

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Tyrrell Hatton

Press Conference



JACK RYAN: We would like to welcome Tyrrell Hatton to the interview room here at the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard.

Tyrrell, last year, obviously, you were the final winner on the PGA TOUR before the shutdown due to the pandemic. Not all positive, I'm sure, when the memories come back to you. But what do you think about last year, earning your first PGA TOUR victory?

TYRRELL HATTON: Well, yeah, it's obviously special to be back here. Yeah, the world's changed quite a bit in the last year since my win here. But obviously it's still fond memories and it's always going to be a special place for me.

JACK RYAN: When you walk around here, yesterday you hit that opening tee shot, what's it like being back here as the defending champion and how special a moment was that for you yesterday wearing the cardigan?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, it was nice, just, I guess kind of good vibes just being back, really, remembering how difficult it was, obviously the pressure. I played the back nine yesterday morning and it was kind of nice just being out on the course again. I hadn't been back here since. Although living in Orlando, I hadn't been back since the tournament last year. So, yeah, just nice to be back and kind of get familiar with the course again.

JACK RYAN: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Your winning score, obviously, tough conditions, I think it was 4-under par last year. Your average on the European Tour winning total is 21-under par. So any preferences for a winning score this time around?

TYRRELL HATTON: I don't know. Obviously, last year here it was absolutely brutal over the weekend. I remember I think I shot 3-over, over the weekend, which is almost unheard of to then be holding the trophy on Sunday evening. Obviously we have had a lot of rain last night. It will be interesting to see how the course is going to play

from tomorrow. I haven't really seen what the forecast is like, but if it's not too windy, the course is obviously going to play quite a bit softer now. I imagine scoring will be fairly low. I think it's normally been, what was it, around mid-teens anyway as a winning score. So, yeah, we'll kind of see what the weather does and obviously give it our best.

Q. And you've obviously defended a title before with the Dunhill. Can you take anything into that, anything from that, or is it the fact that the Dunhill's a pro-am, does that make it entirely different?

TYRRELL HATTON: No, I mean, like you just said, you try your best every week. Yeah, it was nice to, and very special to defend the Dunhill and I'll be trying my best to do that this week here at Bay Hill. Just, like I said, we'll see what happens.

Q. I just wonder, a year on, how do you reflect on that victory, just how big it was and how much of a role it might have played in subsequent victories, the likes of Wentworth and so on?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, it was a huge moment for me in my career. Winning for the first time on the PGA TOUR at such an iconic venue is extremely special. I think, although we did have, unfortunately, a long break not long after the tournament last year, I guess I kind of kept that run going and ended up having a brilliant year. So obviously very thankful for that and, yeah, hoping I can kind of put up a good defense this week.

Q. Do you feel it's given you a lot of confidence in subsequent events?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, well, I think, obviously, I proved myself on the European Tour and I've had some good finishes on the PGA TOUR, but obviously to win here, it was a world-class field and, yeah, it does a lot for the confidence and I'm sure it played a huge part in how I then, once we restarted golf again, how I kind of finished off the year.

Q. Getting that red cardigan back on today, how close



do you think are you to getting a Green Jacket also in the wardrobe, given that's only a month away now? How great would that be, too, as well?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, I think I need to figure out how to putt at Augusta, if that is ever going to be happen, to be honest. Normally putting is a strong point for me and I've never putt well there, sadly. So obviously hoping that changes this year.

But there's a lot of golf to be played between now and then. I'm mainly focused on this week. I feel pretty comfortable on the golf course, obviously. I've putt well here in the past and hoping that I can kind of produce another good week here.

Q. How different has it been for you going back to Bay Hill this week and what's it been like and how much do you sort of praise both tours in the way they have carried themselves and how golf's sort of got back on to the stage again, post the lockdown last year?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, I think we all know how lucky we are to kind of be working and I guess having almost a normal life, really, being able to play tournaments. Obviously it's a little bit different on the European Tour where it's a lot stricter, there's a lot more, I guess, hoops that they have kind of got to jump through there with different governments and whatnot.

But, yeah, I think just a general consensus from the players is that we're very happy to be playing again. I think we got 25 percent capacity fans this week as well, so that's going to make a nice change. Bit of atmosphere again is always welcome and it will be done in safe manner, which is the important thing.

Q. What's been the response to the anger management classes?

TYRRELL HATTON: (Laughing) it's gone down very well. I mean, it's a pretty funny piece. I know that there's a video coming out today that is almost a bit of a follow-on from that. So, yeah, you guys will have to keep your eyes peeled. I think it's, at some point this afternoon U.K. time it will get posted. So I've seen it this morning and it's pretty funny and I'm sure everyone's going to enjoy watching it.

Q. What's your fondest memory from your victory last year?

TYRRELL HATTON: Probably the 7-iron I ended up hitting into 18. Such, the amount of pressure that was on that shot and to kind of pull it off and to give myself what was probably the scariest 20-foot putt I've had in my life, it was,

yeah, that was a great moment.

Q. In terms of World Ranking you're actually the top guy in the field. I just wonder whether you find that almost surreal and whether your status in the game now, is that a reflection of it?

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, it is surreal, really, but it doesn't sort of, it doesn't necessarily, golf's funny, isn't it? You're not going to go -- sorry, I think we had a communication issue. Sorry, I lost my train of thought.

Q. You said it was surreal.

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, it doesn't really play any relevance in how the tournament's going to go. It's not very often that the top three guys ranked in the field finish, one, two, three. So there's a lot of fantastic players here this week and that's the beauty about professional golf. Anyone playing the tournament has a chance to win. So you've got to play very good to even have a chance and, yeah, hoping that I'll be able to do that.

Q. Given your ranking on the fact that you've won four big events in the last 16, 17 months, do you walk onto the range a little bit taller?

TYRRELL HATTON: Standing at 5'8" I wish I could walk onto the range a little taller. (Laughing) but sadly that's out of my control.

But, no, I mean, I feel confident when I go to a tournament if I know that my swing's in a good place and I can kind of, if I manage my emotions well throughout the week then, sure, I'll give myself a chance.

I felt last week that I was, I didn't feel like I was swinging it that good and I was getting a bit frustrated and my golf got a little bit better each day. I actually played really good on Sunday, even though I shot, I think it was 3-under. So I take confidence from that, that my swing kind of feels like it's getting into a good place again and I guess we'll see exactly tomorrow how it is, and like I said, hoping that I can kind of get off to a good start.

Q. There's a possibility of three European Tour events moving to Florida after the Masters. Now I know these probably aren't events that you're going to play, but what your thoughts on that and what three venues what you, would you, if you were making the decisions, what three venues would you have them played at?

TYRRELL HATTON: Oh, yeah, I had heard a rumor of it. I think it's pretty tough, obviously for the European Tour at

the moment where there's just some countries that you can't get into and the guys need events to play in. I think if that is a possibility for them to come over here to the States and do something here, then playing opportunities for guys is pretty important. So I think it would be a good thing.

In terms of courses where they could play, well, I mean there's a lot of good courses in Florida. I'm sure the weather will be a little bit different to what guys have been used to in Europe at the moment, but I'm sure that they will choose three good venues, if that is actually an option.

Q. 25 percent of the gallery is a step forward. But you probably have the distinction of having the last big roar in golf, if you think back to last year, at Bay Hill. Can you even remember what that sounded like and do you think it might even be weird to hear a cheer for you, assuming you do anything worth cheering this week?

TYRRELL HATTON: I think it's kind of hard to remember the cheers, really. We played a lot of golf since then with obviously no fans. But like I said, it will be nice having a limited number of fans out there again, just to kind of give a bit more of an atmosphere and hopefully I can do something worth cheering about.

Q. Can you think of any awkward moments over the last year? Awkward meaning the silence, if you will. Introduction on the first tee, no one to say anything.

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, that was quite strange the first few events back. It just seemed like a bit dull. But you kind of get used to it and at the end of the day you're there to just play golf and kind of get on with what you need to do and everyone's done a pretty good job of that.

JACK RYAN: Thank you, Tyrrell, we appreciate your time and best of luck this week as you defend your title.

TYRRELL HATTON: Thank you very much.

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