academy isn't necessarily the traditional path to the PGA TOUR. Yet here you are on the PGA TOUR. Was this something that you did think about when you were in high school, or was it something that came after while you were in the Air Force Academy, because you played there?**

TOM WHITNEY: There might have been some glimpses when I was a high schooler, but yeah, nothing, I don't think



I was making any long-term golf career decisions at that point. I was just trying to figure out my life and where I was headed. Fortunately, got to follow my brother Bob to the Academy. When he was there and I was finishing up school in high school I had met the team and the coach and seen the facilities and really just kind of fell in love with it and thought it would be cool to at least start out there and give it a try.

Then, thankfully, after I got there and got through that first year I really had fallen in love with the place and really the idea of just being part of something bigger than myself and a calling, if you will, of just being part of that greater mission. So, that's how I ended up there. Still playing golf for them Division I school, Mountain West. Yeah, not necessarily a powerhouse, but still got to compete with some of the best teams in the country week-in and week-out. I think I had five individual titles during my tenure there. I had a pretty impressive string of top 10s, either my sophomore or junior year. Then, my senior year I spent a good chunk of time in the top-25 individual rankings. I think it was at that point that I truly knew like, okay, I'm going to honor my commitment to the Air Force, I'm going to finish that out, and then I'm going to give golf a go, because I can't not try and be able to live with myself if I didn't do it.

**Q. And now you're here.**

TOM WHITNEY: And now I'm here. 10 years later, yeah.

**Q. Since then it's been a variety of tours that you've been on. Did you just play the best golf you've ever played last year or did it just the breaks went your way and you played that well before?**

TOM WHITNEY: I think -- it's a combination of I'm getting better and more consistent on a weekly basis, but honestly, some of the best golf I ever played was back in 2015 when I was on the mini-tours. I mean, that's, the golf I played last year was definitely better than that, but in that year playing on the mini-tours it was kind of the start of the decline of mini-tours in the States where the SwingThought Tour no longer had the two hundred thousand dollar purses and the money leader being in 200-, 300-thousand in his pocket at the end of the year. It was kind of on the decline. I think I -- the money I earned that year with four firsts and four seconds throughout state opens and pro-ams and just all the mini-tour events I played, the money I earned would have qualified me for graduating spot at number 25 on the WEB.COM list at the time. So, that was, again, another one of those moments where, I'm not there yet, I don't have the status, but I know I'm good enough to compete, keep my head down, keep trucking along, and yeah, spent a year and a half on the mini-tours,

then ventured down to Latin America and spent a year there. Graduated out of the top-10 category. Earned conditional WEB.COM status, Korn Ferry Tour status. Then fought for two years with conditional status on Korn Ferry Tour. I'm probably going to lean on a lot of those experiences, because I'm a status-carrying member on this TOUR, but it doesn't quite feel like the fully-exempt guys. So, I show up to Sony last week and start or end up second alternate. In the field by a good bit here, but not in Phoenix, maybe not in Mexico, so I'm going to be on the bubble for awhile. I will definitely have to lean on the lessons I learned from playing Mondays and being on the edge of the commitments list from those two years on Korn Ferry Tour. Then at the end of those two years I fell back down after a bad year in 2018, kind of reassessed my game, what I was doing wrong, and focused on my time management Monday through Wednesday in a lesser capacity. So, I was doing too much work. Case in point, flying out here, I, it was mandatory for me to see every single hole before teeing off. Where, a wiser me receiving this invite at that time would probably see one or two of the courses and maybe walk and putt one of 'em and save my energy. But that's just the kind of stuff you have to learn along the way. Yeah, then six years of learning lessons on Korn Ferry Tour in total and finally made it here.

**Q. To the point you just made, as being a 34-year-old rookie far different than being a 21-year-old rookie?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, for sure. Probably lagging a little behind in the energy, but miles ahead in just the life experiences. There's so many things that you can't learn out here without having experienced it. I mean, I'm looking back at a lot of pieces of advice I received from veterans and they kind of went in one ear and out the other, and you don't really internalize those until you live it and experience it yourself. I mean, kudos to the young guys that have already figured it out at this point, but, yeah, I've learned a lot in my 10 years. I wouldn't trade it for getting here any sooner, I think the timing is perfect. God's got me right where I'm supposed to be. Yeah, just looking forward to entering my prime.

**Q. Wanted to ask you about something else you touched on about being bummed about not getting in Sony. Just kind of how a rookie is looking at things these days on the PGA TOUR as far as trying to get in these early events, so when you were trying to map out your schedule did you have a pretty decent idea of what you're going to get in and what you're not and how difficult is that to just want to play and be delayed in that?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, I think part of the experience piece is I've learned that, hey, whoever signs up ahead of me is



outside of my circle of influence. I have no control over that. I want to play in everything, I won't get every opportunity, but there's nothing I can do to change that, other than entering a Monday qualifier or that route. But I'm not going to dwell on the stuff that I don't have any control over. So, that made last week a little more passable. I look at the schedule, I mean, Phoenix will probably be near impossible to get in. Mexico's still kind of on the fence, they're also a 132. Cognizant is another 144. But the PGA TOUR's in uncharted waters as far as they don't have metrics on who is going to play what and who is going to take what off. We're all kind of in an uncertain holding pattern and just kind of figuring out as we go.

**Q. Can I ask you about being second alternate, how were you sitting there kind of looking at updates on who is not in and who is in, things like that? How late did it go as far as you kind of still hoping that you would be in?**

TOM WHITNEY: I think the hope kind of dies out, at least after the first wave finishes and I'm still holding No. 2, No. 2 alternate. I wasn't going to leave the property until the last group exited, because you don't want to be part of that story, where the last two guys got food poisoning or whatever, and they pulled out and Tom's nowhere to be found. Yeah, I just can't even imagine being a part of that scene. So, yeah, I was at the practice facilities just kind of doing 30 minutes of practice, 30 minutes of break, just being in the area ready to go. Fortunately, I got some really good practice in that week. I got to do a practice round on the tournament course on Tuesday, an off-site program on Wednesday. I played in the Monday qualifier. Kind of utilized the practice facilities all day Thursday and then flew home Friday.

**Q. Will you be at Torrey Pines?**

TOM WHITNEY: Um-hum.

**Q. That was one of the ones that obviously bigger fields, so you're able to get in?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, so that's another two course, 156 players, so, yeah, I should be in by 10 or more.

**Q. Does it feel like a lot of pressure to perform when you're going to get your opportunities, because there's a lot out there as far as rewards for playing well?**

TOM WHITNEY: I don't think so. There was more pressure coming here in 2018 on a sponsor's invite. Now, I was chatting with my caddie earlier today, and it feels like I belong out here, I've earned my way to hold this card. Monday morning, I'm in breakfast and JT's eating with

another guy, and I could sit by myself and be at a table alone, or I go join those guys. And I go join them and meet 'em and, I mean, we're all peers out here, we're all trying to get to No. 1 spot, we're all going through highs and lows and we're going through it together. It's, honestly, pretty similar to the stuff I learned at the Academy, going through basic together, everyone has high, everyone has lows, everyone needs help from different people at different times. We're trying to beat each other, but we're also all trying to get better at the same time.

**Q. Your back story, obviously, is kind of known at this point. People have mentioned it. It's not like you were making pizzas or selling insurance out there. Are you surprised that people know or have learned that story about your time in the Air Force?**

TOM WHITNEY: No, I'm not surprised anymore. I mean, I've been grinding away for almost 10 years now. I've put myself in the public spotlight or tried to get myself in that spotlight for 10 years. Yeah, there's been a lot of fantastic writers that have written on my behalf and given a glimpse into what my life has looked like in the past, part of the Air Force and the journey afterwards with my wife and our four kids and being 34 as a rookie and, yeah, it's cool that people get to know my background and how I got where I am.

**Q. But your background is not like some Tom Clancy movie. If I remember talking to you about this, you said, 12-hour shifts and they were kind of dull.**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, they were, yeah, yes, a nuclear missile operator, 24-hour shifts with a crew partner, eight times a month. I think in total spent around 200 shifts underground by the time it was all said and done. Yeah, a lot of dull moments. It's not a sexy job while you're doing it, and at times it can not even be very enjoyable, but I'll tell you, it didn't take very long after I separated and left that job and started golf full-time to where I missed it. I completely misgauged what I had, and you think the grass is literally greener as you're entering the career of golf, and, man, I had it easy. People told me where I had to be, when I had to be there, what I had to wear, how long I had to be there for, what I was going to get paid. I pretty much knew what I was going to be fed. I mean, all the hard decisions were made for me. I just kind of had to follow a checklist.

Now, going from Korn Ferry Tour to here, there are so many unknowns that you just kind of learn along the way. I mean, this is just an impressive venue, three courses, massive clubhouse, great player amenities, massive driving range. I mean, you're just navigating around this whole property trying to figure out where everything is,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

where the media room is, and --

**Q. Beautiful mountains that you probably took for granted the entire time that you were here.**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, yeah, these are mountains? Like I came from Colorado.

**Q. Well, you're from Colorado, I'll give you that.**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, yeah. (Laughing). Yeah.

**Q. But now you would like to be known as the guy who is successful on the PGA TOUR, and not talk about that stuff anymore, right?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, but, you know, at the same time I think the reason everyone likes to stick to that is because there's three of us in the modern era of golf that have gone on this journey, Billy Hurley, Kyle Westmoreland, and myself. So, we didn't come from a powerhouse golf school, we didn't go to professional golf academies for high school. We served our country, and then decided to take a gamble on this career. I think, you know, whether you're a serviceman and you're reading this, and you can identify with just the drive or the journey, or if you're someone that just thinking, wow, that's different, that's really cool. So, yeah, I'm fine that people are still considering me the Air Force guy rather than the PGA TOUR player, because that's always going to be a part of who I am.

THE MODERATOR: Before we go back, you mentioned Kyle Westmoreland, have you spoken to him about advice on how to attack the rookie season?

TOM WHITNEY: Not yet. I was rooting for him final stage, man, he was so close to coming back here in the Korn Ferry Tour finals category. No, I haven't reached out to him yet. He's off to a good start in the Bahamas and, yeah, I'm sure at some point there will be some questions asked of, All right, where should I stay this week, do you have any Air Force connections at any events coming up that I can mooch off of. But, yeah, I mean that's the cool thing about even up at this level is, you know, I can still lean on the 20-year veterans and ask 'em where to stay, where to eat, how to go about things, and they're pretty willing to step in and help.

**Q. Can you explain what your underground job was?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yes, I was a nuclear missile operator. That means me and a crew partner were positioned about a hundred feet underground in a personnel silo directly wired and attached to our nuclear missiles. So, we have three nuclear missile bases in the United States, one in

Wyoming, one in Montana, one in North Dakota, and I was stationed in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Of those 150 missiles, myself and my crew partner would be in, primarily in charge of 10 of them. You would show up to the base, let's say on a Monday, and mission plan for two to three hours. You talk about expected weather, expected maintenance, maintenance that happens over the last 24-hour period, any intelligent, relevant intelligence threats or situations. Then just anything else that can overall affect your upcoming alert. Then you drive out to the site, which can be anywhere from 45 minutes to two and a half hours from the base. Everything's spread out among Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska. So, it's a good sized field, or we call it the missile field. It's about, the entire complex is about the size of Rhode Island. If you think about it, there's 150 missiles, 15 personnel sites, and the base, and everything is hard wired underground. So, just the engineering and planning that went into it to install these pressure sensitive cables, and trenching all that to connect everything, it's a really cool weapons system. So, you get out to the site, you go underground, and you transfer over with the previous crew, get briefed up on everything that happened. Then, once they're gone, you have anywhere from an hour to three hours of just routine checklist items, going through all your daily test, inventorying everything. Then, it's just whatever is scheduled for that specific alert. Sometimes you have maintenance scheduled on one of the missiles, sometimes you have retargeting measures that all the crews have to send out, where we change the targets of where the missiles are aimed, based on current intelligence. Sometimes there's just communications systems repairs or maintenance we have to accomplish. We respond to security situations. So, basically, we have like, I don't know, 1,500 pages of technical data and, as missileers, we are trained to know how to prioritize what happens and where to look to follow the checklist. So, anything that happens to the missile goes through the missile crew, which I was a part of. So, if maintenance is happening, a security response is happening, if a test, exercise, fire, underground shocks from an earthquake, whatever, we have to respond to, basically, we're the go-between, between security, maintenance, and everything else. Ultimately, our main training part of the mission is we are the ones that launch the missile if the President sends the order. And it goes from the President to the USSTRATCOM, USSTRATCOM to us. So, there's only one entity in between us and the President, if we are launching a nuclear missile.

**Q. Did that change your life perspective?**

TOM WHITNEY: Oh, absolutely. I mean, golf is just what I am currently doing, and I'm completely blessed to do it. But I could still be in the Air Force, at a place I don't want to be. I could be in harm's way. I could be fighting enemies.



I've lost friends and loved ones in the armed forces. I have friends that are deployed. And I'm here in Palm Springs with two miles per hour wind, 75 degrees, getting paid to play these fantastic golf courses. Absolutely, I have a different perspective, because, you know, I signed up to basically saying I'm willing to give my life for this country, and never came anywhere close to that point. But I mean, that's kind of what you're agreeing to when you join the military. Just understanding that, like, Man, there's tough days out here, but in the grand scheme of things, I get to play golf for a living, I get to represent some awesome companies, I get to do what I love, and pretty much have control over my schedule and what I do day-to-day. So, yeah, it's definitely fixed my perspective on life.

**Q. You obviously have built some a lot of good relationships during your time in the military. Do you still stay in touch with a lot of those guys, do you hear from them, do you text with them, and what are their opinions or thoughts on what you're doing now?**

TOM WHITNEY: Oh, yeah, I'm in touch with quite a few, from all aspects of my military life. I'm part of a group of all of the military golfers on the active duty side, every year the Air Force hosts an all Air Force-wide golf tournament and the Navy, Marines, and Army do as well. Then, at the end of that competition, the six members that make up each of those teams come and gather and play in the armed forces event. Then, the top six players from that tournament represent the U.S. military at the World Military Championships. I got to participate in those for four years while I was on active duty. I still keep in touch with a lot of those guys from that group. I keep in touch with one of my roommates and groomsmen still to this day. I have a buddy that played on the football team that we're still in communication daily, and, yeah, I mean, the Air Force is essentially a massive fraternity that you will always and part of. The coolest part is I have Air Force behind me, I also have all the other services behind me. I mean, it feels like I have the entire armed forces rooting for me. I think everyone thinks it's cool that I served my time in the Air Force, and then I have a skill set that not many people have. I think at orientation we were told that only 1,600 people have ever had a full PGA TOUR card. That's a real slim number, when you boil it down. So, the fact that I could serve my time in the Air Force, and then transition over to this job and have success is real cool.

**Q. Following up on that, any of those friends, have they departed the military and gone on to do something that you're kind of in awe of them doing something else in public life?**

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, I've had some friends that have left and started their own companies. I got one buddy, Jon

Sepp, he purchased a bison ranch in Montana, and just, the outdoorsman in me, is super jealous. His company is Go Roam Free, and he supports me on the snacking side as well. But, yeah, I mean, he served his time and got out and started pursuing his dream, and he's had some major successes running this bison ranch, and now he's in, I think, multiple Costcos throughout the nation. Another friend runs a top-100 security, cyber security company in the world. It's really cool to see people leave the military and then go on to do great things. Because not everyone is going to be able to serve a 20-year commitment. There's an understanding that we're all going to go our separate ways. The 2023 grad just won Miss America a couple nights ago from the Air Force Academy. She was crowned Miss Colorado and then just was crowned Miss America for 2024. Like, that is really cool. It's cool to see that there's people that have passions outside the military, but also the determination and skill sets to pursue full-time careers active duty, and be good enough to keep up their journeys on the side of whatever they're pursuing outside the military as well. So, yeah, it's, I feel like I have a lot of fans from the Air Force side that are excited to see me excelling outside of the uniform.

**Q. Is there something that you could consider the most challenging part of being in service, and then maybe the most rewarding part of being in service in your time in there that might lend itself to helping or assisting you in your pursuit now as a professional golfer?**

TOM WHITNEY: Most rewarding by far was just having the team around you. That was one of the toughest things to get used to out here. You're in the Air Force, you're assigned to a wing, which is a base. In that wing, you're assigned to a group. Inside that group, you're in a squadron. Inside that squadron, you're in a flight. And you have all those levels of organizations that you're a part of. Just the team aspect is really tight. It's just a brotherhood inside of your units, inside your squadrons. You get out here, and it's a very lonely sport, or it can be at times. Golf is an individual sport, sometimes you got to figure it out on your own, a lot of times you got to bring in teammates to help you, whether it's a swing coach, mental coach, fitness coach, but essentially you're kind of traveling on your own and figuring out as you go. So, yeah, I miss the brotherhood of the Air Force, for sure. I think that was half of your question. Can you ask it again.

**Q. Rewarding, challenging, just --**

TOM WHITNEY: Oh, yeah, that was one of the most rewarding. One of the most challenging parts? Probably just giving up control to the Air Force and allowing them to tell me where I'm going to live and what I'm going to do. I

was truly devastated when I received my initial assignment as a missile operator in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Young, young Cadet Tom, when he filled out his requests for base assignments, put San Antonio and Eglin, Florida and Phoenix, Arizona, and all of the warm, sunny places where I could keep my golf game up. Then, in order to station me with my wife, they gave me two hours more north of the Academy in Cheyenne, Wyoming. And, I mean, there were, there was a good amount of tears shed that night just at the feeling of not being in control, not getting what I thought was the best thing for me. It's really one of the testimonies of my faith journey as well, because fast forwarding and looking back at that chapter in my life, working shift work in nuclear missiles was probably the best assignment I could have had to keep my golf game up. Because when I was complete with my duty for the day, I was clean, clear and free to practice golf on my off time. There was no obligation to sit behind a desk from 7:30 to 5:30, like a lot of the regular jobs in the Air Force require. Especially in the service jobs, where, if you're in personnel or finance, you're manning the desk in case someone comes up with an issue. In missiles, you work your shift, you go to your training, and other than that, you're good to go. We grew up, or, in Fort Collins where we lived, we were surrounded by an awesome new church, and just the foundation of our marriage was strengthened living and being surrounded by that community there. Yeah, so it was challenging to not be in control, but at the same time it's taught me some great lessons of, I can make the plans of how I think things should go, but I'm old enough now and wise enough now to realize that they're not always going to go my way, and I'm learning to roll with the punches and just be patient and enjoy where I'm at in the present.

THE MODERATOR: Sticking with the Air Force theme, been coordinating the flyover for Friday, what kind of goes into that process of getting that through?

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah, it was kind of a doozy. It was more involved than I expected. But there's an official form and request that you have to send to big Air Force, big Air Force, then recognizes the request, and then it's on me to coordinate with the FAA. So, I had to take that form and send it to the Riverside FAA office and get approval for them or from them. Then coordinate with the March Air Reserve Base down in Riverside, who that was the unit that wanted the flyover. Yeah, so quite a good bit involved. Then, coordinating the best time to do it. Because we basically play until dark, and the Air Force has rules about flying after dark, just for safety, and especially being so close to these mountains, hills mountains, whatever. (Laughing). Yeah, so, we were able to squeeze it in. It's set for Friday, right after play ends, right before the Keith Urban concert. I just wanted to do something cool for the

tournament that's been so nice to me, and also for all my fellow players, you know, coordinating this, I think you mentioned it, I'm probably the first player that's ever coordinated a flyover for a tournament.

THE MODERATOR: I felt pretty safe in saying that.

TOM WHITNEY: Yeah. So that's pretty cool, just a little way that I can give back. The unit's really looking forward to representing the Air Force, and they're going to have a handful of guys from their squadron out watching the golf this week. It's just cool to bring part of my brotherhood that I talked about earlier into the tournament.

**Q. What kind of planes?**

TOM WHITNEY: I think it's F-16s. I got to verify what kind of fire base it is.

**Q. You kind of answered with Mark's question, people can make the argument that you can learn a lot about yourself on the golf course. I would imagine you can learn a lot about yourself in the military as well. Just, curious as to maybe if there's one or two particular things that you kind of grew into or became through your time there that you are glad you became because of the military, and how, if possible, that has helped you on the golf course. In other words, take the old Tom, add the military experience, who is the new Tom that came out, and how has that helped him on the golf course?**

TOM WHITNEY: I think one of the biggest questions I've learned is just your specific sphere of control, and staying inside of that. And by that I mean there's going to be things outside what you can control, and if you let that effect your emotions, you're going to be in for a world of hurt. There's a lot of things in the military that are outside of your control. Call it red tape, call it whatever you want, but there's decisions that are made at many levels above you that come down, and you may or may not agree with, but at the end of the day we are reporting to specific officers, we are reporting to our President, and in my specific job I signed a line to, saying, if I was given a lawful order to launch a nuclear missile, I would do so. Just learning that lesson over time, I think, has really freed me up and given me a lot of peace out here, just on the day-to-day. I mean, I flew a direct flight from Dallas to here Sunday night, and my clubs didn't get on somehow. I would say the old Tom would have gone down a deep spiral of, Okay, my Monday is now screwed up. I can't, I was supposed to tee off at 8:30, my clubs aren't here, they're not landing until noon. I'm missing all these checklist items that I had planned to accomplish. The new Tom is, Okay, well, I guess I'll hit the new wedges for an

hour or so and get used to those. I needed to work on wedges anyway. So, it's almost a blessing that my clubs didn't show up, because now I can more intentionally focus on this aspect. Just kind of learning to view things from a different perspective of realizing, Well, if I let go of control of stuff that I couldn't control in the first place, well then it's a lot easier to roll with the punches. That's probably the biggest lesson I've taken from my time.

TOM WHITNEY: All right, yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

**Q. Obviously you're talking about being stationed where you were, how did you keep your golf game up? You said you had time to keep it up. How did you do so? Because I know not everyone's living here in Palm Springs right now. I think it's probably an interesting piece of advice for a lot of those dealing with a lot of winter cold weather and keeping their games up as well?**

TOM WHITNEY: Time-wise I alluded to those alerts that last for 24 hours and they kind of span over a day and a half. I would, on a really good efficient day, if I went out on an alert on Monday, I would get back on Tuesday around two or three. That would free me up to play golf until sundown. Summers in Colorado, it gets dark at 9 p.m. so. Then sometimes I would have multiple weekdays off in a row, where the course is empty, everyone's either at work or, you know, taking care of real-life stuff, and I'm at the course by myself and have a free rein over the practice facilities. Cold-wise, Fort Collins was actually better than I expected. They're kind of protected by some of the mountains near them. It will snow and it will be 65 a couple days later and the snow will be gone. One cool thing about most courses in Colorado is they don't shut down. They, if it's warm enough, they're open. So, a lot of courses kind of on the East Coast, where it does get pretty cold, they will shut down for the off season. That's not really how Colorado operates. So, I think every year I lived there I was able to play in short sleeves every month of the year at least a few times. So, it was better than I expected going into it, and then I was very blessed to have access to multiple clubs out there when I lived in Fort Collins, and with some indoor facilities to do work. Part of that, outside of my circle of influence, I mean, I can't control the weather, so I learned to be patient with that as well. If I was planning on working on my game and a snowstorm rolled in, then I would just focus my time elsewhere on something that I needed to get done. I wouldn't put so much pressure on myself that, Oh, I'm getting behind on my game. I could be productive. It's just, Okay, well, it's snowing out, I'll do something else. When it's sunny again, I'll go back out there.

THE MODERATOR: Tom, thank you so much for the time. We wish you the best of luck this week and look forward to the flyover Friday.

