

LIV Golf Andalucía

Sunday, 14 July, 2024

Sotogrande, Spain

Real Club Valderrama

Fireballs GC

Sergio García

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome the winner of LIV Golf Andalucía, our captain of Fireballs GC, Sergio Garcia.

SERGIO GARCÍA: Gracias, gracias. Thank you.

Q. Everything that happened out there seemed to happen really fast. I know you haven't had a moment yet, but can you try to articulate the emotions that you are feeling right now in this moment?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, it was amazing. Very overwhelmed after making that putt on 18 to win, after seeing my teammates win it as the team event.

I mean, it was amazing. So much hard work, so many hours put in with my wife, with my dad, with Matt, my mental coach, with everyone, with Andrew, obviously with Neil, my new caddie. It's been hard -- it's been great, don't get me wrong, but it's been hard losing a couple of playoffs this year, being really close to qualifying for the British Open and trying to make it my 100th major, just missing close like 10 days ago. It's been a roller coaster for sure.

But I knew I was playing well. I love this place. I love these people. So thankful to everyone for what we were able to achieve today.

I might be wrong, but I think that if the soccer team wins tonight, it could be probably one of the biggest days in the history of Spanish sports, I would say: Alcaraz winning, us winning both individually and as a team, and then the national team winning the Euro Cup. It would be amazing to have all those four things happen in the same day. It would be amazing.

Q. It almost felt like it was written in the stars, a script, how it all played out. You winning the individual, the Fireballs end up winning the team, and all the support that was out there from all the Spanish people. Can you talk a little bit about the support you felt out there and if that helped push you through?



SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah. I mean, for sure. I feel it every time. I'm very lucky, I feel it every time wherever I go, but obviously on my home turf and here at Valderrama where I've done so well, I always feel it. That's one of the main reasons why I love playing here. Not only the difficulty and the beauty of the course but the support that we get here, it's amazing.

I was so focused on what I was trying to achieve, not knowing if it was going to be good enough or not to get the win, but I was playing hard. I was playing really, really well. Gave myself a lot of chances, and making some nice putts here and there.

Obviously when I three-putted the third hole, my 54th hole, I was still very happy about the way that everything went and how I felt throughout the day, but obviously the other two Playoffs come into mind, and you think, oh, man, another second. It's a great week, but unfortunately just a little bit short again.

Then all of a sudden you have another life. You have another chance. Then the team had another chance.

Some of the finishes that they put on to be able to get into the playoff and then obviously win the playoff, it was just a dream-come-true kind of day.

Q. You have been the most gracious person, such an incredible show of sportsmanship throughout all of it. How much sweeter having gone through those moments and then to take home the playoff now in Spain at Valderrama? Does it make all those other moments worth it?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, they're all worth it. They're all worth it. They're all a learning process. They're all -- don't get me wrong; every time you get into a playoff or you're finishing second or something like that, you've had a great week.

Obviously we all want to win, and sometimes it doesn't happen, unfortunately, but they're all great weeks, and they're weeks that you can learn a lot from. That's what I try to do.

Even though when you just finish, it stings and it hurts and



it's tough, then when you settle down and you start thinking about it and all the great things you did throughout the week to give yourself a chance, you realize that it was a great week.

Obviously this week is even better, but yeah, they're all good learning experiences.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your colleagues on your team and what they had to pull off this week, this incredibly difficult win and tough conditions, what they had to do to pull off the win for you guys?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, I'm so proud of all of them for the kind of players they are, for the kind of people they are. I know that obviously David had a really tough first day and he was down and we had a talk on Friday night. I tried to help him as much as I can. He's just a wonderful human being. It was great to see him come back and play well again.

Obviously Eugenio had a good solid week. Unfortunately he didn't play as well as he would have liked today.

Then Abraham, he fought hard. He always does. It's great to get our first -- I think it's our first win of the year after a couple of seconds. It's nice to be able to do that and hopefully move a little closer to higher positions for the team championship in Dallas.

Q. Is Abe officially a Spaniard now?

SERGIO GARCÍA: For sure. Even before the week was over, he was officially -- we adopted him as a Spaniard. I even made him wear the Spanish colors. We changed our outfits for this week. I wanted to do something special for this week here in Spain, wearing obviously Spanish colors on the weekend.

But I thought I can't do this to Abe the whole week, so I gave him Mexican colors on the first day with the green and white. It was a fun week.

Q. Sergio, where would you rank this victory in your career, the fact that it's your first on LIV, it's at Valderrama but also ends a five-year drought anywhere in the world. Where does this stack up in your career?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Well, I mean, obviously I won in 2020, so I guess it's just a little bit under four years, when I won the Sanderson Farms.

It's very important. It's obviously huge. I keep telling everyone how difficult it is to win out here. At the

beginning everyone thought that we were all retired here and there was no competition or anything like that. It's so hard to win out here. All these guys, they practice so much. I'm practicing more than I ever did before, and I'm 44, because if I don't, I feel like I'm going to get stuck behind.

It's really amazing to be able to do it in your home country in front of my family, in front of so many friends and on my favorite golf course. It's obviously super, super nice.

Q. You just mentioned the fact that you're 44 now but you're practicing as hard as you ever have. I think one of the things that the fans have loved about your move over here is that you haven't stopped trying to qualify for the U.S. Open and the open championship. Tell me where the hunger is for the majors and for professional golf in general still.

SERGIO GARCÍA: You know, I said it at the U.S. Open, that I am so thankful for LIV, and I don't want to sound like I'm bragging or anything like that. I've been very fortunate to play pretty much every single major since the British Open in '99 until 2023. I only missed the Masters because of COVID.

Even though you realize that the majors are super important and it's what we love to play and stuff, when you get the chance to play in so many in a row, you start forgetting how difficult it actually is to make it into those majors.

This last year and a half or so, I've realized how difficult it is playing qualifiers and stuff like that. One day you hit two bad shots and you're out.

It's given me definitely a different perspective on the majors, on how much they mean, on how much harder I'm trying when I'm playing them, and the U.S. Open was a good example of that. I was trying so hard to have a good week and play well and get in the top 10 so then I would qualify for the next year and things like that, and then obviously played the qualifier like 10 days ago for the British Open and just missing out.

I know even more how hard it is and how important the majors are, and I still want to play as many as I can.

Hopefully things get better and we start getting spots coming into some of the majors, but if not, I'll just keep playing qualifiers until my body says enough is enough, I guess.

Q. What is it about Valderrama and you and your success here? There's horses for courses, but this

seemingly goes far beyond that. How do you explain that? And did you feel like it was fate, really, for you and the Fireballs to win today?

SERGIO GARCÍA: I don't know. To be totally honest, there's a connection between Valderrama and myself that I can't even explain it. As difficult as this golf course is and as tricky and sometimes feels a little bit unfair as it might be sometimes, I just seem to have something with this course that it just -- first of all, it's my favorite course in the world, so obviously that helps me because I see everything a little bit better than some of the guys might see it.

I would love to transfer this into Augusta because I see things a little bit differently there, and I hope that going forward I can change my mind there and kind of start to enjoy it more when I go and play the Masters. That's what I was talking about before.

Hopefully my mind is starting to realize those things, and go out there and enjoy it and try as hard as you can. At the end of the day, that's all you can do.

I didn't know -- I obviously knew that we had a chance. I knew that this course, with four scores to count, anything can happen because if one of the guys has a little bit of a bad day and shoots 6-over, everyone is back in the game. So I knew if we played well, we had a chance.

Obviously I started really well, and the team started going up and up and up, and we go into the lead or tied for the lead, and it was great to be able to have one more shot at it individually and as a team after I finished my round because then it felt like we were going to lose probably both by a shot, and then thankfully we didn't, and we managed to win both Playoffs, which it doesn't happen that often. We're very thankful for that.

Q. I wanted to ask you about -- you finished on the third hole, as you mentioned --

SERGIO GARCÍA: I'm making my answers so long, sorry.

Q. It's good stuff. You finished on the third hole. I don't think you were back at 18 yet when Baan finished; is that right?

SERGIO GARCÍA: No, we were actually riding on the van and we were just going by 18, and we obviously heard the crowds going crazy, so we figured that he might have missed his par putt. Then as soon as we stopped, then they said -- well, actually I had Jon next to me and he was checking the scores, and he was like, I think he made bogey, so you're still in this thing. He obviously wished my luck.

It was nice to be able to have another shot at it.

Q. Did you feel like in the playoff that you had the more pressure knowing you were playing in front of your home crowd and obviously everybody wanted you to win, or did Baan have more pressure given the fact that he could have won in regulation?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, obviously he had the last putt to win it. Obviously I also bogeyed the last hole.

I felt good. I felt fine. I actually told Neil on the second try, on our second playoff hole, we were walking down after hitting our tee shot, and I looked at him, and I said, "This is fun, isn't it."

I love those moments, and to be able to have that here at Valderrama, my favorite course, in my home country, after seeing my teammates win it, I felt good. Obviously you do feel some pressure, but I felt good about it.

Q. I would love to think that the ghost of Seve is doing something to give you wins here.

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, without a doubt. We always think of him here at Valderrama even more. I think that he's always on our minds, and we wish that he was still here with us.

As everyone knows, he was my idol. I think of him very, very often and talk about him very often. It's great to be able to get another one done here.

Q. Does someone like him, the inspiration that he provides, give you the drive, the bite and the sheer guts to say, right, I'm taking this, I'm wanting it, I will not let go?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Yeah, without a doubt, that and my team, my wife, the support that I get from her. I feel like she believes in me more than I believe in myself, and it's amazing to see that.

But yeah, it's always great to have those memories, and some of the memories that I had with Seve and some of the memories that I've had here at Valderrama and with my family and with our kids, it's just been amazing. I'm so thankful that I'm able to keep doing things like this year.

Q. What are your best and your worst memory in all those years you played Valderrama?

SERGIO GARCÍA: Well, I mean, thankfully I've had a lot of great memories. I think probably my worst memory is the

year that obviously I was struggling mentally with what was going on with me personally, and it was my worst tournament here at Valderrama. I think it's the only non-top 10 here I had at Valderrama out of 15 or 16 tries. So that's probably the worst one.

But so many good ones. Obviously my first win here with Jaime Patiño and how much it meant to him for me to win here. This one, it means a lot, with Javier Reviriego and all the support I get here. There have been a lot of amazing moments.

Q. On a historic day for Spain potentially. Obviously you're three-fourths of the way. Did that make its way into your talk last night when you were talking to your team?

SERGIO GARCÍA: I mean, obviously I think it was in our minds. Obviously we texted each other and wished each other good luck and just kind of helped each other on.

We knew what was at stake, obviously, but we could only control our thing, I guess, in a way. So we couldn't control what Carlos could do against Djokovic. We can't control what the national team does against England.

But at least we've done three of the four things so far. Hopefully we'll get to celebrate again tonight.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports