

DP World Tour Championship

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Dubai, UAE

Jumeirah Golf Estates

Ryan Fox

Press Conference



TOM CARLISLE: Delighted to be joined by Ryan fox here in the Media Centre here at the DP World Tour Championship.

Ryan, it's the final event what has been an incredible season. How does it feel being here in Dubai and being in the position that you're in?

RYAN FOX: A bit surreal to be honest. If you'd have said this at the start of the year, I probably wouldn't have believed you.

But it's been an amazing season and hopefully I can finish it off this week. But regardless of what happens, I'm really proud of what I've done this year. It's been a fun ride.

TOM CARLISLE: When we spoke at the Dunhill, you'd cut the gap to Rory to just over a thousand points and you've had some gratuity form since then and now the gap is just 128 points. How much is that playing up on your mind going into tomorrow's first round?

RYAN FOX: Look, the golf, going into last week was definitely the cut to get. I couldn't have wished for a better week in that sense, especially around a golf course I haven't done very well around last week.

I'm not trying though think about it too much. Rory is the best player in the world. He's obviously the favourite but to be in this position is great and I've got nothing to lose this week. Won't do anything different from what I've been doing all year. Just go out and try to beat the golf course and see what happens in that sense and that's served me pretty well and hopefully I can do the same thing this week.

TOM CARLISLE: Playing with Rory, is am I right in this is the first time?

RYAN FOX: I'm looking forward to it. He is the best player in the world to play off the No. 1 is always special. I've heard from plenty of guys on tour that he's a great guy, and just hope he doesn't bring the rugby up too much in the first couple of holes.

Q. I remember talking to you after Abu Dhabi early in the year and you were not happy with your game at the moment. I think you finished 60th or 61st in that tournament, and then something happened and you finished Dubai and you missed the cut in Ras al Khaimah. What happened after that? What happened after that missed the cut?

RYAN FOX: To be fair, that missed the cut I was struggling with the back a little bit. Just suddenly locked up on me and my physio came out that week -- the following week, and I had a little bit of work done by the European Tour physios, and I felt like the game wasn't too far away.

I played relatively well in Dubai minus a few holes here and there. Obviously something clicked that week. Body felt really good, and just felt like I got out of my own way really nicely.

Yeah, I think I got a lot out of that second week, and coming that last round with a six-shot lead, all you're thinking is, don't mess it up, basically. And to come out of that relatively unscathed and get the win, I think that helped a lot confidence-wise, and was nice to take that into the rest of the season and after that, I felt a whole lot more confidential in that situation.

Get another win at Dunhill was amazing and arguably I could have got a couple more as well but it's pretty hard to win out here. To put myself in that position as many times as I have done this year is pretty cool. Hopefully I can do the same thing again this week.

Q. And I must ask you, you were very philosophical about not making it to The Presidents Cup team but looking back at it, is that the biggest regret; that you cannot play in The Presidents Cup?

RYAN FOX: I'd love to have made the team obviously but I left it open to someone else's discretion, and you know, I can understand why Trevor didn't pick me. I didn't play a whole lot in lead-up, and was sort of out of sight, out of mind in that regard.

It was nice for my peace of mind that for the last few weeks, that if I had of got picked, I felt like I would have



been able to contribute and I was still in decent form. It's just something to work towards for a couple years' time in Canada.

Q. Did he call you?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I had spoken to Trevor a little bit and I did get a call saying "it was a really close-run race, but you didn't make the team" and I appreciated that. It's nice to be in the equation. It was something in the start of the year I didn't quite think was a chance.

But yeah, as I said, it's kind of motivation for a couple years' time to try to make the team properly.

Q. When you talk about equations, as you know, everyone knows if you win this week, you can go to No. 1 in the DP World Championship, in that regard, have you had any messages from Cambo?

RYAN FOX: I haven't checked my New Zealand phone, so I actually don't know to be honest.

Q. Which would be some achievement, two Kiwi guys to win the Order of Merit.

RYAN FOX: That would be pretty cool. We've had a pretty good run, New Zealand golf this year, obviously with Steve Alker winning, and Lydia has got a chance to win this week as well.

It would be certainly a nice trifecta if I could math it but just to have that opportunity is great. Cambo is an idol of mind in that sense. I group watching a lot of golf. He stopped the nation pretty much in 2005 when he won the U.S. Open. To follow him to be pretty cool.

Q. I was going to ask you, sort of the New Zealand golf is riding crest of a wave at the moment, isn't it.

RYAN FOX: Yeah, we are. It's really nice. Obviously Lydia has been a phenomenal player for a long time, and yeah, she probably had a little bit of different form, which happens and it's great to see her bounce back so strongly this year.

Obviously Steven Alker's story has been unbelievable. I think, what, Monday qualifying to his first Champions Tour event and to turn that into winning Charles Schwab Cup with four or five wins now and I don't know how many Top 10s, probably too many to count; that's such a cool story and he's inspired a lot of people back home, as has Lydia.

As I said it would be nice if we could create a little bit of golf history for New Zealand and win three Order of Merits

in the same year but regardless, I think golf at home is riding a really nice wave.

Q. Did you catch the video of Steve getting the trophy--

RYAN FOX: I didn't actually.

Q. A question about Rory and his investment on and off the course after a difficult year for golf and the world of golf, what do you think about his voice as world No. 1? Are you proud to have a world No. 1 who tried to defend the world of golf as he does?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I mean, I think he's been really thoughtful this year with what he's said. And yeah, it's great to have someone like him; he's a great ambassador for the game. I don't know him very well, but by all accounts he's a really nice guy as well, which that's fantastic for golf in general.

It's like he's taken the whole thing on his shoulders this year, and defeated the establishment in that regard. I think he's done a pretty damned good job of it. Obviously the world of golf is a bit messy at the moment and we need some common sense in there, and I feel like Rory for the most part has been that voice of common sense.

Q. Did you ever think you would see the day when New Zealand are better at golf than rugby?

RYAN FOX: I knew that would come somewhere (laughing).

We're all right at rugby at the moment but we are a little bit inconsistent. Yeah, I mean, as I said it's been a great year for New Zealand golf and long may that continue. I certainly hope the All Blacks find some form before the World Cup in France next year. In the rugby sense, I think next year's World Cup is probably going to be one of the most interesting ones we've had. I think there's five or six teams that could win it and another couple of teams that could certainly scare one of the top teams and knock them out pretty early.

Hopefully get to see a couple of those games next year, and I'll be trying to watch the game on the weekend, and hopefully we can get England at Twickenham. That's always a nice scalp to have.

Q. You're in the World Top 25 obviously, but will there be nerves when you play with Rory?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, there will be nerves. I'm sure we will have pretty big crowd out there which will be nice.



But that's what you play golf for. You want to be in those big groups, and it's cool this year in the fact that I've earned the right to be there. Try to enjoy it as much as I can and hopefully continue the good form.

I've obviously played in a few decent groups, been in contention a lot this year and handled that pretty well, so hopefully nothing changes in that respect on Thursday.

Q. When you look back at the year you've had the wins, the close calls, the injuries, how proud are you to be in this position with a chance to win the rankings again?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I mean, it's been a funny year in that regard. Obviously hurt my knee at Wentworth and had a little bit of a back issue earlier in the year at that first RAK event. But this year has been surreal in that respect, and I couldn't be more proud of what's happened this year.

The goal at the start of the year was just to get another win under the belt, and I guess the goal probably for the last five, six years on tour has been to try to get in the Top-50. I've cemented my face in there now for a little while which is really cool.

And yeah, to be in this position this week and have a chance to win the Order of Merit is amazing, and as I said earlier, I've got nothing to lose in that respect. Go out and give it a crack and see what happens. It's kind of a nice place to be.

Q. As always with these things, there's different permutations winning the rankings. Do you think that might take over your mindset come Sunday depending on what position you're in?

RYAN FOX: I mean, I would like to say no but I think it will definitely be a little bit of it there. I've done a really good job this year of not thinking about any of the external stuff. Just go out and pretty much my plan every week has been to try to beat the golf course. That's going to be the goal again this week.

Go out, try to pick apart this golf course and see the best way to beat it, and if it all turns out right at the end of the week, I will have given myself a chance. If not, I could still be incredibly proud of the year I've had and not winning the Order of Merit is not going to be the end of the world to me in that sense.

Q. Your dad was good at focusing on big moments. Any advice you sought from him, not just this week, but in general?

RYAN FOX: Not necessarily this week but he did caddie for me a lot when I was coming through. I think he spent two or three years pretty much caddying for me in every amateur event, even stuff in the States and in Australia States.

I learned a lot from him in that regard. I feel like goal kicking was very similar to golf. That ball doesn't move; you've got far too much time to think about it, and he was really good in those moments. It felt like I had a sports psych in my corner early on without sort of the terminology in that regard.

And I think as most fathers and sons would, we had a few disagreements along the way, but overall I learned a lot from Dad. It certainly helped a lot on the pathway to where I am now.

Probably the biggest thing I got from Dad overall was not really a quote but he was always: As long as you work to be best you can be, whatever happens, doesn't really matter. If you don't succeed but you've tried your best and become the best person you can be, then you can live with that.

Took a while for me to probably understand that properly but he's right in that regard. If you've done everything you can, it's easy to live with yourself. I've tried to do that as much as possible.

Probably the one thing we disagreed on was Dad was very analytical, and I found golf really hard to be analytical. If I thought about how I missed a shot one way, if I completely lost the plot. We had a little while there where we were trying to get on the same wavelength. Maybe learned a bit off each other in that regard, but Dad has been massively helpful and supportive of anything I've tried to do, and it's been cool to have him as part of the journey.

Q. If there's one part of the game, I'm sure there are many, but if there's one part of the game that you can put a finger on and say this is one that I really improved upon this year, what would that be?

RYAN FOX: It would be the putting. I mean, I think if you look at my stats year-on-year I was down near the bottom on the putting stats for the year and I think this year I'm sitting inside the Top-50, at least, and that's -- dare I say, the old saying, drive for show, putt for dough kind of thing.

I always felt like if I could at least get to be an average putter, I would probably give myself a few more chances to win and be a bit more consistent, and I've probably improved beyond that this year. I felt like I've been a good

putter, and that's been huge coming down the stretch making important putts and stuff like that.

Yeah, that's probably the biggest change. But every other part of the game has kind of improved as well which has been nice.

Q. Did you do something special for the putting that's shown up this year?

RYAN FOX: Not really. I mean, probably the biggest thing I did is move to the arm lock a couple of years ago, and I feel like that was a really good move. It took a bunch of rotation out of my stroke, which I always struggled with and made it a lot more consistent from shorter range. It's probably taken a couple of years to really understand how that worked, and this year kind of figured it out properly.

But I certainly had -- in the last couple of years, I certainly had bit of weeks putting in where I found the consistency with it, and this year I managed to find the consistency with it which is nice.

TOM CARLISLE: Thank you for your time.

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