

AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Sunday, February 14, 2021

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

Daniel Berger

Press Conference



JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Daniel Berger, the 2021 champion. Daniel has won his fourth PGA TOUR title in dramatic fashion here at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Daniel, can we get your thoughts on doing it in the style that you did with eagle there on the 18.

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I just, one of the best finishing holes I've ever played, obviously, with everything that happened on Saturday, hitting that ball out of bounds, to step up there and hit a great drive and then one of the best 3-woods I've ever hit in my life and then to make that putt is just as good as it gets for me.

JOHN BUSH: Now you move up to No. 10 in the FedExCup standings. Talk about how this changes your season and your goals.

DANIEL BERGER: It's very important to get up as high as you can as early as you can in the FedExCup and I think today really solidified my position as one of the best golfers out here and I just need to continue to do the things I've been doing and I feel like there's no, there's no limit to what I can accomplish.

JOHN BUSH: We'll go right into questions.

Q. What's going through your mind on the tee shot? You alluded to the drive you hit on 18 yesterday, and also over the 3-wood. Are you looking only at positive or is there any part of you that's worried about a miss?

DANIEL BERGER: For someone that cuts the ball like myself, it's actually, I feel like it's a relatively easy tee shot because you can start it down the left in the water and you just cut it off the water. Yesterday I just kind of flared it. Today I stepped up there, and I wanted to be as aggressive as possible and I would rather go down swinging than making a conservative swing that doesn't end up really well.

Then the 3-wood was, like I was saying earlier, one of the

best 3-woods in my life. I've always struggled with finding a good 3-wood. It's either good off the tee or good off the deck, but this one I've really been comfortable with for a long time. I just try to be aggressive. I wanted to win the golf tournament. I didn't want to lose it on the last. I just wanted to go out there and try to hit the best shot that I could and I wasn't going to be conservative on the 3-wood coming in.

Q. Lastly, that was a 4-iron on the second hole for your eagle?

DANIEL BERGER: 4-iron on 2.

Q. All the talk about the class of 1993, sometimes they leave you out, with the Masters obviously not getting in despite being in the top-15, do you ever feel like you're underrated and is that something that at all motivates you?

DANIEL BERGER: I do feel like I'm underrated, but that's okay with me. I just think it's puts a little chip on my shoulder which is totally fine. I think a lot of the guys that they give credit to deserve credit. But I've been pretty consistent and I've accomplished a lot for the short amount of time that I've played out here on TOUR. You look at some of the other guys and what they have accomplished, I'm kind of right in line with that. So I just want to continue to get better. I feel like, my goal has always been to be the No. 1 player in the world and some people will laugh at that and that's fine, but that's something that every day I wake up and I strive for.

Q. What happened on the 1st hole with Russell? What did you make of that and how, were you shocked when the rules referee came up on the 5th tee?

DANIEL BERGER: You know, the way that Russell described it when we were, when I was standing there, it sounded like it was a penalty and then the rules official came in and said it wasn't a penalty because he had addressed ball and then the ball moved, and from what I've always understood is once you've addressed the ball and you've kind of gotten in there and the ball moves, it's usually your fault for the most, and he didn't give him a



penalty, so I was trying to just inquire about why it wasn't a penalty if it was one or what was going on. And then obviously they looked at it on tape and figured out it was a penalty, and it is what it is. I mean, it sucks but that's just the way golf goes.

Q. Quickly, how did sort of Russell take it? Did you sort of get a feeling of how he sort of felt for the rest of the round or not?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, he didn't -- honestly, he didn't mention it once after the rules official came up. I asked him what happened. He said I got a penalty and then it was kind of forgotten, which I think is probably the best way to deal with it. I mean, it is what it is. You just have to move on.

Q. When you were dealing with your wrist injuries, was there a really bad moment or a dark moment and what kept you going forward?

DANIEL BERGER: It's funny that you mention that. When I was hurt, I thought, man, I'm never going to be able to play golf again without being, without feeling like I was going to be hurt and not be able to do the things I know I needed to be able to do to prepare and play my best golf. I thought I didn't really love the game until it was taken away from me for three or four months and then I was really sad. I think I was a bit lucky to have the team of doctors that I had to really get me back to a hundred percent. Now it's a nonissue. I never think about it. It never bothers me and it's really something that I can put behind me in the past.

Q. Will you be circling AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am on your calendar every year from now on?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, you know, I think I've played it three times and I've had a 10th, a 5th, and now a victory. But I love Pebble Beach. Every time I've ever played it I wonder why I don't come back more often, and this year was, I knew I was going to play it. I set it on my schedule early. I didn't commit until kind of late, but I knew I was going to be here. It's just a special place. Every time you step up to the tee, you just, you tend to take in the sights and sounds and don't really focus on the golf as much and I think that's kind of helpful for me.

Q. How much scoreboard watching do you do when you're in contention in the fourth round like today?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I mean, I want to know where I stand compared to other guys. I think early on in the day I try not to focus on it as much, but you have a sense of kind of where you're at. But obviously without the fans it's much more challenging, you don't hear the roars, which can be a

little bit more difficult. But I'm the type of guy that likes to know where I'm at, so I pay pretty decent attention to it, especially on the last four or five holes. I knew that Nate Lashley and I were tied kind of coming into 16 and 17 and then hit a drive on 18 and looked at the leaderboard and I didn't see his name. I was a little confused and then, I still don't know what happened there, but I just knew that I needed to go out there and hit a good shot coming in on the last hole and I could win the golf tournament.

Q. He missed a few 3-footers on 16.

But how do you deal with the adrenaline versus trying to keep yourself calm? Do you try to like harness that extra energy or do you try to chill yourself back out?

DANIEL BERGER: Winning a golf tournament just feels like you're having a heart attack on every hole, really. It's not -- I love that feeling of that pressure and, I wouldn't call it anxiety but I would call it excitement. I didn't get overly pressing. I kind of just stayed patient. And I didn't hit a ton of amazing golf shots coming down the stretch until the last two or three holes, but I did enough and that's what it took.

Q. You talked about your tee shot on 18. Can you elaborate a little bit on the second shot, how far out you were and what it was like standing over that? I mean, obviously, knowing if you hit the shot that you did, you essentially set yourself up for a 2-putt to win?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, you know, I think I had 235 front, 250 hole, something like that. It was a little cold into the wind, so it kind of set up nice for just a full 3-wood. I'm usually a cutter of the golf ball, but the wind was a little off the right, which I think kind of helped me out a little bit, just being able to kind of hit a little cut that kind of comes out straight, and it was just almost lucky to have that kind of yardage coming in where I could, it wasn't in between clubs, it was really just a full 3-wood. Didn't have to take anything off of it. And at the end you just have to execute and I did that.

Q. Was there excitement? Anxiety? What was at that like over the ball as you stepped up to it?

DANIEL BERGER: I think a sense of calm. I've been in that position before and I wanted to go out there and win that golf tournament today. I didn't want to be conservative and bailout to the right and try to get up-and-down. I wanted to be aggressive and I was going to go down swinging.

Q. You mentioned your history at Pebble and enjoying coming here and obviously the setting is what most people talk about. But what about the history?



There's so much history here and so many great players have obviously won on this course, to join that list, and what is your sense of the golf history here and how much does that affect you?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, it's special to me. When I won at Colonial last year and to see Ben Hogan's name and all the past champions that have been winners there is really special and then to come to a place like this with 50, 60, 100 year of history here is so special. To kind of etch my name into that history book is really cool and it's definitely going to be a place that I come back to for many more years.

Q. Just to clear up on your playing on Pebble, at what point did you commit to play this year? Were you a late entry or were you always going to play it?

DANIEL BERGER: I was always going to play, but I didn't commit until the Friday deadline, which was 30 minutes after your tee time on Friday, after I missed the cut last week. I was always planning on playing it. It's just sometimes I'm kind of a last minute-guy. I don't like it make commitments and I don't want to pull out of a tournament if I've committed to one, so I kind of wait to the last minute to do. Just like for next week in L.A. I committed on Friday, so that's just my style, for whatever reason.

Q. Without grandstands, without the ams, and basically an empty golf course, you guys played a lot of different shots this week at Pebble that you've never played before, the 10th tee, the 5th tee yesterday morning. How much fun was that?

DANIEL BERGER: It was fun. The one hole that really comes back to me the most is the 6th hole because usually they have the grandstands on the left and it's a really daunting tee shot with the bunkers on left and the cliffs on the right. And we just got up there and sent it as far as we could down the left, knowing that there was really no trouble, you were still going to have a chance to go for the green in two, which with the grandstands being there usually in the past you wouldn't be able to do that.

But I miss the fans. I'm hoping that they come back soon and I'm hoping that the Florida swing will have some, so I'm excited about getting them back here.

Q. You've always been seen as a bold player and what you did at 18 today certainly is very bold. Where inside you does that come from?

DANIEL BERGER: I think it's a lot to do with the confidence that I built in myself when I was really starting

out the game, when I was 14, 15 years old, playing with Steve Marino and Will MacKenzie and the local TOUR players there and they really brought that out in me and I feel like I owe a lot of my success to the guys that I grew up playing with.

But I think the biggest thing is playing fearlessly. You can step up there and be concerned with all the different outcomes and all the different places that ball can go, but in the end it's just golf, it's just a golf shot and if you can step up there and kind of free your mind and be fearless, then you have such a better opportunity to hit a good shot.

I've been in this situation before, coming down the last hole, having to hit a good shot, sometimes it goes your way, sometimes it doesn't, but you really have to be bold and I feel like did I that today.

Q. To be clear on one thing, did you know you were tied playing the 18th and assuming so what were you trying to do with that putt?

DANIEL BERGER: When I hit that drive down the 18th hole I looked to the right and there was a leaderboard and I saw that Maverick McNealy had birdied the 18th hole and I know Nate Lashley was tied with me for awhile and I didn't see his name. So I knew I was going to have to birdie it, but the putt was much trickier than I thought it was going to be, it was extremely fast, a little right-to-left and then a little right at the end. But I mean I would be lying if I said I wasn't trying to 2-putt that. To see it go in was just an extra bonus. Obviously playing under the situations I knew a 2-putt was good enough for the most part, unless Patrick made his eagle putt, but it was just a nice roll with good pace and I feel like I had a lot of close putts today that didn't go in so it was nice to see one go in, especially under the circumstances.

Q. Your time with Cameron, what would you say has been the one change that, if there's been a change, what's he meant to you and can you give us just a little detail on what's going on there?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I don't think I would be here right now without -- well I know I wouldn't be here without his help. He's totally given me a different outlook on short game, on putting, just a different outlook on golf in general. He's allowed me to be artistic, he hasn't changed me in a way that where you get worse before you get better, which I know happens to a lot of people when they change swing instructors. He's just given me the confidence and he's allowed me to be myself and work with within the things that I'm capable of doing and just gave me a different outlook on how to practice, on how to get better at the game of golf, which I feel like for a year or two I kind of loss

that, what I needed to do in order to get better and the plan that he's created for me is really tailored to me and has allowed me to be as good as I want to be, I feel like.

Q. No big changes, mainly tweaks?

DANIEL BERGER: We don't really do too much in terms of swing changes, but he's just -- the first thing we talked about when I talked about with him working with him was my short game and I said, I kind of hit the same shot all the time, the same trajectory, the same spin, and he said, How many times have you seen the best chippers in the world hit the same shot all the time. He rattled off 10 different people, Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth all the different great chippers of all time, they've got all the different variety of shots in their game and you need to be able to be artistic and be able to see those shots when you get in those situations. So he's really given me a different outlook on how to work on those different aspects of my game without being super technical, which is something that I've never been. And you can see in the last 10 months how my game has improved.

JOHN BUSH: Congratulations once again, our 2021 champion, Daniel Berger.

DANIEL BERGER: Thank you.

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