

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Cameron Young

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the reigning Arnold Palmer Award winner, Cameron Young, into the interview room at the 2023 Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard. Cameron's making his second start at the event. So Cameron, before we get into this week, just looking back at last year -- and we talked about this at the CJ Cup -- but what an honor it was to win the Arnold Palmer Award, especially as a Wake Forest grad.

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I think he is one of the most important people in the world of golf, especially in the world of professional golf in history. So any time you get to be connected to him in any way at all is special. I think it's a sign that you're doing some things right. So to win his award and put myself not only on that list of names that have won that award, but just to connect with Mr. Palmer in another way is very special.

And to be, to have the opportunity to play this event last year when starting out it didn't necessarily seem possible or likely, was really cool for me. I've been looking forward to coming back all year. It's one of my favorites of the year. It's an unbelievable golf course. I'm very familiar with the area. My family used to kind of spend some time here in the winter. So it kind of feels a little bit like home. It's one I look forward to all year.

THE MODERATOR: I know you said you love the golf course. Just after seeing all 18 holes in the pro-am today, just a comment on the shape of the course coming into the week.

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, nothing you wouldn't expect. It's in beautiful shape. It's already difficult. The greens are already drying out. They're firm and fast. That's one of the main defenses out here. If the wind blows at all, those greens get really, really tricky. You have to have tremendous control over your golf ball. Not only -- I mean, you have to hit it in the fairway off the tee to have any chance. Then from there you have to have tremendous control over your golf ball to have chances to make birdies, just with the firmness of the greens and the speed of 'em.

So I think it will be a great test. It is every year.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll take some questions out here.

**Q. Two unrelated questions: One, regarding the new TOUR schedule and whatnot and kind of the new format. You obviously kind of came from almost no status and played really well to get yourself to this spot over here. If you were still down in that lower status, would you be concerned at all about or would there be some things that would concern you about this new format kind of icing out a little bit, for lack of a better way to put it, some of the lower-ranked guys?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I kind of -- you know, I haven't honestly seen what they announced today. But I'm aware somewhat of what it is. I know there's some smaller fields and whatnot, but I think there's also a tremendous amount of opportunity to get into them very quickly.

I think -- I would love to see how it would work out if I kind of had the start I had last season. I think I probably would have ended up in a very similar spot. I had the same opportunity to get into some of the bigger events very quickly based on good finishes.

So I understand there's some smaller fields, but I also know that there's a ton of opportunity provided for people to get into them very quickly.

**Q. Shifting completely away from that. The run that you've been on the last year plus, we were talking to Scottie Scheffler a little bit earlier and obviously he's been on an incredible run for 15 months or whatever it's been.**

CAMERON YOUNG: On a different scale, yeah.

**Q. Can you put into words how you psychologically keep that going? Because it does seem like the players that get hot stay hot for awhile. Obviously you're trying to win your first one, but how will you try to keep it rolling and get over the edge like that?**



CAMERON YOUNG: I think -- I don't know. I feel like I did play really nicely last year. I think there is some emphasis put on me trying to win for the first time, which of course I am. But I think, for me, I have to look at it as I could win a golf tournament this year and not necessarily be any better than last year. I don't know if it is a mark of improvement for me in that sense.

I think obviously you have to play some tremendous golf to win out here and I played some tremendous golf last year. I just happened to get beat by one guy a few times.

So I'm really just trying to stick to what I know and continue to get better. Which I think I'm doing. I don't think the results have showed it this year thus far. But I've played some nice golf and I think if I just kind of keep sticking to what I do, keep pounding the stone, the results will speak for themselves.

**Q. I'm pretty sure it was here last year where your finish, whatever it was, 12 or 15 or something like that, assured you top 50 and getting a spot in the Masters. So going to Augusta as kind of a late entry, if you will. How much more, I guess, are you, do you anticipate it, having a full year of thinking about it? Not to say you think about it every minute, by the way.**

CAMERON YOUNG: No, I think right about this time last year is when stuff was coming at me pretty fast. It was only a few weeks before this that I really assured myself a place in THE PLAYERS, which is a huge deal your first year.

Then, yeah, obviously to get into Augusta is a huge bonus. It's not necessarily something that you're thinking about I think right off the bat. I think I kind of let it come to me a little bit last year. Which is a hard thing to do.

But if you set that as a goal at the beginning of the year and you get off to a mediocre start it's so unattainable, I feel like. We did a good job last year of just letting it come to us. I was fortunate enough to get in.

But I think this year being able to plan on here's where I'm going to play, these are basically all the designated events is where I'll be. To just kind of have the peace of mind to know I'm going to get into all those ones I want to play and I'm going to have all the opportunity in the world this year to play some golf on some very big stages has been comforting. It's definitely easier just knowing right off the bat that I'm going to get to play in all that stuff.

**Q. What causes you the most stress in this game? Besides the press conferences.**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, it's hard to say. I think we're kind of getting used to a lot of the top players being together on a weekly basis. Obviously there's a few guys that come to mind, Jon Rahm, Scottie Scheffler, Max Homa, at this very moment in the game of golf that you just have a hard time seeing past them. I think on a weekly basis you know that at least two of them are going to be right there. I don't know if it's stress as much as you just know from the very beginning you're going to have to beat so many good players that it's easy to put some pressure on yourself to play perfect golf, when in reality that's not what you have to do.

But I think the hardest part right now is just kind of like I said, letting it come to me and knowing that I am playing some good golf and the finishes haven't quite stacked up to that. But if I just keep plugging along, doing the same things and trying to get better, I think some good things will happen.

**Q. Your best finish this year was the Saudi International. Curious, what was the incentive to go and what did you take out of the trip?**

CAMERON YOUNG: It's just one the guys have played. I know a bunch of guys went over last year. I think it was 10 or 15. I don't even know. But it was just an opportunity presented to me and I kind of went not knowing that there were only going to be a couple guys.

But, yeah, at this point in my career that was an option presented to me for that week. I'm glad I went. As you guys know, I'm playing a full PGA TOUR schedule and committed to being here.

**Q. I'm assuming it was a huge change for you to start this season compared to starting last season. Were you exhausted at the end of last year? How much time did you take before you sat down and took a deep breath and figured out what you were going to do for this year? And how much did you adjust your goals if you did?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I was definitely tired the end of last year. I think I played 26 times. Which is a lot of golf. I know some guys play more than that. Some guys play less. I think getting through that and getting to the fall where I only played twice was really nice.

I got to spend some time with my family at home. We had our second baby. I was really able to kind of step back a little bit and not necessarily reflect too much, but kind of just start over and make a new plan for this year. Which has been a lot easier knowing where I'm going to play and knowing I'm going to have the opportunities to get into all

these events.

So yeah, I mean, I was definitely tired, but I think that two- or three-month stretch where I only played a couple times was really helpful to kind of reset and make a good plan that I was happy with for this year.

**Q. Congrats on your great year last year. When you look back, what did you learn the most from those near misses at the Open Championship and at the PGA?**

CAMERON YOUNG: I think more than anything just kind of taking away that winning an event like that is something I can do. Having been that close there's little things that went on during the course of that week that are very avoidable, for both of them. And it's just one of the things that I kind of look back on and think is something I can improve.

It's easy to say, Well, if I hadn't doubled this hole or whatever I would have won. But I think it's more learning from those mistakes and understanding that there's going to be a couple times here and there where just something simple is better than trying to make a birdie or whatever it is. I think it's just stacking up that experience and using it to make the best decisions you can week-in and week-out on every shot, every day. I think all just adds up to being more comfortable and I think hopefully will kind of translate into maybe not making one of those mistakes when I'm given an opportunity like that again.

**Q. It's been a few years since that Monday qualifier. Do you ever think back to just a few years ago and where you are now, especially if that alarm clock hadn't gone off?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, that question gets asked quite a bit, so I think about it all the time. Yeah, I mean, it's obviously been an interesting two years basically at this point. I'm very fortunate to be where I am. There's so many things along the way that could have gone just slightly wrong and I wouldn't be sitting here. So it's easy to look back and think about how much more I could have done with my year last year. And at the same time it just wouldn't have taken much for me to not even have the opportunity to play on the PGA TOUR or on the Korn Ferry Tour at that time.

So, yeah, I mean, I look back just with gratitude that things worked out the way they did and I have the opportunities that I have today.

**Q. The Kansas City, Chicago. Two weeks. Have you ever played golf at that high level? I mean, leading eight consecutive rounds and just running a way with**

**both?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I obviously played really nicely. I think especially that second week really played into my hands a little bit. It was awful weather and it was playing pretty hard, at least for a couple days. And I think it was a really good time for me to go into that event knowing that I was playing well and knowing that I could beat everybody if I played well.

So I think the circumstances of that event kind of played into my hands a little bit.

But, yeah, I mean, I played some golf very much like that out here the last year. Obviously it hasn't led to a win, but I don't think there's any reason that it can't.

**Q. What kind of scores were you shooting in the Monday qualifiers when you weren't getting in?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Oh, man. I feel like I shot 4- to 6-under a lot and was on my way to the airport really, really fast. I think one of the days in San Antonio it took, I think there were just four 9-unders. I think I had shot 6-under. I think I shot 6-under like the third group of the day and had already missed out on the qualifier.

So, yeah, I mean, I don't remember exactly. I know one of the rounds, I think it was for Kansas City that year, I shot like 2-under and that one happened to be 4. And I was so mad because like I had been shooting 4- and 5- and 6-under all the time. And you go out and shoot 2-under and like only miss by a couple. That was really frustrating. But, yeah, I mean those Mondays are brutal. It's 150 good players going to try to shoot 60 and every week a couple of 'em do.

**Q. Was it harder to get out here or harder to stay?**

CAMERON YOUNG: It's hard to say. I think the initial opportunity is really difficult to come by. Especially if you're going the way of Mondays. It's just, no matter how good you're playing, you just don't shoot 7-under every day. To get through one of those you have to. It's 7- or 8-under almost all the time.

I think there's really hard parts about both things. I think it's hard to get out here and trust what you do and keep playing well. But it's also really hard to get your first opportunity to get somewhere. Whether it's Q-School or Mondays or Canadian TOUR or whatever it is.

**Q. In terms of learning experiences over losses. When you take a case like the PGA where you're right there and make a blunder on the 16th hole; or St.**



**Andrews where you shoot 31 on the back and someone's one better, which one's easier to stomach at the end of the week?**

CAMERON YOUNG: It's hard to say. I think they are both kind of unique to me in a way. The PGA I felt like I kind of wasn't really in it for quite awhile. Then all of a sudden like on the back nine on Sunday I was right there. I think I made the turn probably tied for the lead. It didn't really feel like it the whole way. I don't know why. I think I maybe shot 1-over the first day, so I kind of just was creeping up.

But I think they're really different in that way. Because St. Andrews I think I led the tournament on Thursday and then was second on, after Friday and then third or fourth Saturday and Sunday. So I think they're just very different.

At the Open Championship I was right there the whole week and at PGA I kind of felt like I snuck up and all of a sudden had a chance to win. So they're very different. I don't know if one hurts worse than the other.

Neither of them really hurt anymore. I understand at this point how well I played and how much opportunity that's provided me moving forward. So I'm not necessarily still upset about either of them. I think I'm able to look back and realize that I played some great golf and had some good opportunities. The more of those I have, the better.

**Q. You mentioned earlier about the level of fields now between the designated events and the limited fields. Curious what your experience was like playing with so many of those guys during the Presidents Cup last year and what that experience was like and how it was to bond with some of those great players.**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, a week like that is very unique for someone like me. I mean, as a rookie on the PGA TOUR, those aren't necessarily the dinner tables you kind of picture yourself sitting at starting out. So I think more than anything it was a great week for me just to become more friendly with those guys and get closer to 'em. In the sense that they're all obviously tremendous golfers, but to get comfortable personally just to be able to sit and have lunch with any one of 'em or talk to 'em about whatever it is. So I think mainly it was huge for me just to kind of get more comfortable out here. Not only in a golf sense, but on a personal level too.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Cameron, we appreciate your time and best of luck this week.

CAMERON YOUNG: Thank you.

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