

# Alfred Dunhill Links Championship

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland

## Billy Horschel

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Billy, this is your first start since claiming your second BMW PGA Championship victory a couple weeks ago. Now that you've had time to reflect, how satisfying was that victory.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: It's amazing, any time you get the win it's pretty special anywhere around the world. It's very difficult to win in professional golf, always has been, but I think it's tougher now with the depth of play around the world.

As I was telling someone, I think this last win, the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth two weeks ago may be one of the most satisfying, most memorable ones I'm going to have in my career at this point. To do it in a playoff against Thriston and Rory McIlroy, as I said I think Rory is the greatest player of my generation, and to be able to go head-to-head with him in a playoff and come out victorious is pretty special.

Went head-to-head in 2014 at the FedExCup TOUR Championship, the last two days we were paired together, and I was able to come out victorious again. But you know, it's a little bit different in a sudden death format, and like I said, it was an unbelievable week. Something I will always cherish.

Yeah, like I said, I enjoyed it. Got home, my kids were happy. We all sort of were just reflecting on what's just happened.

THE MODERATOR: And now turning your attention to this week, as an American who spends most of his time in the States, how much do you treasure coming to St Andrews and being able to play this great championship on three of this finest links courses in the world?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: It's pretty special. I was sitting in the bridge at the Rusacks this morning, having breakfast, and Adam Hayes who caddies for Jon Rahm -- and Adam Hayes and I are from the same area back in Florida. We group in Brevard County, he's from the Rockledge area, and I'm from the Grant-Valkaria/Palm Bay area. And I sat

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there and I said, how special is this that we are here right now, and how amazing is it that two guys from Brevard County are here at this great event, cherishing all these moments.

Brevard County is a very blue-collar, working class county. We have NASA. We have the Space Center. But beyond that, there's not a lot of major, major corporations with a lot of high-paying jobs. So it's a very blue-collar county. It's pretty special to come over here and experience the Home of Golf, to play St Andrews, Carnoustie, Kingsbarns.

The more I do it, the more every time I come back, I pinch myself and say how lucky I am to be able to do this for a living.

**Q. How did playing with Jay Monahan come about? Did he contact you? Did you contact him? How does that work?**

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Earlier this year, I was trying to figure out my schedule, what I was going to play over here in Europe. So trying to figure out, did I want to come back at Dunhill, the last three years, the weather has been a little wearing on me a little bit, just like all the players. When I thought long and hard about it, I want to come back. I love this event. I enjoy coming here. I don't care how bad the weather is. It's more about the experience and enjoying these courses and being around these great people. I didn't know who I wanted to ask. I asked my dad, Mark Noble, my wife. I think my wife will come back in a couple years. She didn't get the full experience as we got rained out the third round.

We were at the Zurich Classic, and I said, Hey, I'm going to play Dunhill again this year, I know your schedule can be a little bit chaotic at times with a lot of stuff going on in the game of golf but asked if he was interested in being my partner this year, and he said yeah, I would love to.

I asked him two more times over the next couple months to make sure he was -- really wanted to do it which I knew he did but like I said, schedule can dictate things. He was all for it and I was excited that Jay accepted my invitation.

**Q. As a follow-up to that, you probably couldn't have anticipated at the time that your pairing would be quite as high profile as it is with Yassir taking part as well.**

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**Do you take that as a sign that there's some real genuine thawing and willingness to try to get something done, and will you be eavesdropping into any conversations on the fairways?**

BILLY HORSCHER: One, I don't think they are going to have any conversation on the golf course about the deal.

And two, I do believe that there's been both goodwill on both sides to try to make a deal happen over the last 18 months, year, since the agreement. It may not move as quickly as people want. There's a lot of complicated things to figure out and there's a lot of things behind the scenes that the public just don't understand; that they can't comment on.

But I figured about a month ago when I heard Yassir may be playing in this, there's a good chance that I may be playing -- Jay and I would be paired up one day with them, and I figured knowing Johann, we would be playing with Johann one day.

It's a great grouping. I'm excited about it. Obviously got Rory and Gerry in there as well. It's a great grouping that we have. We're excited to play.

And I think, listen, anything that we can show the game of golf, especially the fans, that things are trying to go in the right direction, we are all trying to make this work and figure out how the game of golf is going to work in a couple years, but really how we are going to set ourselves up for the next several decades is a positive.

So hopefully the fans understand by this pairing, by these groupings that things are moving in the right direction and you've just got to give us a little more time.

**Q. Sorry to throw you in the deep end but also on the back of what you were saying Monday on the range about the Presidents Cup, knowing Jay so well, are you bold enough over the next three days to suggest what you suggested about how the Presidents Cup could change in terms of introducing players? Is that the right situation? Would you be comfortable to that mention to Jay?**

BILLY HORSCHER: One thing I've always done in my career is I'm never afraid to tell people directly what I think and give my opinions. What I may say behind closed doors I also say publicly and I mentioned to Jay that I think, yes, the Presidents Cup could be better. There could be -- having these international stars, international players come back and play would be a benefit to The Presidents Cup.

But right now, we've made a decision that we made two

years ago, and you know, whether it's right or wrong, that we stick by it, we are going to stick by it now but. I do believe when this gets settled, international players like Joaquín Niemann do come back.

Give you a perfect example, in Maui in 2023 when it was -- January 2023 of Maui, I was having breakfast with Jay one morning and we were talking just about a few things, and I decided to bring up THE PLAYERS Championship. The Masters had come out and said LIV players would be allowed to play and the PGA said LIV players would be allowed to play. And I just mentioned to Jay, I said, Hey, I think if these majors are going to allow these LIV players to play, I think it would be really good if we do allow them as well.

I do believe THE PLAYERS is the fifth major. I do believe it would be unbelievable if Cam Smith is able to come back and defend his title in '23. You know, I said what I -- obviously I told him what I felt.

He gave me a reply, which I figured. They made a decision and they went against the PGA TOUR rules. I don't fault them for his comments. But like I said, I've always been very open with the execs at the PGA TOUR giving them my opinion and trying to show them what I think or what I feel.

**Q. You may recall at The Scottish Open in 2022, you went off on a spectacular 20-minute rant, and you said they made their bed and they shouldn't come back to the PGA TOUR and DP World Tour. What's made you change your mind?**

BILLY HORSCHER: Well, if I'm correct on what I said, they did make their bed and they made a decision that rewarded them financially, and their families.

I was -- also in my comments, they went against our rules that we have on the PGA TOUR, and they went against the rules that are set on the DP World Tour.

So I was going by what our rules state, and I'm a big -- listen, I'm a big rule follower; I always have been. I don't like to break rules. But I also felt the same time as I said, I have no issue with LIV. I have no issues with the Saudis. I think competition is a great forum to better a person, better a company, to improve, and I've always said the PGA TOUR would -- I would always bet on the PGA TOUR to win out. Whether I said this at the Scottish or not, I did believe at the time that there would be a coming together. I thought it would be five years, not 18 months.

But I do believe now looking at the game of golf, looking at -- which I could never imagine at that point sitting there and

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speaking how I spoke, that the divide that we've created in the game of golf would create such a disinterest in the fans. And that's really who has sort of been hurt by all this.

I feel like as all golf fans, as much as I play golf for a living; I'm a golf fan. I'm a golf fanatic. I watch golf all the time. I do believe some coming together and some semblance of healing to the game and showing what the game is going to be going forward is what we need for everyone involved, but especially for the fans. Because without the fans, without the sponsors, we are playing golf just because we play golf. We're not playing golf for money.

**Q. Have you spoken to any LIV players yourself about the future, what you see as the future with them?**

BILLY HORSCHER: I've spoken for several years to them about what I think the future of the game of golf looks like. For six to eight years, I always felt a world tour would be created in my time. Just understanding the economics of the game of golf and trying to increase that side, I felt like we were going to have to go outside the United States; on the PGA TOUR side, I felt like we would have to go outside the United States to continue to grow.

But listen, I still have a lot of great relationships with a lot of LIV guys. I still talk to them all the time. I still message them. And so yeah, we've had some discussions. And as I said in Scotland in '22, I do believe there is some form of team golf that can be successful in the game of golf.

But I also did say, I didn't think as they were promoting at the time, that the 54-hole shotgun start was the future of the game of golf. I'm a big believer in the 72-hole individual, the way we have it, will always be the future of the game of golf; will always be how we define "champions" in the game of golf.

But I did feel like the team golf aspect, there was a desire amongst the players and amongst fans to see some form of that, and I think hopefully with all this being discussed, I do hope that we figure out some way to have that. Because I do think it's a fun environment. It's another way for fans to get involved and to pull for players and teams.

**Q. Are you priding yourself that you can see past your own thought process and look at the bigger picture and possibly if more people were like you could get a faster conclusion to this thing?**

BILLY HORSCHER: Listen, I've always tried to take my bias aside. I've always, whenever I try to give an opinion on my thoughts, I try to look at it from a 360-view and every window before I speak. I may not have always done a good job of that at times, but I do try to understand

everybody's side.

I try to be respectful for people's opinions, and sometimes there's been times when a person's point of view has influenced my point of view and changed my point of view on things. I think for the most part the people in the room that are talking who have the betterment of the game of golf in their hands, that's what they want in their hearts.

As I said, I've had many conversations with Jay Monahan and Andy Pazder about things that we can do to continue to grow, and they have always been very open and understanding. In my time with them in speaking with them, they always understood that and they have held that view as well.

So listen, everyone is their own. If some are more looking out for themselves, that's what they want and that's how they do things. But I think for the most part the people in the room are taking their selves aside and taking their bias aside and looking at it in the sense of the whole of the game of golf.

**Q. You've obviously been very open about what you think should happen going forward, but given the fact you've obviously talked to a lot of your fellow players, are you in the majority or are you in the minority? Is there a consensus out there about what the future should look like?**

BILLY HORSCHER: You know, I haven't really had a lot of conversations really. Obviously being involved a lot in the first year or so with everything, sort of stepped aside.

Obviously my game of golf was pretty bad last year realised I needed to focus back on myself and playing well. I think for the most part, the players want to find some way to end all of this. I'm sure there's a handful of them that don't want any coming together and want us to go on our own and don't want to be tied to PIF and the Saudis, and that's their own right and they can think that way.

But for the betterment of the game of golf, I do believe the majority of players on the PGA TOUR, the DP World Tour, the players that play on LIV, I think we want to figure out some way that we can all make this work and get back to really being the focus on golf and not the politics side of everything.

**Q. That well may be true, but speaking to people on The European Tour, a significant number of people felt that if talks broke down, it would be better if the DP World Tour and everybody else got together and created something everywhere except America. Would that be good or bad in your mind?**

BILLY HORSCHEL: I will say this: The DP World Tour I don't fault the players for their thinking. The DP World Tour probably hasn't been taken care of over the last couple years as they should. I know the PGA TOUR owns a portion of the DP World Tour, but I understand why those guys would maybe want those talks to falter, and then maybe come back to PIF and do a deal with PIF.

So I don't fault them. Do I think that's right? No, I do believe in figuring out how we can all work something out is better for the game of golf. But listen, like I said, everyone has their own opinion and their own thoughts. I don't fault anyone for having them. I just may not agree with the way they see things.

**Q. I just think some of them would think that The European Tour going forward on the scenario I just described would be a bigger part of the deal than they would be as part of something that was dominated by the PGA TOUR.**

BILLY HORSCHEL: In my thinking, in my thoughts and the way I see things, I think if this all works out the way I hope it works out, I hope that the DP World Tour will be looked after. I'll go a little deeper into this into what I believe and what I believe for so long, is that you have sort of this pyramid, and you have let's call it the World Tour, however many guys, let's call it a hundred; and then you have the PGA TOUR; and then you have DP World Tour and underneath it; and then you have The Challenge Tour and Korn Ferry Tour underneath those, and you have a filter system that works up and a filter system that works down. But I do believe something along those lines, I do believe then that pyramid financially is going to be rewarded more so than they are now.

That's when I have a discussion with the DP World Tour guys, this is what I sort of hope for and sort of talk to our people around the PGA TOUR about. I show them that side of it, and hopefully if it does work out, I think it does reward everybody in the long run.

**Q. Talking about the financial aspect, obviously the players who went to LIV made a lot of money and those who resisted it missed out. Do you think there has to now be compensation or almost a repayment situation?**

BILLY HORSCHEL: No, I don't. Listen, as the PGA TOUR did this deal with SSG, and X amount of players got equity in the tour, my wife said one thing to me. She said, if you don't expect to get any equity, your life is not going to change. You're still going to be happy and still going to go on and still going to play golf and still going to enjoy

everything you have. And if you get some portion of equity, then it's golden. It's over the moon; it's icing on the cake.

I don't believe there should -- you know, listen, we've got our equity on the PGA TOUR side, the players. But listen, those guys made a decision to go to LIV. As I said, I don't fault them for the financial decision that they made, and I don't believe that guys on the PGA TOUR that didn't go should, if PIF comes in, should be paid even more money because they didn't take that opportunity or weren't offered that opportunity.

So listen, I don't worry about that. For me personally, I'm happy. I love to play the game of golf. I play for competing and seeing how great I am against players like Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm and all these guys, and the financial side is just, honestly -- obviously it does play a part but it just a bonus to me, and that's the way I've always looked at it.

**Q. In 2022 at The Scottish Open, there seemed to be bad blood from not just you but a lot of people. Do you think that's gone now and you're closer to a solution because people are getting on a little bit better?**

BILLY HORSCHEL: Time allows things to dissipate. We've seen that through the history. I'm sure there's people that still hold grudges and everything. Personally I still hold a few grudges, I'm not going to lie. But I understand that for things to get better and heal, you have to get past that and move beyond that.

For me personally, I've moved on beyond that. But I know some guys, some players probably still hold grudges. I've just seen based off what I've seen said in social media and other interviews, and in just certain things I've heard in the locker room. But I think we do need to move beyond that to really come together.

**Q. I don't want to have to go back, but with The Presidents Cup, there's a lot made of how the international team have lost nine times in a row. If you were to take it forward another nine years, what do you think the results would be? Do you think the Americans would go on winning or do you think it would be more even?**

BILLY HORSCHEL: Well, history has shown us early in these competition, one side is dominant for a while. We've seen that in the Walker Cup and The Ryder Cup. Obviously changes were made to allow the European players to come and join on the Ryder Cup side. I believe in the Walker Cup, no changes were made there. GB&I



still stayed.

But nine years from now, I do believe the international side will have won it probably two or three times by then. I do believe the quality of players on International side is getting better. I do believe you need someone like a Tom Kim to change things. Tom Kim could be the Severiano Ballesteros for the Internationals with the passion he shows and the way he plays and everything, he's carried that team emotionally the last two Presidents Cups.

And now, be able to improve the talent and improve the consistency of the International side in the sense of players, then you're going to get victories, and I do believe -- I say it's a matter of time, but I do believe over the next nine Presidents Cups, if nothing's changed in the sense of players, I do believe they are going to win a couple times, two, three, maybe four times possibly because I do believe that side is getting stronger and they are making the necessary changes to get themselves a better chance of winning.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks very much for your time.  
Best of luck this week.

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