

PNC Championship

Friday, December 17, 2021

Orlando, Florida, USA

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club

Tiger Woods

Quick Quotes

MARK WILLIAMS: Welcome back you're here at the PNC Championship a year after we saw you play the last time. First question is, did you feel any nerves on the first tee being back here today?

TIGER WOODS: You know what, I actually did. I haven't hit too many tee shots, and then all of a sudden the wind has come off the left and my little heel cut thing I'm seeing and all of a sudden there's people off the tee box.

Yeah, so it wasn't in play, but no, it was an awesome day. It was just awesome to be back out here playing and being out there with my son, and we just had an absolute blast.

MARK WILLIAMS: Before we take questions, what were you most excited about that you saw or did today in your game that might have revealed itself today in a competition round?

TIGER WOODS: Well, as you know, I'm just starting to get back into trying to play again. So I don't quite have the endurance that I would like to have. But just to be able to hit some shots, I've still got the hands, I've still the feel. Unfortunately sometimes the feel doesn't really match up with the speed or the shot that I'm seeing, so that's one of the things that Joey and I were talking about. The ball is not quite flying as far as I'd like or I'm used to, and so we have to talk about some of the numbers and some of the shots and making some of those small adjustments.

Q. Just overall, how did you feel health-wise and the shots toward the end, was that by design or did you get tired?

TIGER WOODS: Both. I wasn't going to play much on the back nine, any ways. Just try to save myself -- just like last year, try to save myself for the weekend and plus most of the tee shots are going to be hit by Charlie, any ways, on the back nine. Some of the tee shots, I've got to hit on the front nine. They moved his tee markers back so we don't have quite the same advantages that we had last year.

Q. And secondly, what kind of adjustments do you



make with your swing?

TIGER WOODS: Well, it's just not as powerful. I just don't have the speed, you know. It is what it is. The ball doesn't fly as far. I can't generate the speedy used to, and you know, the body is not what it used to be. Obviously it's been a little banged up this year, and slowly but surely, I'll get to where the speed will start coming back up, and I can start hitting the shots that I know that I see that just aren't quite coming off.

Q. Given the time frame, a lot of people are amazed you're here this week hitting shots. Are you amazed?

TIGER WOODS: Yes and no. If you would have asked me after those three months in the bed, I would be here, I would have given you a different answer.

But there are no days off. We worked every day. Even days where I didn't feel very good, we still worked on something. So every day, there was never a day off the entire other than those three months in bed, I haven't taken a day off.

Q. Is it up to you when you want to start trying to walk a golf course, or do you have to wait for a doctor's okay, and what do you think that process is going to be like to try to build up?

TIGER WOODS: Well, it's going to be awhile. I couldn't walk this golf course even right now, and it's flat. I don't have the endurance. My leg is not quite right yet and it's going to take time. I told you in the Bahamas, I'm a long way, way from playing tournament golf. This is hit, hop in a cart and move about my business just like I would at Medalist. Being able to play tournament golf and being able to recover, practice and train and hit balls after a round and do all of the things that I need to be at a high level, I'm a long way away from that.

Q. Could you envision as this process goes on, even for a short time, whenever it is, applying for a cart?

TIGER WOODS: No. I wouldn't, no. No. Absolutely not. Not for a PGA TOUR event, no. That's just not who I am. That's not how I've always been, and if I can't play at that level, I can't play at that level.



But this is a different event. This is a fun event. You know, you get guys that are in their 80s out here playing and if they didn't have carts, we wouldn't be able to see the likes of Lee Trevino and Gary Player out here -- well, Gary's different, never mind (laughter) he would probably be doing wind sprints on some of these holes and then doing push-ups and then, you know, a bunch of sit-ups on the greens and stuff.

But you wouldn't see a lot of -- some of the legends that I grew up idolizing and watching, and even got a chance to play early in my career, they wouldn't be able to play in these events. Their bodies are too banged up.

But to be able to play with their child in this event, having a cart allows them to do that. And we're out here having a great time, and that's what it's all about. It's about bonding and having the time of our lives.

Q. Compared to the other injuries you've come back from, how different is this one as far as therapy to do what you did today?

TIGER WOODS: This one's been a lot harder (chuckling) it's been, yeah, the leg was pretty messed up, and as I said in the Bahamas, I'm happy it's still attached. So it's still here. It's all good.

Q. Can you talk about trying to find that balance with Charlie of being his father and his coach on and off the course?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I'm his father. I'm not his coach. I'm his father. And so if he wants to learn about the game of golf, he'll ask. I'm there as a sounding board.

But my job is to be a parent and make sure that his priorities are right, and school comes first, and then if he wants to play a sport, so be it, and if it happens to be there or anything else, so be it. Just as long as his priorities are correct, and that's my duty as a parent.

Q. We've seen the video of the similarities, your mannerisms and so many things we can point out that he has that you have. What would be something that you say makes him a different golfer, that makes him a little bit different than you?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I didn't have speed like that at that age. I was probably a little bit taller than Charlie is at that same age. I was skinny as a rail. I looked like a 1-iron. The way we move, the way we push off or -- sorry, the way he pushes off, or how I used to push off, very similar.

But that's what is neat about this event. You look at the

history of the event and you look at mannerisms of the father and the child, to me, the best of all time is watching the Stadlers play. I mean, that's just the absolute best: The frustrations, the enjoyment, the cup throws, everything about it, that was the best.

Just the little quirks that we have as -- we don't realize that we have the quirks that we do but our kids copy them. That's what they have seen us do, and you know, this event throughout the years, you put a highlight package, you see all the different quirks that the parents have that the child has definitely picked up.

Q. Timeline to come back and play this tournament, how much of that was because Charlie wanted to or because of the unique tournament that it is?

TIGER WOODS: I think it's just being able to have the bonding experience of being out there with Charlie. Unfortunately this year has been very hard and I haven't been able to play at all until, this would be probably my second or third round this year. It's been a long year. But just the fact that I'm able to play and have this experience with him and watch him, watch him hit shots or encourage him to hit shots, where to think -- that's one thing I can do, I can think my way around the golf course. I may not be able to execute it, but I can help strategize some of his shots, where it hits it, how to hit it, things of that nature and make sure that he's in his little bubble and he's having fun.

It's the two Joeys and the Woods' together out there. We are in our little bubble chatting away and talking about sports and having a great time and we have the chance tomorrow to play with the Thomases which are like our second family.

We have become so close that I think Charlie's like Justin's less little brother he never had and Justin has become the little brother I never had. We are extremely close with the family and we do a lot of things together, and to be able to have that experience tomorrow again. You know, we don't want them wearing that belt again, so we are going to give it our best. Christmas dinner wasn't quite as pleasurable last year as it hopefully will be this year.

Q. Obviously you have a long way to go, but knowing when you know right now about your body and your golf swing, do you have in your head an attainable goal for 2022?

TIGER WOODS: That's a good question. I still have a long way to go in this rehab process. As I said, I don't have the endurance to be out here to play at the TOUR level.



This is different. You saw it out there. I can hit around here, drop a ball here, hit a few wedges do, that. But to go out there and have 220 yards and know that you have to hit a 3- or 4-iron and miss the ball in the correct spot, and then hit certain shots and one stroke determines whether you win or lose, that's a totally different mindset than what we have out here this week. I'm not there yet.

Q. What have you seen from the new driver that led to you putting it in the driver and how does it feel versus the titanium?

TIGER WOODS: First of all, they have moved the CG more forward so I'm able to curve the ball more, and you guys all know that I've always been a player that has worked the golf ball. And so, yes, it's given me the ability to hit balls and hit cuts.

I didn't like having just only one shot. The driver setup that we have for Augusta allowed me to draw the golf ball. But when I hit the cut, it was really short. I don't have that difference anymore. They are very similar, which is huge. And hey, got to love the colors.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports