

# Honda Classic

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

## Matt Jones

### Press Conference



HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Matt Jones, our 2021 winner of the Honda Classic. There's a lot of good things that happened this week, quite the opening round, quite the career in tournament, low 18, to capturing your second PGA victory today. Just talk about what this victory means and how challenging the golf course has been.

MATT JONES: It means the world. Seven years between wins, it's been a battle. I've had ups, I've had downs, but to win a second time on this golf course in these conditions that we faced all week is, it's phenomenal and hopefully it's something I can build on for the rest of the year. I mean, I really played amazing golf all four days. I didn't make any real mistakes, which is what you need to do around here.

HALEY PETERSON: With that we'll open it up with questions.

**Q. You made the comment coming off the golf course that you thought it was the calmest you might have ever felt at a golf tournament in your career. What was behind that? What made you feel that way?**

MATT JONES: I'm not sure. I couldn't put anything on it. I probably had a goal this week to walk a little slower and just relax. I'm normally an up-pace up-tempo person, play golf quickly, so I tried to stay calm and stay relaxed out there, and I know you have to be when you play this golf course, so I actually probably set that as a little goal this week and it worked out.

**Q. Secondly, you relied a lot on scrambling yesterday and your short game. Then you went out today and hit just, had a great ball-striking round. I think you missed one green. What changed with the ball striking and how much easier did that make the task you were trying to accomplish?**

MATT JONES: Nothing much changed. It was just really windy and tough yesterday. If you were just a little off, the wind would eat the ball up and you would miss the greens. I did get up-and-down a lot yesterday, but this golf course

you have to. Today I probably was a little more conservative than I would normally be, knowing where I stood a lot of the time, didn't take a lot of the pins on, just give myself some putts and go from there because I know historically no one's really going to come from behind and especially the way the golf course is playing today.

**Q. Was there a moment out there where you let your mind sort of drift ahead to Augusta by any chance?**

MATT JONES: Probably last night. Not out on the golf course. It's hard not to think ahead. We all do. We try our best not to do it. But, yeah, I mean, there's always a lot of things that go through your head, especially playing on this golf course. You see a lot of things out there. There's a lot of water. There's a lot of stuff out on this golf course, so my mind was wandering, but I just try and let them come in and let them leave, don't try and procrastinate or think about it too much.

**Q. I saw you on 2. J.B. got into trouble there and the rules official needed a few minutes to get there and you were just sort of chilling for about 10 minutes on the other side of the fairway. Were you worried that that was going to -- I mean, you were only five shots into the round, I think at that point, so it's not like you had a lot of rhythm built up, but what was kind of going through your mind in those minutes?**

MATT JONES: Nothing at all. I was just waiting, hoping he had a shot. I didn't actually know what was going on over there because it took so long. But it was -- it happens a lot out on TOUR. We have to wait a lot. So it was nothing out of the ordinary and I was, I made a good 2-putt to get a 4 on that hole.

**Q. You wrote a piece for us at the end of last year about turning 40 in lockdown and how it drove you to have some serious conversations with the family about how much longer you potentially had in the game. What do the conversations look like now?**

MATT JONES: (Laughing) I mean, yeah, I mean, it was a great win. It opens up a lot for me tournament-wise this year. I'm sure it helps my World Ranking as well. But,



yeah, I mean, I've spoken to Adam Scott about this. We got five really good hard years ahead of us, where we think we can do something special and I think this sets me on a path where I could.

**Q. We have seen this a lot down here and it's not much knowledge of what you've done down here in the U.S. Will we see more of it do you reckon?**

MATT JONES: See more of what?

**Q. How good you are.**

MATT JONES: Oh, I hope. I mean, you know, it's a very tough game we play out here. There's those exceptional golfers that you see on TV a lot and then there's probably I don't know how many of us out here that are really, really good golfers and people don't understand, but it's just not that easy to win out here. And there are great golfers everywhere. I was just lucky enough to get it done today and hopefully it leads to more.

**Q. What have you done with Gary, like very recently, and now does he look like maybe trying to get across to Augusta, do you think?**

MATT JONES: I would love that. We do, we FaceTime a lot, and hopefully he can. That two week quarantine in a hotel, I can't really justify doing it. Not really fair on him or his family. But it's worked out pretty well so far so we'll see what we come up with.

**Q. Do you remember how knackered you were at Augusta when you won at Houston?**

MATT JONES: I do. Monday was washed out as well. And then I had the par-3 tournament. I can't really remember the golf course. I can't remember much about that week. It was all a blur, so I'm looking forward to getting some preparation on the course this year.

**Q. Is that the goal to come there fresh because it should set up well for you, that shape of course?**

MATT JONES: It really should. Yeah, I'm going to, I was planning on taking three weeks off, but now that's changed, so I'm going to take two weeks off and then go to Augusta and then I don't know if I'm going to go early or -- I got to figure out what my schedule's going to be.

**Q. Have you let Olympics flash into your mind?**

MATT JONES: No. I've thought about it, actually because I turned it down last time, which in hindsight's probably, I would have liked to have done it. It would have been nice

to say I was an Olympic athlete or I played in the Olympics. It's something I'll think about now. Of course Presidents Cup's always on my mind, which is something I've always wanted to play in. I've been close a couple of times, but this will help me in that regard as well.

**Q. Where did that emotion come from when you were on television right after the last putt dropped at the hole?**

MATT JONES: I mean, golf, it's a very tough sport we play out here. It's very cut throat. We're working to keep our jobs every year and you have to perform well to be able to do that. So it's probably been seven years since I won, but I've had some lean years in there, and to get back to the winner's circle and to win this golf tournament was pretty emotional for me.

**Q. Were there -- like you said, you talked about this, the ups and downs, was there ever -- what was the lowest moment for you and did it, did there ever come a time where you thought you were going to move on from the sport?**

MATT JONES: No, I've never got to that time. I love playing the game that much and I love competing. I never got that low. When I say I've had down times, I've lost my card, had to go to Q-School. It's just a tough job. But, no, I'll always play as long as I can. I enjoy it out here, I like competition, and I like challenging myself.

**Q. Where do you and your family live?**

MATT JONES: We live in Arizona.

**Q. And I think you married a girl from Idaho; is that correct?**

MATT JONES: She's Northern California, but when we met she was Miss Idaho back in the day.

**Q. How did you guys meet?**

MATT JONES: I got introduced through a mutual friend and then we went and met up at the racetrack in Del Mar, San Diego.

**Q. Does your family travel with you at this point or how does that work?**

MATT JONES: They travel as much as we can. I've got three young girls. I got a 9- and a 7-year-old, so they got school, which makes it more difficult. But they were out at THE PLAYERS last week and half of Bay Hill the week before that.

**Q. Touched on it before, but like really is it life begins at 40 for you here? Can you really feel yourself kicking on trying to just put everything into it for those five years you talked about?**

MATT JONES: Yeah, I probably, I will. I've probably underachieved, in my opinion, for what I could have done. But I've got some time left. I feel like my game's getting better as I get older. I'm hitting it better, I'm hitting it longer, so there's nothing to say that that won't happen.

**Q. Obviously we have seen all that great footage of you as a kid with the shark. Could you have imagined that you would have done this much? You said you underachieved, but what do you think that 6-year-old would have been thinking right about now?**

MATT JONES: He probably would have been just happy to be out playing golf. I mean, I remember getting dropped off at the golf course when I was 12 and when mom was on the way to work at 8 and she would pick me up at 6. I would go out and just play golf all day. And it's something I've loved ever since I was that young. So he would be pretty happy, hopefully.

**Q. I just wanted to follow up on the ball striking this week. You came in ranked, I think, 112th on TOUR tee to green, strokes gained. It was actually a negative. So you were losing a little bit of strokes. And I think you led the field this week in that category. What changed? What adjustment did you make or was it just golf being what golf is?**

MATT JONES: It's probably just golf being what golf is. I mean, there were, I played Bay Hill and I missed the cut, but I didn't hit it that bad. I actually just didn't make any putts. PLAYERS last week, I told my coach and I told my friends, something's coming, it's getting closer. I worked on the range through FaceTime with my coach back in Australia, Gary, and we just started to get a feel for things and started to get the body and the club working together and it worked all week. I told a friend earlier that I like my chances this week.

**Q. Your coach is Gary?**

MATT JONES: Gary Barter.

**Q. You stuck your hand up or you looked back at your caddie or something when you hit your second to 16. Is that when it sort of dawned, like that was such a good long shot?**

MATT JONES: It was a good, yes, it was good. I was

happy to see that one on the green. I've had some issues with that hole before. But it was more so, once, when I saw the ball land and go on the green on 17, then I relaxed. I saw where I stood playing 16 and then when I birdied 16 I knew where I went to. So I was just happy to hit the green on 17. Then I kind of -- then I relaxed, I was like, I'm fine from now on.

HALEY PETERSON: Thank you, Matt, for joining us. Again, congratulations, and thanks for taking the time to answer some questions.

MATT JONES: Thanks very much. Have a good night.

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