

Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions

Tuesday, January 19, 2021
Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA
Tranquilo Golf Course

John Smoltz

Press Conference

Q. Back to back defending champion in you're here. What's the week look like for?

JOHN SMOLTZ: You know, when you get here I kind of pinch myself thinking, How did I win two in a row? It's something that you always want to feel good about, so like you're defending something.

So I know the third one will be super hard, but I've been thinking about the third one ever since the trophy got presented last year.

I don't hit it as far as those guys do, but it's a lot of the fun to compete, and when they're keeping score I obviously want to be as high on the scoreboard as possible.

Q. Who was out there with you today? I heard it was a little lively.

JOHN SMOLTZ: Oh, yeah. We had a lot of fun between the baseball guys and Bumgarner, Brian. We had a little match and it came down to the last hole, so last hole is always exciting.

You know, when you play together as long as Glavine and Maddux and I have, it does seem old hat, but it's fun to reunite. We don't play golf anymore until we get to Tahoe and here and the Hall of Fame, so whenever we get a chance it's always fun.

Q. Who took all money? We didn't get the results.

JOHN SMOLTZ: We're trying to figure it out. We had a -- we got to match the cards and figure it out. I think my group won. We had a draft early in the morning. A lot of guys were -- their were impacted on where they got drafted.

There is a lot of strategy in the captains and being able to pick the right guy with the right shots and attitude.



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So looks like my team came out on top. There was a little distraction in the back group, which probably helped us, but it was a struggle between my MVP of being Glavine or Brian. Brian came through huge, especially on the last hole. He needs that for his ego, to be honest.

And that's going to pump him up for his career, I'm sure.

Q. How did COVID-19 impact your preparation and golf game and where it stands now?

JOHN SMOLTZ: Honestly, I mean, with all the things going on and all the things you can't do, the one thing you could do was play golf, so I played a ton of golf. The one thing I didn't do was take care of my body based on what was shut down physically.

So I was in a cart the entire nine months. The challenge for me honestly is going to be walking. These next four, five days of walking the golf course is going to be a real challenge on me, so I'm borderline embarrassed to tell you that I didn't do anything cardio to get into this tournament, but my golf swing and game should not be -- that shouldn't be the reason that I'm not prepared.

It's just walking the golf course is for me at this point in my life until I get the hips fixed is a nice challenge, a big challenge.

Q. It's both hips, huh?

JOHN SMOLTZ: I didn't think -- yeah. I didn't think walking a golf course was a much of a big deal until you walk a four-round golf tournament. You realize by about round two and three what's happening to your body, and you just can't imagine that -- I now get it. I get the difference between playing golf in a cart, flying around, playing fast, 36 a day, to playing 18 holes on your feet all the time and just trying to stay mentally focused for each shot.

It's a lot different.

Q. When you found out that Annika Sorenstam was part of the celebrity group what were your thoughts?

JOHN SMOLTZ: I've had the pleasure the playing with her



a few times before she retired, so I've gotten to see what a treat it is to watch her play. I think it's just great. Any time Annika is playing in a golf tournament I'm sure even though it was her livelihood, there has been some time gap that her competitive juices will be flowing again.

Trust me, there is not on ounce in her game that she doesn't want to come out on top, so it's going to be a challenge for all of us.

Q. Topic about a year ago was Major League Baseball expands, Orlando being one of those cities. Do you see that working, assuming Tampa Bay is not there anymore?

JOHN SMOLTZ: Yeah, it's an interesting dilemma, because it would be nice to have Orlando have a team. I think they could support it. But I don't know if three teams in the state.

With all the talent and all the opportunities to create another -- we got to find a way to even it up. It can't be 30. It's got to get to a square number; 32 is a perfect number.

And whether or not that is Orlando or Charlotte or Nashville, I think it would be awesome to get two more teams in baseball. Then there are a lot of the things you can do with the game that you can't do with 30 because of the odd number, 15 in each league.

So I've always been -- Orlando is kind of my home away from home if you think about how many years I spent here as an Atlanta Brave and just coming down here to the tournament. I love Orlando.

I'm biased, and I would think the city -- spring training, when Florida and Arizona have spring training you just wonder how much that would have to do with a team being here.

But now there is not many teams in this area for spring training, so that might be a plus.

Q. Where do you keep your trophies from this event?

JOHN SMOLTZ: I've got 'em up in my office. The coolest thing is that gigantic board, the check that I get. I feel like what is it, Happy Gilmore. Feel like taking that check in to try to cash the actual cardboard.

The trophies are in my office, and I don't make any bones about it. Winning this golf tournament a couple times has been awesome because of -- you got to win something, right? I mean, everyone talks about competing, but until you win you don't know what that feels like.

Q. So they're sandwiched in between some baseball trophies?

JOHN SMOLTZ: Yeah, yeah.

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