

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Friday, June 18, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Bubba Watson

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Bubba Watson, 4-under 67. Congrats on a great day. What was the biggest difference from yesterday?

BUBBA WATSON: I just made some putts today. I thought I played pretty smart, executed to my positions. One hiccup I had, a three-putt is the one I wish I could have back, but maybe that motivated me to birdie the next three holes or something.

We can all look back and pick out shots we wish we could redo, but the three-putt was the only true, I'd say, silly mistake today that I could have cleaned up.

Q. Bubba, you were just talking about talking with Matthew this week. Can you say what day that was and maybe what the conversation was like?

BUBBA WATSON: I didn't even know I shot whatever she said I shot. No, I don't know what day it was. It was a practice round, so it was either Tuesday, Wednesday. I wasn't here Monday really. It was one of those days. It was just -- I was just sharing my own issues and struggles. Not that he wanted to hear it. He didn't ask for my advice.

I love him. I love his family. I love his team. I love Gigi. So I was just talking to them and just shared that I've wasted money, I've saved money, I've bought businesses, sold businesses, I've lost 20, 30 pounds because of struggles. I said, I've done everything you're thinking about, I've done it all. So I said, so if you ever want advice, just call me, and so that's what I said.

I was going to text him a few weeks ago, but I wanted to talk to him in person. That's what I did. Obviously, he hasn't called me. He did pretty good yesterday. He had eight birdies. No, I was just trying to give him my two cents. He didn't ask for it, but I gave it to him anyway.

Again, it's probably more helpful to me than him just because I can hear it again in my own head, me saying it out loud, and I played pretty calm out there the last couple days. So I guess it did work out for me.

Q. You talked about over there reaching the bottom. Where are you at on your journey back, do you think?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, gosh, I'm definitely not on the bottom. I don't think there's ever -- I don't know what we ever considered a top, right? My wife's saying yes. Adopting my two kids, I guess those would be high on the list. Passing 17 years of marriage, I guess that's high on the list too. So there's things that -- there's milestones that we go through in life, but the top would be making it to the pearly gates and making it to Heaven. I guess that would be my top.

Losing all that weight was definitely my lowest point, and the things that we don't talk about a lot is the people around us. They're going through it too. Even though they don't show it, they know I'm going through something. So my wife's having to deal with my low point, but, yeah, I don't know where the high is, but I'm definitely not at my lowest. So we're heading in the right direction.

Q. How long ago was that, the bottom?

BUBBA WATSON: Gosh, I can kind of pinpoint, probably started at '15 at some point. But last time I checked my weight was in '17. 162 was the last time I checked my weight. It could have been the end of '16, could have been early '17. I can't put a pinpoint on it. I know for a fact it's definitely started in '15. It doesn't happen overnight. Good play doesn't happen overnight. Bad play doesn't happen overnight. It's all these things.

So my low point happened probably -- somewhere in '15, I know for a fact it did when I look back at it.

Q. How do you feel about your position heading into the weekend?

BUBBA WATSON: I don't know where I'm at, but I know I'm talking to you all, so I know I'm doing all right. I was on number -- where I three-putted. Why are you bringing that up again? So where I three-putted, I thought I was 1-over at that time, and I three-putted, and that made me go to 2-over, and I realized I made a birdie, and I was even.

So I really didn't know what I was doing. I was just kind of in the flow playing with two great guys, shooting the breeze, making fun of them and stuff, so it really took me out of my element. I didn't know what they were shooting. They didn't know what I was doing.

Yeah, I'm looking forward to it though. Whatever position I'm in, I made the cut, so that's a bonus for me. A golf course that I've been successful around a few times, top ten a few times, so looking forward to the challenge kind of. Should be fun.

Q. What's the biggest way the game has changed?

BUBBA WATSON: Slower play. Too many people in the field, not enough people making the cut. Want me to keep going? For sure. Now we can tap down marks on the greens. There's a lot of things.

Truthfully, here's the sad part for me. I've got the microphone so I'm going to talk. The sad part for me is we celebrate every sport in the world. We celebrate accomplishments. We celebrate a guy scoring 50 points in the NBA. They are not saying quit shooting three-pointers. But we don't celebrate when a guy makes eight birdies or a guy bombs it 400 yards. I don't understand how we're not celebrating. We're trying to make golf courses bigger, harder, dumber, however you want to word it, but we're not celebrating our great players.

I'm definitely not in that group of great players. I'm saying I want to see these guys hammering the ball. I want the next up-and-comer. I want a 6'8" guy not playing in the NBA, I want to see him on the PGA TOUR bombing the ball. We're the only sport not celebrating accomplishments of being a guy working out in the gym that can hit the ball miles. We're mad at that guy. I don't know why, but we are. I'm not, but some people are -- golf course designers.

The NBA, Tom Brady winning, throwing touchdowns, we celebrate that. ESPN talks about it nonstop. They don't ever talk about us chopping out of the -- hey, he laid up again. That's great. Anyway, that's my rant for the day.

Q. You talked a little bit about the kind of journey with anxiety and the things that you've gone through. Now, I don't know if this feels a little like a double-edged sword, mostly a good one as you're in this position, but as the pressure ramped up in a major, how do you manage that given the spotlight may have drifted off of you a little bit?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, man, how am I going to manage it? I'm going to play Call of Duty nonstop. I'm going to have Call of Duty on and golf on, and I'm going to be

shooting -- okay, I'm not very good at it. I play it nonstop, but I'm terrible at it.

You know, I enjoy it. I'm striking the ball well. I'm actually going to putt some, some five-footers, and I'm going to hit some balls just a little bit just to make sure we're doing what we want to do. I'm looking forward to it.

I had a charter on Monday morning to go to the Travelers Championship, so I didn't want to sit and watch golf. I wanted to actually play it. So I'm glad I made the cut.

I think I've been playing well. I've been making a lot of mental mistakes. When you're slightly off, the scores look like you're way off, and I don't feel like I'm way off. I feel like I'm charging. I know I was playing well until Memorial. I got really tired at PGA Championship, just exhausting, trying to make the cut on Friday with that wind. Then I got mentally tired. I was fried after that on the weekend. So I kind of struggled on the weekend there.

I thought I'm playing really nicely, progressing the way I want to progress, and the last couple days, it showed. I stayed committed to my lines and my putts, and I made the putts, and here we are talking to you guys.

Q. A lot of times you show up at golf courses, and if you don't feel like you can see it in front of you, you don't play well.

BUBBA WATSON: Thank you.

Q. Is that a fair assessment?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, I've probably said it more than once.

Q. Is this one of those places where it actually meets your eye and you feel comfortable on top of everything else around?

BUBBA WATSON: I'm going to be dead honest with you. Don't tell nobody; this is a secret. I am nervous over every shot, okay? Told a guy out there, John La Monte, he said, Man, great putt. You make everything. I said, I'm trying to lag it, man, but they keep falling in. I don't know what's going on. I'm so nervous.

Yes, I've played well here. This golf course is such a beast. Great putters don't make as many putts because rumor is it bounces around these greens. So bad putters still putt bad, so I'm right there. I've got a chance on this course. I putted well.

Yeah, I can see some of the shots. The golf course -- like



Phil said, the golf course has definitely changed since I won ten years ago, but, yeah, I can see some of the shots. I'm just hitting big slices, trying to get the ball in play, but I can see this golf course a lot better, and I got some confidence knowing that some areas are patchy, where you can play out of the rough when you miss the fairway. As long as you're missing it in the right places, you still have a chance -- not a good chance, but you've got a chance.

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