

# WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Patrick Cantlay

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Patrick Cantlay here to the interview room at the WM Phoenix Open. Thanks for taking a few minutes. It's always nice to have you. Making your second start and quite the successful first start here last year with the runner-up finish. Just a few comments on being back here for a second time, especially coming off the strong finish last year.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, thanks. The course seems to be in great shape. Should be, I think, a little colder this year than last year. Last year if I remember right was a little warmer and ideal conditions, so the course with the greens being firm may play a little tougher this year, but should be a good test.

THE MODERATOR: Prior to making your first start here last year, had you kind of felt it out from other players that had been here to kind of gauge what exactly this event is about? I'm sure you've heard a lot about it. Did it live up to or exceed everything you'd heard about it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, definitely. This week is a party for everyone except us, and we're at work, which is great. It would be weird if every event was like this, but it's great that we have events like this and there's so many people in the area that come out and support the event and have a good time and watch just a little golf.

THE MODERATOR: You're making your fourth start of the season, runner-up finish in your first at Shriners and haven't played since American Express, so a few weeks off. Bring us up to speed on how you're feeling about your game and what you're confident with.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I feel good. Nice to come to a place that I've played well at before, and looking forward to Riv next week to close out the West Coast Swing. I always enjoy the West Coast, and yeah, it's nice to be back here and hopefully have a good week.

**Q. There's been a lot of advancements in the TV broadcasts recently with CBS doing mid-round interviews. Would that be something you'd be**

**interested in doing?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I saw that. That's been great. Probably not something for me, but I think it's great that those guys who want to do it are able to give those insights while they're out there playing.

**Q. Same thing with the Netflix show; I noticed you weren't a participant this year. Are you going to watch it? Do you have any interest in doing it next year?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't know, I'll see about if I want to do it next year. I haven't watched it yet, so I might take a look at it, but it's not too high on my priority list.

**Q. You may have been asked this at Amex, but since last season, any significant changes or anything you're working on to get a little bit better or more specific or any equipment changes? Did you change your shoelaces?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: I recent up went up in weight in my shafts and my woods. Looking for a little more stability there. I've been swinging the golf club just a little bit faster, and so trying to make sure I have a little bit more stable club that I can swing faster.

**Q. Have you felt a difference?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, definitely tightens up the dispersion a little bit. When I was swinging my best and swinging my fastest, I had a little too much right to left on the golf ball, but I stayed in the same shaft, just went up 10 grams in weight, and it seems to have really taken that left shot out of play.

THE MODERATOR: I don't even know what dispersion means.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Just the windows that your golf ball ends up in.

**Q. What are you reading right now, and even further than that, do you take whatever you're reading in your free time and either apply it to your game or talk about**



**it when you're on the course? How do books kind of play into your time on the golf course?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I mean, I've read, like I've said before, I've read "Thinking Fast and Slow" before, and I think that's helped a lot, not only on the golf course, but just in my everyday life, just trying to put things in the proper perspective, and I think seeing things as accurately as you can and not being biased, which I think is a lot of thinking fast and slow is trying to overcome your inherent bias, and that's golf all day, right, because your emotions are playing tricks with you, and you feel like certain shots are more important than others, when in reality they're maybe not, and there's shots that you feel like are more important depending on the moment or shots that you feel like you should have hit closer, but if you take a large sample size and try to remove that emotion, you can actually get to the heart of maybe -- like you can start to pull things out of your round that will help you going forward instead of getting caught in the spiral of your emotions deciding how you feel about how your performance was.

**Q. I was just wondering if there's like a different feel or buzz to the tournament this week knowing the stakes are a little higher this year?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I mean, we play a lot of big tournaments. I feel like this tournament in particular, at least last year was my first year playing it, it felt like one of the biggest events of the year, just because there's so many people here, and today on Tuesday there's thousands of people out there. It feels like no other practice round that we play all year.

Every tournament feels like a big tournament, and with all the people out there, this one feels just a little bigger.

**Q. You led the TOUR in par-5 scoring last year. I'd love to learn more about what your strategy is on those holes and what works so well for you.**

PATRICK CANTLAY: It's a good question. I don't know if I know the answer because I think most guys that kill the par-5s usually probably hit it farther than I do, but I think driving the golf ball in the fairway is huge, and then really studying the hole location and leaving your golf ball in the correct spot.

I think a lot of times on par-5s I'm not necessarily trying to get it as close as I possibly can to the hole, but I'm trying to get up as far as I can, even if I'm not going to get to the green, and then also leave myself the proper angle.

That's doing a lot of the right prep work in practice rounds

and really studying the individual hole locations and then figuring out where I think I would get up-and-down from the most, and then if I can hit the fairway quite a bit, then I can move my golf ball into the right general area, and I should have a good look at getting up-and-down, which the statistics the last -- since they came out with ShotTracker and strokes gained, I think everyone has maybe been surprised at how much better you get just the closer you get to the hole.

I almost don't ever think of laying up to a number, which is how I learned how to do it from John Cook and the guys that mentored me when I was growing up. Now it's can I get the right angle to whatever hole location it is and can I get it up there as far as possible and then hopefully in the fairway so I can get some spin on it and control the golf ball and get it around the hole.

**Q. Looking off the course, you have your own foundation and you've been very active in the charitable community. Have you done any events so far this week with Waste Management?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: No events this week, but we had the season ending of the Patrick Cantlay Foundation Series events of the Toyota Tour Cup, which is Southern California, SCPGA Junior Golf, and we had the finale in December at the club I grew up at, Virginia Country Club, so I was out there for a couple days and that was a great event, and we were really happy to put that on and hope to do that for a number of years.

**Q. What does it mean to be able to give back?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it's great. I got a lot out of playing those junior golf tournaments, and I played all over Southern California. My parents would drive me to tournaments on the weekend, and being able to give back and try to elevate those events and maybe incentivize the best players in Southern California to have something to try to qualify for and get into those season-ending Toyota Tour Cup events I think has been really cool, and getting to know the kids just at the tournament for a little bit, did a clinic with them, and hearing how appreciative they are just to have the elevated experience of the tournament, it's something that when I was growing up I would have liked to have seen and played in. So that's what I'm trying to create with those tournaments is something that they're excited about where they show up to the tournament and feel like it's as close to a TOUR event as it can be.

**Q. You and Xander are pretty tight; he's dealing with some back stuff right now. I know you've dealt with some back stuff over the years. Share any healing secrets with him? Has he come to you for any advice**



## on how to deal with it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I hope his injury is not as severe as mine. I think it's quite a bit different, and so we've chatted about it a little bit but not too much. He has a good team around him, and I think that's really -- when I was going through things, just leaning on my team, and ultimately it's just down to you, how do you feel and what are the things that you can do to just kind of get the pain to go away.

Hopefully he seems like he's doing better, and hopefully -- it didn't hinder his play. He's making 2s on par-5s and stuff. Hopefully he keeps playing well.

## Q. Five of the last seven events here have gone to Playoffs. What is it about the course specifically the last four holes that lends itself so much to the drama?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think that's probably just a statistical anomaly. I thought there's anything to the golf course making that happen, but it definitely provides drama down the stretch with 15, which I think is a huge risk-reward hole, and we've seen plenty of guys make decisions there or have to make decisions there in the fairway, which is exciting; and then 16, a pretty vanilla hole but not this week; 17 is a hole that you feel like you should birdie every time, but it's a little more difficult than that; and 18, you'd better drive the golf ball in the fairway.

I think those four holes are a great finish and should provide some drama almost every year.

## Q. 16, how do you approach 16, because you're so reflective, to play it successfully?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it's just a short iron par-3, and depending on the hole locations there's some more difficult ones on the back that I try to stay a little short of, and the other ones just to the fat side and as close as I can. Hopefully you walk up to the tee and get a good number.

## Q. Because of your experience at UCLA and I know you appreciate the GC Thomas courses, what are your thoughts on LA North being the U.S. Open site this year?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it should be exciting. It's a golf course I've played a number of times, that we played in college. I was there for two years at UCLA. I'm very familiar with the golf course. I never thought when I was playing back then that they would ever have a U.S. Open there, but it should be exciting. I'm really looking forward to it.

## Q. So you have a home course advantage do you

## think?

PATRICK CANTLAY: We'll see. I mean, usually how the USGA sets it up, it's totally different than it's ever played before, but yeah, I do feel comfortable around that place.

## Q. You touched on 17; could you discuss your strategy whether you do go for it, and if so, when, or if it's better to lay up. How do you approach that one?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think 17 you try and get it to about the front fringe every day. If you could have it right in that short gully short of the green almost in the middle of the green just over that bunker, I think that's the best place to play to all the hole locations. Whether that's a driver or 3-wood just depends on the time of day or the wind.

## Q. Following up on your answer about the CBS question, why is doing the interview not for you, and do you feel like you're an outlier in that situation, or do you feel you're in the majority that feels that way?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'm not sure how the majority would feel. I'm curious to see how many guys would decide to do it. For me, I just feel like I'm so focused on what I'm doing when I'm out there that I don't want or need any other distractions, and so for some guys that may be exactly what they want to do, but for me, I think I just want to focus on the golf while I'm out there.

## Q. Did somebody recommend that book to you that you talked about earlier, or did you just come across it yourself?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, Dr. Virginia recommended it to me, and I'm glad he did. He always has good book recommendations.

## Q. Talking about 16, Jon Rahm said that you either love it or hate it, there's no in between. Which are you?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I love it. I think it's cool that you can step up there and freeze it in there and make everyone go nuts and make a birdie. Like I said, if it was every week, it would maybe get a little old, but the novelty of it being one week out of the year and one hole out of the year, I think it's all right.

## Q. When Jon was up here earlier he was talking about how the elevated events now have allowed him to pick and choose his travel a little bit easier than in the past and which tournaments he want to play in. Is that the key for you, and before the elevated events, how tough was it to pick your schedule for a year?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I actually like picking my schedule. I haven't had too much trouble with it. Fortunately it seems like a lot of the elevated events have already been on my schedule in years past. I think that's just lucky that it worked out that way. But I've always liked it. I tend to play and go to tournaments that I've played well at and golf courses that I like, and that seems to be the biggest factor for me.

I've found the rotation of golf courses that I like, and I tend to pick and play those tournaments each and every year.

**Q. With the Super Bowl being here at the same time as this year's tournament, what do you think about the crowds, how it might be different from last year, and who do you have in the game?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think Saturday should be busier than last year's Saturday, but Sunday I think should be actually a little more chilled out than last Sunday. I think last time, I was talking to somebody that had been here the last time the Super Bowl was here, and Sunday was very mellow compared to usual.

I'm not sure who's going to win the game. Chiefs look good, and they have looked good for the last couple years, so I'll go with them.

**Q. You told us in Hawai'i that you were in the market for a clothing sponsor. What's the update on that, and what are you doing also from an equipment standpoint? Are you still testing out a bunch of stuff? Where have you landed on that issue?**

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, like I said earlier, I changed some shafts, just 10 grams heavier in my woods. Other than that, everything is pretty much the same, and still wearing B. Draddy at the moment, and I like it. It's good.

THE MODERATOR: Patrick, we appreciate your time as always and would love to see you right back here Sunday.

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