

American Century Championship

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Joe Theismann

Erik Schneberger

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Joe Theismann and Erik Schneberger.

Q. Joe, the tournament, of course, announced the extension through '29, I believe, now six more years, just your thoughts on that and the stability and the history of this tournament.

JOE THEISMANN: You mentioned a keyword, "stability." NBC has been such a great partner. They've been so wonderful with the various venues that we have the opportunity to be able to present this product, and I'm thrilled that we've committed another six years at American Century with NBC as our partner.

It's been a great relationship. They do such a fabulous job of covering the tournament, of getting the information out, and it's a lot of fun for all of us that participate, but it's a great opportunity for NBC to continue this relationship.

Q. '29, how long are you going to be in?

JOE THEISMANN: I know how old I'm going to be in '29. If I'm here in '29, that will be a story. That will be some kind of a story, '29. But I'd like to be able to see this to the end, I really would. But if not, I'll figure out a way to be out here anyway because I enjoy so much.

And American Century, this is their 25th year of sponsorship. The relationship out here in Lake Tahoe, what they do for the community out here in Lake Tahoe -- we raised over \$7 million for charities out here because of this tournament and because of so many wonderful people that come out and support us.

Last year, 68,000, I think, expecting more this year. And, of course, if you want to dream about weather, just dream about Lake Tahoe, because it's the most beautiful place in the world.

Q. And off of that a little bit, Charles, of course, I think this is the third or fourth year where they've offered the bet at Caesar's.

JOE THEISMANN: Charles has gotten good enough to do that.

Q. Will he finish in the top 70. He came close in the last couple of years but hasn't yet. Do you think this might be the year?

JOE THEISMANN: My opinion of Charles finishing in the top 70 this year -- he's down about 60 pounds. He's a lean, mean golfing machine. I think he will finish in the top 70 this year. Larry is playing really good golf. I haven't seen Baumgartner's yet, haven't seen what Brian is doing, but those are the guys there together. But I think Charles will finish in the top 70 this year.

Q. Do you think that 60-pound weight loss was all about competing up here?

JOE THEISMANN: It could be. You never know about Charles. Charles is such an incredible entertainer. Knowledgeable individual. Great human being. Remember the fires up here a few years back, and Charles put together an event for all the firefighters.

His heart is, and was, as big as he was, and now his heart is still bigger than he is today. He's just a terrific guy. I'm going to wish him a lot of luck.

I think being lighter will make it easier for him to get around.

Q. Erik, has Joe's involvement in promoting the fantasy sports aspect of this, has that been a bump, you think, in some of the participation?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: First of all, Joe, thank you very much for supporting us and the event. Without a doubt, it has been a bump.

This is our third year of doing the fantasy golf tournament



at accfantasygolf.com. As you said earlier, \$10,000 goes to the charity of choice for overall winner and four trips to this beautiful resort and golf course all through to the winners each day.

So far we're seeing really great reception. We're well ahead of pace from last year's enrollment and expect to see even more as the tournament picks up.

Q. Not to be contrary, Joe, but I think Barkley losing 60 pounds is like any one of us in the press room losing five.

JOE THEISMANN: He was sort of large, but now it's great. He's just got to feel good. Part of anything is feeling good, and coming out here, walking for all those days, those three days in a row, it wears on you, you get to Sunday. I think losing the weight will really help him continue with stability and stamina as he goes forward. I'm excited to see him. I haven't seen him yet today.

Q. Joe, what group are you in for the fantasy golf? And do you think they've grouped the players appropriately?

JOE THEISMANN: Well, first of all, I'll answer the second part of that. I think they've grouped the players appropriately -- I think that what they've done, the way they've grouped it is basically the way you have finished -- we have a lot of people that have been over the years. We have a number of new people as well.

The new people, you're not sure about, you sort of get an idea. But I think the grouping is very fair, the five different groups that are set up, is very fair when it comes to the way they play the game of golf. I think it's a fair grouping.

Q. Any predictions on who might win?

JOE THEISMANN: Be foolish not to say Tony Romo. I gotta be honest with you. Tony's playing really good golf, and he's won a couple of tournaments this year. Mardy Fish continues to knock on the door. Vinny Del Negro is another one who has won before. And John Smoltz is another one.

My favorite is Annika. I want to see Annika break through. I really do. She's been so close. She lives here in Lake Tahoe. She's an unbelievable golfer. I always find myself wanting to get wherever she is on the range so I can watch her swing the club, see if I can pick up something, heaven knows, something that can help my golf game.

But those are some of the people that I think that can do it. And Derek Lowe has played well before. Mike McDonough

is another one.

There's probably 15 people, if you look at the list, Erik, right, about 15 people you'd say if any one of those won, I wouldn't be surprised.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: And the last few years, we've had a three-way playoff and a two-way playoff. What's great about it is those few people who have the opportunity, it's really tight every year.

Q. John Smoltz has got a hip replacement or knee replacement or something. He's physically a little better.

JOE THEISMANN: John's just a gamer. He wouldn't miss this. And if not this year, don't ever count him out.

Q. Erik, what's new and different about the contest this year?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: So a few things. As I said, this is our third year for the fantasy golf contest, and so this year we've added, for the 25th anniversary, a signed silver ball that all the celebrities are signing over on 14th hole.

In addition to what we're calling the Chip for Charity Challenge, and that is a chip challenge for all the celebrities who -- and clients -- who come through on 14, they have an opportunity to try three tries to knock a ball into a target that's 25 feet away, 25-inch hole. For every ball that goes in, \$250 to the Stowers Institute for Medical Research, up to \$25,000.

As Joe said, this event is a great event. It's a fun event, but it's about charity. And American Century Investments feels very strongly about two things: Number one, we focus on securing financial futures for our clients. Number two, we focus on doing well for the world.

JOE THEISMANN: One of the other things that American Century Investments does is -- people don't realize that this company donates over 40 percent of its net profits to the Stowers Institute for Research on Disease. I think everyone in business can understand, donating 40 percent of your net profits to charity speaks volumes to the character, the leadership and the type of company they are. And that's what American Century is all about.

And Erik makes a great point -- plus, we as participants can't begin to thank you, because if you talk to anybody, quote/unquote, a celebrity, from any walk of business or any part of the entertainment industry, this is what you want to play in. This is where you want to be.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

No matter what your golf game is, irrespective of what it looks like, you want to be here. Because the people, you find out, are so wonderful.

Q. Erik, talk about Stowers and what kind of work they do.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: The Stowers Institute for Medical Research is an institute about 550 researchers based in Kansas City, focused on foundational medical research to find cures and causes of life-threatening diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's and diabetes.

We're really proud to not only serve our clients but serve our communities and humankind by having 40 percent of our profits going to the Medical Research Institute, which is nearly \$2 billion since the year 2000.

In addition to the \$7 million that we've raised through this tournament, our organization, through its ownership structure and 40 percent going to the institute, has generated nearly \$2 billion for this life-saving research.

Q. What about the winners the last couple years, have they been out? Have we met them?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: Yes, every year the winners come out here and we introduce ourselves -- for fantasy golf? Yes, we introduce ourselves and show them around, and they've really enjoyed themselves. Great contest.

JOE THEISMANN: Just as an FYI, I'm in group three. Now I've mentioned this on a lot of interviews. They said you're playing with Patrick Mahomes, oh, you're playing with Josh. No, I don't know if I am or not. I'm in a group with our game about where it is.

Right now I'm hovering around a 5 handicap as a golfer, hopefully a little bit better. We've seen the shootouts on TV with Patrick and Josh and everybody. And Roger Clements is in there. Larry Fitzgerald. I'm looking forward to competing within the group and at least trying to be respectable.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: Competing? I have you winning in that group.

JOE THEISMANN: Thank you.

Q. Josh and Patrick hit the ball 290. How long are you?

JOE THEISMANN: Not 290, I'll just leave it at that. I watch Josh Allen hit the golf ball on the range last year. We have a trailer that's out about 300 and change. He hit it over it. I

mean, there are holes out here where he's not going to be able to hit driver.

There are holes out here he's probably not going to be able to hit 3-wood, to be honest with you. Patrick moves it well. Roger and I were just in Hawaii for an event as well. Like I said, for us, this is just the most wonderful week of the world.

American Century and NBC have provided opportunities for us to be able to really get to meet people away from their particular environment, hockey players, entertainers, football players, baseball players, everybody from a different field. But you find out one thing that everybody has in common: Every one of us loves to compete. We're competition junkies.

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