

# RBC Canadian Open

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Oakdale Golf & Country Club

## Nick Taylor

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the winner of the 2023 RBC Canadian Open, Nick Taylor, to the interview room.

(Applause.)

THE MODERATOR: Nick, you're the first Canadian since 1954 to win this country's National Open. What does it mean to you?

NICK TAYLOR: I heard someone shout out there, "everything," and I don't know any other word to use other than that. I think it's a tournament that we've circled on our calendar since probably junior golf. But ever since I've been on the PGA TOUR this is one that we want to do as well as we can in, and the crowd support was the most unbelievable thing I will probably ever experience in my life. To kind of break that curse, if you want to call it is -- I'm pretty speechless. I don't think it's going to sink in for quite some time what happened today.

THE MODERATOR: Nick is the fourth Canadian to win on the PGA TOUR this season. That's the most in TOUR history. And he moves to No. 6 in the FedExCup.

So Nick, as you let these emotions sink in and you look forward to the rest of the season, you had a big finish in Phoenix, you get the win here. What does this say you have to do the rest of the season.

NICK TAYLOR: It sets me up great for the FedExCup playoffs. I was in a good spot but needed to keep the pedal down. I feel like the play is so deep out here that -- you know, I took some time off and had a couple missed cuts and I was falling quite far down the list.

I knew my game was where it was. It was it might have been a little bit rusty coming off some time off, but everything just kind of clicked here the last three days. That's probably the best I've struck the ball tee to green and the putter was hot. It's been great for four or five months now. But to shoot 20-under the last three days, I definitely had everything working, which is very rare. So



that was special.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions out here.

**Q. Welcome to the longest press conference of your life.**

NICK TAYLOR: (Laughing.) I'll take it.

**Q. Take us through the winning putt.**

NICK TAYLOR: It was long, obviously. We knew the finish line would be the best way to put it. We knew about the last 15 feet because I had that in the second playoff hole. With the rain coming down, the slope, obviously, we knew it was going to be slow. It's so easy to leave that putt 10 feet short from how far I was. To get it there was, obviously, a bit of a surprise, honestly. But I felt since that -- we've learned a bit from that second putt that we knew generally what it was going to do. There's a lot of luck for that to go in the hole.

The speed is all I was thinking about. Tommy probably had about 12 feet and I expected him to make it almost like the first playoff hole. So I was trying to get as close as I could to essentially know that he had to make or miss to keep going. So for that to drop is -- it was a huge surprise but an amazing one.

**Q. Obviously this has been the holy grail of Canadian golf for seven decades. What do you think is the next target for Canadian golf?**

NICK TAYLOR: I think major championships is what we're all striving for. I said it this week, this is fifth on the list, I think, from the four majors. With Mike Weir having the Masters 20 years ago, Corey's played unbelievable the last two or three years in a lot of major championships. He's been inspiring to play well at the top of the best fields out here.

But that's the next step. Hopefully I'll be in a lot more of them. I haven't been in enough as I would like over my whole career. I think next week there's seven of us there, so hopefully we can do the same thing. The more time we're up at the top of the leaderboard, you know, lucky



bounces like that will go in the hole. So hopefully that starts happening.

**Q. 14 months ago when you and I were trading messages about your equipment, some of the things that were going on in your life, and I sensed a bit of a crossroads at your age, at 35. Was there a crossroads? Were you feeling like you needed to make some changes to go from -- for Nick Taylor to go from here to here? What was your thought process when you and I were kind of going back and forth on that and how does that correlate to today?**

NICK TAYLOR: After last season with all the changes that were happening going into the playoffs I snuck in there. My first week with Dave Markle, my caddie, was at Wyndham. We snuck in, I missed the cut in the first playoff event, but I knew what I was doing needed a bit of a tweak. So that fall I -- not the fall, sorry. I think we had five weeks off or so. Chris Bertram is a mental performance coach. I went and started seeing him. We set a plan out, like a good year plan, started changing a few things, nothing crazy, but a few.

I was doing work with my coach, Mark McCann, Garrett, and then locally I was in Abbotsford for that time off, and I went and saw Ryan Hawley. He's more like -- he's like dual foot pressure mat. So it's just another, I thought, element maybe that could help me.

The best thing that Dave has been for me, I think, is realizing -- because I've been around him a long time, is that I am pretty good and he tells me that every day. There's certainly times that I probably lost site of that. He's been incredible for me on the golf course. It's shown this year. Shots that I probably typically don't make, I'm making, and I think he has that magic, for whatever reason.

So, yeah, it was a productive five weeks in the sense where I've kind of wiped the slate clean and wanted to -- I didn't want to revamp anything but just look at it hard and be like, where can I get a little bit better? The more focus has been kind of 1 percent a day, one little thing a day, and stick to the process.

Leading up to this whole season it's been a very consistent season for me. So this is obviously the cherry on top.

**Q. It's obviously super early, but have you allowed yourself to realize maybe the trickle-down inspiration that this win might have for another generation of Canadian golfers?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah. I think it's hard to imagine because I feel like I'm still that kid. I go to a handful of golf courses

when I'm back in and Abbotsford in the summers and it's great to see junior players and know who I am, say they're big fans, playing golf. So I know this will only help that generation.

I look up to Mike Weir, and if kids say the same thing about me, that's the biggest compliment I probably could ever get. But we're all trying to do that out here. We're trying to inspire the next generation to be as good as it can be.

**Q. I assume you and Andie spoke already. How was that conversation with your family back home?**

NICK TAYLOR: There was some tears. I got to say hi to Charlie and he was probably shocked and what the hell was going on (laughing.) I made a big shot, though. That's what he said. So, yeah, it was a quick call to say hi. I'll be talking to them later, obviously.

**Q. What did it mean to have Adam, Corey, and Mike there on the green, not only at the 72nd hole, but then to join in the celebration when you won the Canadian Open?**

NICK TAYLOR: It means everything. I feel like we all support each other so much, for them to stick around. I think all of us said it this week, if us individually weren't the people to win, we really want another Canadian to do it and break this long drought. So to have them there, it's amazing. I've looked up to Mike Weir and watched him play golf for so long and for him to be there was special. Same with Adam and Corey and kind of all the guys.

**Q. You have such a stoic demeanor on the golf course, but I'm wondering what it was like inside that head and was there any moments during the playoff to where it sort of either wandered to victory and what that looked like?**

NICK TAYLOR: Oh, it wanders plenty. (Laughing.) I try to draw back on experiences. Luckily I had quite a few this year that are relatively fresh of that situation. Try to just focus on what I was doing. My confidence probably has never been as high, especially the last three days, of the shots I was hitting consistently, the rhythm that I had out there. And I was seeing the lines really well with Dave. So it was just one of those things. I felt like the rain coming down and I felt like the fans were really pulling us to the finish line, really trying to keep the energy up. Because it was obviously a long day and each playoff hole can go, you can lose focus for a split second and you might lose it right there. I got a fortunate lie probably on the third or second or third playoff hole when I hit it there, in the rough there. And luckily Tommy didn't make birdie. But there was lots of wanders, I guess, lots of thoughts wandering.

**Q. You talked about the technical changes you made. A minute ago you were saying that you had a habit for sort of searching for answers and you got rid of that. How did you do that and have you sort of tried to find the player that you were when you were back when you were world No. 1 amateur and has Dave helped with that?**

NICK TAYLOR: He certainly has. I think that's been again a point of focus especially starting in January. We know what kind of makes me tick with my certain drills. I missed the cut at the PGA and Colonial. I hit it pretty nice. Didn't make a whole lot of putts. Especially at Colonial. I got a talking to probably from a few people, but I think I was putting too much pressure on myself, so my attitude on the golf course was reflecting the bad scores. I was coming into this week wanting to be positive, wanting to have acceptance, work on that. And the first day just wasn't great at it again after a few tough holes on that back nine. To be where I was, I was in the 7th hole, I remember, the first day, my 16th hole, with 10 feet for par. And made that. And birdied 8 and parred the last to kind of like somewhat be in the cut sight. So to be standing there and then sitting here today is pretty remarkable, to be honest.

**Q. Mike Weir was saying that this is a different tournament to win. It's different than any other golf tournament for a Canadian. Like, how did you feel about that when you were out there? Did it feel different than any other tournament you played?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yes, that's the short answer. I was getting ovations on every tee box and every green. That was incredible. I felt like that spurred us on onto that back nine. I didn't hit or, sorry, I didn't look at a leaderboard. I had a sense of what was going on. I thought the front was playing a little tougher than yesterday. And I played that nine incredible this week. I don't really know why. But I had a sense of where I was with just the energy.

Then after 16 when I bogeyed, I kind of wanted to know what was going on. So to see there, I knew I needed a birdie to tie Tyrrell at the top there. And to make those two putts in the last two holes was huge. Pretty fortunate that Tommy wasn't able to birdie 18 and then again in the playoff. So yeah, it's pretty crazy.

**Q. In the chaos of the celebration did you notice what happened to your old pal Hadwin?**

NICK TAYLOR: Corner of my eye I saw he got a nice tackle there. I hope he's all right. He was upright when I saw him later. So I hope he doesn't wake up tomorrow morning with any broken ribs or anything.

**Q. He was saying he hope he sprayed you with some champagne did he get any on you?**

NICK TAYLOR: My hat stinks, so, yeah, he did.

**Q. You mentioned looking up to Mike Weir earlier. What effect has he had on your career maybe even with the wobble and everything?**

NICK TAYLOR: You know, at the age I was at, I think I was 15, almost 15 when he won the Masters in 2003. That was right when I was dropping pretty much every other sport and focusing on golf. To have Mike win that tournament I think really made everyone believe that we could do it coming from a country like we do, where golf isn't ideal for -- it wasn't quite half the year where I grew up, but three, four months you're not really touching a club. It's inspirational. He's been a big part of a lot of us. I can't not mention Stephen Ames. He was great to me when I first started playing out here and some of the U.S. Opens when I was an amateur. And even over from that, Graeme DeLaet, David Hearn, guys when I came out here were great influences on me. So I feel like we're kind of a brotherhood out here. And everyone's kind of pushed each other along. And now we have so many guys out here it's phenomenal.

**Q. An achievement such as this deserves to be celebrated. How might you celebrate and with whom?**

NICK TAYLOR: (Laughing.) I don't know the answer to that first question. My brother, my caddie is here, we have some family. Unfortunately, my wife and kids are back home, and my parents. But we'll be together. That's all that matters. I was lucky to win two other times other than this and I think I did laundry the one time and maybe had pizza the other time. So hopefully we'll up that here.

**Q. Wanted to ask you, what did it mean to have the whole fans on every single hole and especially during the playoffs on 18 and 9, what did that mean to you just to know that not only you had a whole nation behind you, but everyone here at the golf course as a whole?**

NICK TAYLOR: It was the most incredible atmosphere I've ever been a part of and it's not even close. I think even walking the first tee today, walking to the first green, there's ovations on every single tee and green. When Tommy would miss and they would cheer I kind of felt bad for him. But I knew just how pumped they were and they were trying to put every ounce of energy into it to help me pull it through. To have that moment -- I blacked out when that ball went with Dave. So I'm curious to watch that what we

did. I don't even remember what we did. But that was an incredible moment.

**Q. Wanted to ask you, when did you agree to do the walk and talk?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yesterday.

**Q. Okay.**

NICK TAYLOR: So I was told, your boy Jack here texted me last night and I was like, you know, I'm fine doing that. I feel like -- I don't think it got me off my game. I felt like it was a cool thing to do. I think it's a cool idea they started to kind of do it every week. I think you said it was supposed to be yesterday, but something kind of got side tracked. Anyway...

**Q. Kudos for sticking with it, man.**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah. (Laughing.) Again, it was a small chat going up to the ball and up to the green. So it all turned out good in the end.

**Q. This win is going to transcend golf in this country. It's likely to go down as one of those where were you when moments like a Sidney Crosby golden goal or a Joe Carter home run. I'm just wondering how it makes you feel to know people are going to be having that conversation about something you did?**

NICK TAYLOR: I don't even know how to answer that. Because those other moments were for me, like where was I when Sidney Crosby scored? I was watching with college buddies down in Seattle. That's a really hard question to answer because it's, to think that I'm the person that people are thinking about is kind of breathtaking. So, yeah, I think it will take time to realize kind of what's just happened. But, yeah, that's a hard one to answer.

THE MODERATOR: All right, well Nick, congratulations and best of luck the rest of the way.

(Applause.)

NICK TAYLOR: Thank you.

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