

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Nick Hardy

Davis Riley

Press Conference



HALEY PETERSON: Good evening, everyone. We would like to welcome Zurich Classic New Orleans winners Nick Hardy and Davis Riley to the media center.

Congratulations for both of you picking up your first PGA TOUR victory. We just want to start off with some opening comments about what it was like getting that first victory today.

So we'll start with you, Davis, some opening comments on what it was like getting your first win.

DAVIS RILEY: It was nerve-racking honestly. Any time you're trying to win a golf tournament, more or less to get your first win is always tough. You're going to have to kind of step up there and hit some shots. Fortunately, we were able to kind of execute some really good shots coming down the stretch, and it was really fun.

NICK HARDY: I'll second that. I feel like we both handled it very well coming down the stretch. First timers, obviously. So to be able to do that together, kind of rub off each other's confidence and sort of attitude. It was definitely special to have a partner for the first one.

HALEY PETERSON: Talk about you have a lot of family and friends that were following around today -- no, not too far away from here, being from Mississippi -- what it's like to have friends and family there to witness the win.

DAVIS RILEY: Any time you're playing close to home is pretty special. Just to have friends, family, and others out there was really cool, and to get it done in front of a home crowd for the first time was really special.

NICK HARDY: I had my mom and one of my sisters here. To have them here for this week is really special. My dad wasn't here. My other two sisters weren't here. My fiancée wasn't here. So that's unfortunate, but I'll definitely give them a big hug when I get back home.

HALEY PETERSON: Definitely a unique tournament here. How was just the atmosphere of winning and especially that processional coming in?

DAVIS RILEY: I was thinking about it, and I was telling Nick afterwards, it's almost -- you know, being golfers -- he was talking about it too. Being golfers, you always want to be in control. It's kind of weird -- it's pretty nerve-racking kind of watching somebody when you're not in control.

Luckily I've got a really good partner, so I wasn't worried about too much. You're just rooting for each other as hard as you can to get the best shot. Luckily we were able to do so. To get the win with one of my best friends, Nick, is pretty special.

HALEY PETERSON: Earlier in the week you were discussing this kind of pairing came up late. How happy are you now about whoever texted who first in accepting it, and how soon is this going on your schedule against next year?

NICK HARDY: It's on the schedule for me. I hope my partner commits with me now.

DAVIS RILEY: That's right. We'll definitely be back to defend. This all kind of transpired kind of last minute, and I'm really glad it worked out the way it did.

Q. At what point down the stretch did things kind of turn for you?

NICK HARDY: Once I got that putt to go in on 13, I knew we had a shot for sure. Then when Davis hit the flush 5-iron on 14, that was huge because that hole had been playing tough all day. Probably hadn't been many birdies there, and to get a birdie there was huge.

I knew that we had to just play solid down the stretch.

DAVIS RILEY: I kind of always felt like we were in position, but I knew coming down the back nine we're going to have to make a couple birdies. Especially when Nick made that nice birdie putt on 13, and then whenever we made birdie on 14, I was like, okay, we're right in the



thick of this thing.

I knew we'd probably need to stack maybe one or two more coming in. Nick hit a really nice wedge on 16, and then I made the putt. Then I kind of knew we were in a spot, and we could kind of control our own destiny. For that one to go in on 17 was a little bonus. Luckily, we were able to -- par was good enough on the last.

Q. Highly decorated amateur players, now getting your first win together pretty early in your career. Did you expect it to come this early?

NICK HARDY: I feel like I've been playing some better golf lately, especially hitting the ball. It just hadn't really showed in the results. Once you get some momentum going -- in an event like this, once you get a little momentum going with a partner, I feel like it just can happen fast. I feel like that's what happened.

DAVIS RILEY: For sure. I was really excited about the pairing this week because me and Nick have such similar games. We've been around each other for so long. There's definitely a level of comfort there.

Yeah, to have a couple chances to win last year and not being able to do so, I just tried to -- and that's maybe what I struggled with a little bit earlier in the year. This season putting that expectation on myself, a little bit more pressure to do so since I did have a couple times last year.

It's been tough. I haven't played the golf I really wanted to probably the last four or five months, but I just tried to keep chipping away at it and just tried to get better and better each week. I know Nick has been playing some good golf recently.

It always comes a little bit surprisingly, but there's also -- it's not surprising that we got it done just because I feel like both of our games are in a good spot and we're so comfortable around each other.

Q. You have to take us through how long you've known each other and kind of your golf journey together.

NICK HARDY: I believe we met when we were 14 or 15 at AJGA events. That's when we'd see each other. We weren't locally playing against each other really, but we were partners in a four ball format, I think, at the Wyndham Cup, AJGA East versus West tournament.

Being partners there, I don't remember much about the week, but I know we were partners. It goes back to our friendship and seeing each other -- I don't know how many

events we played together, hundreds of golf tournaments together, so program rounds.

Obviously, like Davis said, we know each other's games well, and we both know how hard we work at it. I feel like we really controlled our attitudes well and just kind of kept the momentum going.

Q. Kind of hard to hear you back here, but you talked about being the last few holes. Davis, you got a birdie on 16 and made a pretty good putt. You said it was nerve-racking.

DAVIS RILEY: I felt like all day we were in it. We could kind of control our own destiny when we played good golf. Kind of like what Nick was saying, I knew we were really in the thick of it when he made a nice birdie putt on 13. And then 14, I hit a close iron shot in there. Then he made the putt.

Yeah, I feel like we were always in a good spot. When those birdies came at 13 and 14, I really knew that we had a legitimate chance. I knew there were some guys in the back that were probably going to make a run. So I just knew, if we kind of hit some good shots coming in and were able to snag one or two more, I knew we had a chance to win.

Q. Let me ask you about the up-and-down on 18 yesterday and how big a shot that was going in today.

NICK HARDY: I think that was huge. We had a long par streak before that. I think for us to get one going home on 18, par-5, when you feel like you've got to get one was big.

I certainly felt it. Having to get that up-and-down, that was definitely crucial for today.

DAVIS RILEY: For sure. I don't know about you, but I feel like there's a little bit of a chip on our shoulder from Friday when we made bogey. I was like, we got to get this thing. I didn't really help the cause too much because I was in the water spectating.

NICK HARDY: I was in the water on Friday.

DAVIS RILEY: For Nick to get that ball up-and-down on 18 Saturday, I thought that was big time. That was one of those things that definitely made dinner taste a little bit better, and it kind of kept us right there in it.

I know it's only one stroke, but there's a big difference, I feel like, between being three and four back. So that was really a nice up-and-down Nick made. I felt like that was a really big point for us.



Q. Just winning so close to your hometown, what it means for the fans to see you here?

DAVIS RILEY: Sure. Any time you can win close to home is special. I've had lots of friends and family out. Obviously some people that couldn't be here as well. No, it's special. To do it so close to home, I'm honestly speechless about it.

I don't know if it's quite hit me at the moment, but I couldn't be more excited. I'm looking forward to celebrating with a lot of close ones.

Q. After being injured last year, how validating is it for you to have these results?

NICK HARDY: You just reminded me of it actually. I got hurt on this day last year here. I hurt my wrist here on this day. I was actually in the hospital probably at this point last year. So it's a lot better place to be at here.

Yeah, I felt a pop in my wrist a year ago, and I was out probably five weeks or something. So there was a lot of definitely stress. I got off to a bad start last year in my rookie year.

Yeah, to bounce back from that, those things, is definitely huge for me. Yeah, I just look back to last year now, and we've kind of come pretty far.

Q. Davis, similarly for you, a couple good finishes last year. How is it on a similar kind of path for you to get back to this point?

DAVIS RILEY: For sure. Starting at Valspar, but kind of starting this week too, that's where I got off to a nice run last year and rattled off some nice weeks in a row. It's nice to be back here, obviously in my rookie year last year, come so far since then. To be a winner on TOUR in your second year midway through the season with one of my best friends is really cool.

Hopefully it's going to open up the floodgates for the both of us. I really did -- Nick's game is in a really good spot, and I feel like mine's in a really nice direction as well. Hopefully it's just the beginning for both of us.

Q. Kind of piggy-backing off of that, will it be easier to win now?

NICK HARDY: I'm not sure, but having to deal with, I think, the pressure with a teammate definitely makes it less stressful, I would say. To feel it down the stretch, no matter what it is, it's definitely beneficial for both of us long

term.

DAVIS RILEY: Any time you grab any kind of experience to get in the hunt to win a golf tournament -- I know I can probably speak for Nick as well on this. I was pretty nervous coming down the stretch trying to win a tournament. It's never easy to win. You're always going to face a little adversity or somebody's going to get on a run at some point.

Nick has talked about it a little bit, our attitude. I feel like our attitude all week was pressing forward and trying to execute the best possible shot at the moment, and I think we did a really good job of that. It all kind of stacked up to lead to where we were, and it was literally the perfect week with him.

Q. Nick, can you describe your injury last year and what happened.

NICK HARDY: Number 4, I hit a hard gap wedge through the fairway and grabbed the ground a little weird. It got stuck in the ground a little bit. My left wrist kind of ran into the ball, and I felt a pop in my wrist. I played the rest of the round, but I woke up the next morning. It was swollen, and I couldn't do anything.

The doctor over at a hospital nearby here, he helped me big time. I was here for a few days after the tournament, and I couldn't play for a little bit. But I was only out four or five weeks. I got lucky. Wrist injuries are tricky, and I was only out four or five weeks, and I played some good golf after that.

Q. Which day was that?

NICK HARDY: It was the final round.

Q. This week, was there anything particular in your strategy that you think helped you win?

NICK HARDY: It was a little easy because I felt like both Davis and I are great ball strikers. We didn't really care who took the par-3s and who didn't. I took the odds last year, and he took the evens last year. That was just the format.

I think going back to what we said earlier about attitude, I don't remember either of us getting mad over a shot. That was huge for us. We handled our emotions so well. Now that I look back, I think that was the biggest key.

HALEY PETERSON: I think that's all the questions we have. Thank you, Nick, Davis, for taking the time to speak with us, and congratulations on the victory.

