

Valspar Championship

Friday, March 18, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Webb Simpson

Quick Quotes

Q. Are you excited?

WEBB SIMPSON: Right now?

Q. This very second?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I'm definitely excited to finally put a good weekend of golf, or first two days together. Yeah, weekdays.

I talked to you at Sony, really excited about the year, and then I get acute herniation the week before Phoenix. So I sat at home, and then last week just wasn't a great week to come back to after seven weeks off.

But Paul and I are always trying to learn. We felt like we picked up a couple things last week and worked on them here Tuesday, Wednesday, and the last day has been way better.

Q. How did you do an acute herniation?

WEBB SIMPSON: The surgeon thinks my disc degenerated over time, just from golf, and I think three years ago is when I started trying to hit it further, and I got a lot more side bend this way, and my neck had more tilt. We looked at video of me from '11 to 2014 and my head really doesn't move that much.

So I think that over time, trying to hit it as hard as I can, just made it a lot worse. The surgeon told me eight weeks off, which brought me back to Augusta. But the more they had a bigger picture of kind of, I have a trainer full-time that I can see all the time, they knew I could devote all my time to getting it ready. That's when they said THE PLAYERS is a possibility. And I played last week with no pain, full range of motion. So I was really thankful.

Q. Did you play in the cold?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. And I was worried about it. But it was fine. It was totally fine.



Q. Can I ask you about Augusta and all the times you've been. Do you know, do you know more about it now than you did when you first went and is there anything that you look back and you go, God, I wish I knew that back then?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, so I definitely, I definitely had to learn the hard way after a number of years. Phil talks about this a lot there, how pretty much every hole they give you a bail-out area, one side of the green or another, on each hole you have an opportunity to get up-and-down. And I think I was just stubborn and it took me maybe three or four Masters where I really not only understood it but put it into play and that's when I started playing a lot better there.

So all that means for me is way more conservative targets, you can't always control short siding, but I have way less short siding now. And Phil said this before, that it's a course you don't have to be perfect on. Wide fairways, and they do give you areas, every hole, like I said, where you have an opportunity to get the ball close and make par.

So I would say that's the main thing I learned and just it's one of those places as a golfer I feel like the kid comes out in me and probably a lot of guys. I just love being there. I normal don't like to get to a tournament until Tuesday, but that one I don't mind getting there Saturday or Sunday.

Q. Do you think any of this is overthought too much?

WEBB SIMPSON: What's that?

Q. It's a place that everybody goes back to every year there's all this talk about experience, can that get in the way, just maybe worrying about that too much?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think so. I think for the young guys I think they can maybe listen to too much advice and then they're hearing from so many different players or caddies or people their opinion and they might get locked up. They might -- sometimes it's good to not know where all the trouble is. But I think there have been some young guys that have success early on there, not many. I just think experience for me, I know on Tuesday, Wednesday, if the



greens are slow, I know by Thursday they could be completely different. So I think just knowing that and knowing other things like that help me or help a veteran player there, just kind of take a deep breath and kind of know that Augusta can change in an instant.

And also I think for the young guys it's, it can be overwhelming. I mean it's a, beside the Ryder Cup, it's probably the most pressure-filled tournament we have in a good way, I think that's what make it's so exciting. So, yeah, I can't wait to get back.

Q. Speaking of the Masters, you were 10 or 11 but do you remember watching Tiger's first win at the Masters?

WEBB SIMPSON: I do. Yeah, I remember that.

Q. Where were you?

WEBB SIMPSON: I was at my house watching with my parents. I had actually gone, that was my first year of going to the Masters on a Monday practice round. I never saw Tiger. And at the time even though I was obsessed with golf already I didn't know the magnitude of what it meant. It was just a young great player who happened to win the Masters, I didn't realize that he won by 12, right? I didn't realize what that meant, the record and obviously knew how good he was, but it hadn't really sunk in yet I guess at the time.

Q. But you understand the magnitude now?

WEBB SIMPSON: Absolutely. Yeah, I mean, I watched that '97 Masters on YouTube probably 50 times. I love that Masters. That just -- I mean the narrator's voice, seeing Earl and him hug after he won, there's just so much there that it brings back great memories.

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