

# WM Phoenix Open

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TPC Scottsdale

## Charles Howell III

## Andy Pazder

### Press Conference



DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome Andy Pazder of the PGA and Charles Howell, PGA TOUR player. We're obviously here for a special occasion today, 600 PGA TOUR starts in the making this week. Congratulations to you.

I was asking you yesterday about it, and I think I have been out with you for every one of them, I'm dating myself, as well.

With that, I will turn it over to Andy for a few comments.

ANDY PAZDER: Thanks, Doug. Appreciate it.

We're here today to honor Charles on the occasion of his 600th PGA TOUR event. Just wanted to talk a moment about what a special accomplishment that is.

Charles made his debut in September of 1996 as a 17-year-old amateur at the Buick Challenge at Callaway Gardens, not far from home for you, right?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yeah.

ANDY PAZDER: I was looking back that tournament, and a couple things stood out. One obviously was your first of now almost 600 starts, but it was a 36-hole event. We had some serious weather issues.

Do you remember who won that tournament?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Was it David Duval?

ANDY PAZDER: Michael Brawley in a five-way playoff.

CHARLES HOWELL III: That's right, yes.

ANDY PAZDER: The other interesting fact I noted was I believe -- I just handed Charles this list of all-time number of starts on TOUR, and I believe you're the only person on that list who started off by shooting 80.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yes, I probably am (smiling). Exactly.

ANDY PAZDER: I don't think anybody else above you shot 80 in their first-ever round.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yes. It could only get better from there. (Laughter.)

ANDY PAZDER: Not only is this a tale of longevity and good health, but it's perseverance. I wish Heather was here and Ansley and Chase to help you celebrate. When I think about 600 starts, so there has been fewer than 70 players in our history that have done that, so it is an unbelievable milestone.

I ran into Charles at our hotel last night, and we started talking about who was No. 1 on the list and doing some math. He's adding years onto -- you're 42, right?

CHARLES HOWELL III: 42, exactly.

ANDY PAZDER: He's like, Man, I don't know if I can get there or not.

But on a personal note, Charles, I would just say there is a lot that goes into playing 600 events. It's mostly good health, it's outstanding play, it's a great family, a great support system. But what I have admired most about you over those 600 starts is you have done it with class in the highest level of professionalism, and you are an absolute credit to our sport and the PGA TOUR.

So it's my honor to be here representing the PGA TOUR to say congratulations.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Thank you.

ANDY PAZDER: We have for you a silver tray commemorating the moment, which we hope you will display at home.

CHARLES HOWELL III: I will.



ANDY PAZDER: I will look forward to giving you No. 700, No. 800, and we will see after that. Congratulations.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Well, first off, I don't know what to say. First off, the PGA TOUR has been an absolute dream. Yeah, I was seven years old when I started playing golf in Augusta, Georgia, and what an easy place to play golf.

You know, golf was cool in Augusta because of this little event called The Masters, and my dream was to play the PGA TOUR. Yeah, I never dreamt about I want to be the best player in the world. I just wanted to play golf on the PGA TOUR.

You referenced my first event. I was paired with Hugh Royer and Jumbo Elliott. That's dating myself here (smiling).

I bogeyed the first two holes, as Andy reminded me, so nervous at 17, and we shot 80. But, I mean, just the whole PGA TOUR, I have watched the organization grow from obviously, you know, Former Commissioner Tim Finchem, now to Jay Monahan, that have just done an unbelievable job.

I watched Jay come in, being commissioner, and then the COVID pandemic hit and what he had to weather from the very start of this deal, and my gosh, I can't say enough about THE TOUR.

The other players have become really my life and family. You know, we are always out here, I want to beat this guy and beat that guy. And you do, but at the end of the day I look back and it's been my life for 22 years. You know, they have become friends. I've got their cellphone numbers in my cellphone, and you text them congratulations when they win golf tournaments and do things well, and it really is a family. The future of this TOUR is bright.

When you're the best at what you do in the game of golf, I think other entities and organizations come at that and try to copy it, but the PGA TOUR is the best. It will be here many years.

My son's 10. He plays competitive golf now, so hopefully I'll be watching him play the PGA TOUR one day. And I'm sure Commissioner Monahan will be moved on from now, but there will be a new one that we'll be yelling at and barking at, and I will watch THE TOUR continue to grow because it is a wonderful organization.

ANDY PAZDER: Well said.

DOUG MILNE: Questions? Charlie, you have a minute?

**Q. Charles, congratulations.**

CHARLES HOWELL III: Thank you.

**Q. We spoke the other day about this, but can you talk sort of about the evolution of THE TOUR over your 600 starts and what it takes now just to make it to the weekend?**

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, great question. So first off, I'm very glad I turned pro at age 20 without a college degree. I left Oklahoma State early. I had no idea what I was getting into.

I thought, yeah, I'll play my way on, seven events will be fine, I'll make enough money to play my way on THE TOUR. The fact that I was 20 and pretty naive to the difficulty of this, I'm very glad for.

The way THE TOUR has changed, I'd say, so I came out with myself, Adam Scott, Matt Kuchar, David Gossett, Bryce Molder, Luke Donald, we had this mentality it's going to take some time to win. You know, I played practice rounds with Corey Pavin, I played practice rounds are Jeff Sluman. These guys, I picked their brain a lot. Hey, how do you do this? What do you do here?

Jesper Parnevik was another player I spent a whole lot of time with. He influenced my fashion sadly for a couple years, but we all make mistakes (smiling).

So, you know, these guys I really heavily relied on. Yeah, it's going to take some time to win and whatnot.

The young players, now they come straight out and win. Viktor Hovland, he feels like a little brother to me. He played at Oklahoma State, as well. We may have a degree between both of us. But I have just watched him come out and win right away and go to 3 in the world.

That new generation, I mean, I think part of it has to do with the PGA TOUR. We are on so many platforms right now, there is so much access to golf. They have done such a great job growing the media side of it where players kind of know what they are getting into before they get here.

When I turned pro, there is kind of a lot of unknowns, a bit like going into the Chocolate Factory, we didn't really know what's it like out there, what is it? Now there are so many platforms of exposure, they expose so many players so they kind of know how it is.

You have Collin Morikawa, Rory McIlroy, Viktor Hovland.  
Just look at the use of this. Golf is in such great hands.

I was the generation, I could never imagine golf past Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson. I thought that was just the end of time when those guys get older and move on. But now we have this awesome young talent. It's bigger and better than ever.

**Q. We joke about it, but what about 700? Could you imagine getting to 700?**

CHARLES HOWELL III: I mean, yes, I'll get there. I'll get there. (Laughter.)

But the sad thing is that only puts me to what, 15 on the list? Yeah, I'll get there. Yeah, it will take a little time, but I'll get there. I can't believe I got to 600, but I have gray hair to prove every one of those starts, yeah.

(Applause.)

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