

# WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Bud Cauley

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Bud Cauley to the media center here at the WM Phoenix Open. Your first start on TOUR since the 2020 Fortinet Championship. You played a couple weeks in the Bahamas on the Korn Ferry TOUR in the run-up to this point, so talk about what it's like to be back playing on TOUR again.

BUD CAULEY: It's great. The last couple days even have been a lot of fun to see a lot of familiar faces and guys I haven't seen in a while. It was great to go down to the Bahamas and play a couple weeks and get my body moving again and play at a competitive tournament. I hadn't done that in a while. That was a lot of fun, and it's even better to be back here, a place I've played quite a few times and really enjoy this tournament.

**Q. You mentioned those two weeks playing in the Bahamas. What were some of the things specifically about your golf game that you were able to learn being back in competition that you think will help you for this week?**

BUD CAULEY: Stuff from my golf swing or making little adjustments with that to just remembering where my ball marker was, how many tees I put in my pocket. I was kind of remembering a lot of old things. But you can't really -- I can practice and play at home, but until you get in a tournament and have the scorecard and have to finish out, it's hard to replicate that at home. So it was a great warmup for me.

I felt like after a couple days I kind of got the swing of it and fell back into a nice rhythm. That was great.

**Q. Making your fifth start here, what's it like, this being your first start on TOUR in a few years and at a place like the WM Phoenix Open where it's going to be really rowdy and you're getting back into the atmosphere of a PGA TOUR event?**

BUD CAULEY: Yeah, it's going to be fun. I've always enjoyed this tournament. It's very unique for our schedule, and as you mentioned, the party atmosphere and the

energy, I've always enjoyed that.

It's a really comfortable week for me. Two of my best friends live here. I get to stay with one of them, and my wife and son came out, and they have a couple little kids. It's really enjoyable for me to always come back and see some close friends and even more so now with the family. Even when I leave the golf course we have a lot of fun.

**Q. Was there ever a time where you considered not coming back to competition? Four years is a super long layoff.**

BUD CAULEY: Yeah, there were -- obviously in the beginning, my optimism was pretty high, hoping that I could recover and get back. Then after a year goes by and two years goes by, your optimism starts to fade a little bit. I definitely had those -- even just conversations with my wife that if this doesn't -- it's not looking too good if this doesn't work out, what are some other things that I can do. But I have to give her a lot of credit. She was always very optimistic and helped me get through a lot of tough times.

**Q. What were the complications that kept you out so long? What was it specifically that kept you from a regimen of professional golf?**

BUD CAULEY: It all kind of stems from the car accident I was in in 2018. I recovered from that, played for a couple years, and then out of the blue, my side started to hurt again. I broke six ribs in that accident was kind of the biggest -- on the right side, and all of a sudden started to hurt.

I went and saw a couple doctors. They thought it was maybe one of the plates I have in my chest. So I went to go have the plates removed, and they couldn't get them out because the bone had grown on top of the plates.

So stitched me back up, said, I think we'll be okay, we took a little scar tissue out, you'll be fine, and then like 12 days later, my incision popped open. Just standing in the house, Christy goes, your shirt is kind of wet. Take my shirt off, there's just a hole in the side of my chest.



Had to go back to the emergency room, a couple more -- I couldn't really feel it. I've kind of had so much happen in that area, I've lost a little bit of feeling, which I think worked out in that situation.

But decided to go in, had a couple more surgeries that didn't heal very well, and it was just a whole mess. I had a seroma, got C-diff from all the antibiotics. Everything that could go wrong seemed to go wrong. That just set me back obviously just over three years.

**Q. Bud, considering everything that you've been through over the last four years, how would you say that your perspective has changed on getting to be a professional golfer?**

BUD CAULEY: It's hard to put into words how much you kind of miss something when you grow up doing it every day and you play golf every day, and when it gets taken away, it does change your perspective on just how fortunate we are to be able to play golf and even to get to do the thing that you enjoy doing.

I feel very fortunate to have found the things that I enjoy to do and that I'm able to do it.

**Q. Now that you are back and getting to focus on being a professional golfer again, what are the short-term goals that you have that you'd like to see maybe over the next couple of months as you continue to get back in it?**

BUD CAULEY: I don't have anything specific. I've really tried to just improve a little bit every day. When I started hitting balls in September, that was just kind of my goal. First it was my body, to get where I could start playing more, and now that I'm back out here, even playing in the Bahamas I was able to make some little adjustments that I think will help me this week.

I feel very prepared. I've had enough time to practice and get ready. Just going to go out there and really just compete, and I think the newness of it will kind of wear off and I'll be able to just focus on the golf.

**Q. I wondered if you could tell us a little bit about what the 2024 version of Bud Cauley's golf game is like compared to when you were playing a few years ago more regularly. What does that game look like for you?**

BUD CAULEY: I think it's pretty similar. I had some time to work on some things that I'd been wanting to change a little bit, even when I was playing. It's kind of funny, even when you take three years off, like chipping has always

been a strength of mine, and I felt like that kind of came back quick. Still doing some similar putting drills. My golf swing is virtually the same. I'm lucky that even though I've had so many things happen to my side, I haven't lost any speed or anything, and my range of motion is the same.

Every day is sort of different in the things that you work on and try to improve on, and I think that I'm just going to continue to do that every round I play, get more feedback on where my game is and where I can make improvements.

**Q. You talk about the complications with your surgery, and I can't imagine the trauma associated with that. Have you worked with anyone like a mental coach or a sports psychologist to get over the hump of dealing with all of that pain?**

BUD CAULEY: My wife (laughing). No, I haven't worked with anyone professionally. But I've definitely bent her ear quite a bit on just things that I was going through and how I felt about it and even concerns that -- even when it started to feel a little bit better, the worry that something else bad could possibly happen again.

She helped me get through a lot of those things.

**Q. What was the longest stretch that you went without touching a golf club?**

BUD CAULEY: I didn't touch a golf club from -- I had my first surgery in April of 2021, and I tried to hit balls maybe a couple months after that once my incision had closed back up, and I hit like four shots and stopped. Then I didn't hit another golf ball basically until September of last year. So I'd go out and chip and putt a little bit or do certain things, but as far as making full swings, I really just couldn't do it.

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