

Aramco Team Series - Jeddah Round Five

Friday, 11 November, 2022

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Royal Greens Golf and Country Club

Chris Gardner

Quick Quotes

Q. I wanted to ask a couple of questions, your thoughts on the tournament. I know you just arrived this morning but initial impressions. Great to meet you.

CHRIS GARDNER: Good to meet you.

Q. We're here in Saudi. What brings you here? Are you a fan of female golf? Are you a golfer yourself? Do you follow the game? Average sports fan?

CHRIS GARDNER: First of all, let's be real clear, I would not embarrass myself or anyone else by going out on this golf course, okay. But I love the game. And I love the global nature of the game, and global includes women. They love the game probably just as much if not more than men and the truth of it is they are probably better.

But also, I'm here to continue to learn more about what they are doing at LIV Golf and how it's changed the game and came out of nowhere and turned the whole thing; and technology, we always hear this word disrupted and innovated, right, until the point that it's over used in that space.

But here, what they have done at LIV Golf, you know what I've always said to people? If you don't like the game, change it. That's what they have done at LIV. And that for me, sir, is tremendously exciting. Change the game.

Q. We are obviously here at the Aramco team series which is backed by Golf Saudi, similar, and this tournament has done the same for the women's golf. There's million dollar prize funds, which is unheard of in the Ladies European Tour.

CHRIS GARDNER: Unheard of in any tournament anywhere, \$1 million. Now folks talk about equality, and the Aramco team series, equality is a reality. Again, that's changing the game.

Q. We are obviously sat here in an amazing hospitality structure as well, and it's not just the prize money because everything that goes around



aramco
team series

goes with it, isn't it. You look out here and the course is amazing, the facilities are amazing that these women can play in?

CHRIS GARDNER: What's exciting for me, I have a granddaughter who if she wants to, could become a world-class athlete. And I am so supportive of this whole idea, everybody should get paid the same thing. Because one day, who knows, she might be in that position.

You've worked just as hard, been just as committed, just as focused, why should you get paid less money? And the Aramco Team Series at LIV Golf this is game changing. I hate to say it but it is.

Q. We actually announced, was it yesterday or the day before, another of the ladies events, the Aramco Saudi Ladies International and Men's International will have equal prize funds, so from February, the prize fund purse will be \$5 million for both the women's and the men's events.

CHRIS GARDNER: I might have to dust off my game.

Q. Both winners will receive \$750,000, which, again, is a testament to growing the team game, isn't it.

CHRIS GARDNER: At some point, the rest of the golf world and the rest of the sports stride global is going to have to answer a very big question.

Well, if they can do it in Saudi Arabia, why can't we do it here? That's game changing. A lot of people are not going to like that. You know that, right?

A lot of people are, it's fine like it is. To be here in Jeddah, and to have the experience, honestly, of visiting Saudi Arabia many, many times before, and to be able to ask people in other parts of the world when they have certain thoughts or they express certain concerns, I ask them, "The last time you were in Saudi Arabia, did you notice" --

And the first thing they have to admit is, "I've never been to Saudi Arabia."

"Ooohhhh, so you want to have a conversation with me about what you think and a place that you've never walked on the ground. Maybe we should change the subject. Let's talk about where you have been, okay."



... when all is said, we're done.®

But to be in a place like this where you see so many exciting changes happening, rapidly, all positively, and especially around inclusiveness of women and equality, man, this is exciting.

Q. Your story, it's quite well documented.

CHRIS GARDNER: My story is not my story. It's the story of everyone who ever had a dream. Everybody who ever had a dream and would not quit, it's not about me, right. And one of the things, most important things that I'm doing with my time right now, is spending time with young people all around the world and giving them what I call, permission to dream.

There's no shortage of places telling our young people what you cannot do. No shortage.

I want to be part of the conversation that says what you can do. What you can do should be much a part of the conversation as what you cannot do. I just got here from Milano, Italy, I spoke at two schools. Fabulous city. Spoke at two schools, one of the highest level possible private school but the other, a high school where all the students were learning a trade: Electrical, plumbing, carpentry, right. Skillsets that will allow them to become self-employed or employable any place around the world, and share with all of them, this can be done.

I'm the wrong guy to talk to about what cannot be done. What can be done -- and that brings us around to the Aramco Team Series and team golf, let's talk about what can be. And if it's not here, let's create it.

Q. On that dream line, there's all these players out here from four or five years old, their dream was to be out here, and it aligns nicely with what you just said and the fact that they have achieved their dream. But there's always more that you can achieve, as well, isn't there, in terms of success?

CHRIS GARDNER: You know, what let me say this about that, as a young guy, I loved basketball. I loved sports. But I was no good. I was no good. I had no skills, no talent.

And one day, my mother said to me something that I'll never forget that I share with young people globally. My mom said, "Son, if you want to make the team, go to the gym. But if you want to own the team, go to the library." So I went to the library, and we just bought a team in Milan.

Q. A basketball team?

CHRIS GARDNER: No. Football. Breo (ph), we are now the third team in Milan and this whole idea of dreams, every player on our team is homeless, Italian, a

migrant, a refugee or an immigrant. We have got people on our team that speak 13 different languages, but on that pitch, we have one dream. Dreams don't have borders. Dreams don't have borders, baby, that's why we are sitting here in Saudi Arabia. Dreams don't have borders.

So now let me ask you one last question before we wrap this up. How is your Mum?

Q. She's good. Well, yeah. As good as can be. We've got some family stuff going on at the moment?

CHRIS GARDNER: We've all got family stuff going on. But does she know where you are right now?

Q. She does?

CHRIS GARDNER: What's her name?

Q. Amanda.

CHRIS GARDNER: I am here with Alastair sitting on this beautiful golf course. It's got to be 90 degrees Fahrenheit. We've got this fantastic breeze. We're sitting here having a conversation, and your son is getting paid to do this. You talk about permission to dream? Get out of here. I want your job.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports