

# Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Wednesday, 31 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Canada

Nick Taylor

Corey Connors

Press Conference

KIRSTEN SABIA: It's my pleasure to welcome Corey Connors and Nick Taylor, Team Canada. You've had quite a few days here in Paris, I understand, traveling around with your wives, hitting the Opening Ceremony. Tell us about your experience.

COREY CONNORS: Yeah, it's been really cool, able to take part in the Opening Ceremony was a neat experience. Wish it was a little drier on the boat but pretty cool getting to see the historic sites and be part of a really cool event. So that was fun for Nick and I, and we've been able to take in some other events and kind of enjoy the Olympic experience a little bit.

I got to play in Tokyo in 2021 and wasn't able to do those things, so it was quite nice to be able to take in some other events and see some other athletes perform.

KIRSTEN SABIA: Nick, you're a first-timer here. What has been your experience these past couple days around other Olympians such as yourself?

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I kind of mirror what Corey said. The Opening Ceremonies was a really cool experience. Got to be around the other athletes. Just asking where they are from, what their training schedules are like. You know, Felix Auger Aliassime, obviously follow him for a long time in tennis but some of the volleyball guys and we met some equestrian ladies. It was fun to meet a bunch of different people.

And yeah, to be out here with all the players. This golf course is great. I heard a lot of really impressive things before coming this year and it's definitely stayed true. I really like the golf course and should be a good test for everybody.

KIRSTEN SABIA: Corey, you have not played Le Golf



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National in person but I understand you have played it in a simulator. How do the two compare?

COREY CONNORS: Yeah, first time here in person. I've got a little golf studio in my basement back home in Canada. I was able to take a few trips around Le Golf National virtually, I guess, and kind of got a feel for it, I would say. You can't really appreciate the terrain and some of the ups and downs the course has as much when you're looking at a screen.

Picked up a few strategy pointers, I would say, on some distances that it's ideal to hit off some of the tees. I would say a number of the holes kind of take driver out of your hand where it's more position play off the tee. I was sort of expecting that when I came here, and you know, that's the case. Definitely nice in person and good to be here but I think it was a little bit helpful. Gave me an idea of what to expect.

KIRSTEN SABIA: Coming off of winning the Canadian Open, that was huge for you and golf in Canada. How did that experience prepare you for Paris?

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, that obviously was an incredible moment for myself, and you know, gave me a lot of confidence going forward for playing big events. It's no different here. Hopefully getting that place where I have a chance to get a medal, a Gold Medal coming down the stretch, and I can definitely draw on that for experiences under pressure, and it can only do me good for going forward.

KIRSTEN SABIA: With this being your second Olympics, I wonder if you've prepared any differently since you know what that Olympic pressure feels like?

COREY CONNORS: I wouldn't say too different. As professional golfers on the PGA TOUR, we are playing in big events week-in and week-out, just coming off The Open Championship a couple weeks ago. You know, definitely knowing what to expect, I think there's some added comfort for me.

But as far as the preparation, prepare as best I can pretty



much each week of the year that we are teeing it up, and it's certainly no different here. I think something that's helpful is knowing what to expect with some of the behind the scenes stuff and logistics.

Yeah, I'm really excited and game feels good and it's great to be back for my second Olympics.

KIRSTEN SABIA: Both of you have a lot of family here to support you. What does that feel like as well?

COREY CONNORS: It's definitely really special. Growing up as a big fan of sports, always watched the Olympics and my family was no different. They have been great supporters of me throughout my career, and for them to be able to enjoy the experience as much as me and cheer me on is really special. Feel very fortunate that they are able to come here and support me.

NICK TAYLOR: I feel the same. My parents are here. My brother is taking the train over from London today. We had a mini vacation with our wives in the city and they are here now. We are taking it all in.

Once tomorrow starts, it's back to grind mode with the golf. But this whole last probably six days has been really special.

**Q. Could either of you guys speak to the idea, you've mentioned that golf is different in that we have the majors and we have a lot of big tournaments and that you're kind of competing week-to-week and there's going to be something in a week or two again, but the other athletes that are here, this is it almost. They spend so much time preparing just for this. Wonder if you've noticed that or seen any appreciation of that you chose and how intense it can be for them?**

COREY CONNORS: I would say definitely in getting to watch some of the events, we watched the medal round in the diving, and the diving -- first of all, every athlete is really impressive, but the divers, this is the highlight of their year and it's obviously a huge highlight for Nick and I as well.

But they have one big event, this event, every four years. I'm sure there's some other World Championship events, but it definitely is cool to see them shining in their big moments, and getting to watch the Canadian ladies in gymnastics was really cool. Just knowing how hard they worked to get themselves on to this stage, and they have got one performance to make it happen.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I would say as I talked to some of the players who played in Rio, played in Tokyo, I think it's gaining momentum of importance.

I would say most would say they take a major over a Gold Medal but I think it's pretty close behind that. There might be differing opinions there but anyone I've talked to or experienced it had such a great time, and that's why I think this year, I didn't see anybody that passed on the opportunity versus the last couple years.

So I think it's gained momentum and I was able to play with Justin Rose quite a bit this year. Just him commenting about his experience, obviously winning Gold. But being around the scenes and the other athletes, it's a really special event. It's definitely important for us to be here and try to compete and win.

**Q. Would either of you like to see a format in the future where you could compete as teammates as well as individuals? Some various ideas have been floated. Obviously you're not doing that this week.**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I think it could add something to the event. I don't know what that looks like with certain countries having more than two athletes, some having one. A combination with the women I think would be great as well. I think it's probably on the table. I'm not sure how that would work but I think it would be great.

COREY CONNORS: Yeah, I definitely think it would add a little bit extra to the event as well. Like Nick said, even being able to team up with the ladies, obviously Brooke Henderson from Canada, a really exciting young, top player. It would be something that would be unique to this event that I think would make it extra special as well.

**Q. Can I ask you both about the qualification system for this event? Obviously the World Rankings are heavily relied upon. We've seen the way that's become a bit messy in recent times. Do you guys as degree with the qualification criteria? Do you think there's a way they should amend that going forward?**

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I don't know what they would do, if you're referring to LIV guys. Yeah, I guess time will tell. But I think you can ask any of them; they knew what decision they were making. This was a byproduct of them are really not being eligible, at least if they left a couple years ago.

I think everyone who plays on the PGA TOUR or DP World Tour or around the world, receiving points, you know, it's as accurate as it can be currently. But for guys that went to LIV and aren't able to be here, they made that choice. So as it currently stands, it is what it is.

COREY CONNORS: Speaking on behalf of Canadians, I

think it's probably the fairest way. There's a lot of good Canadians; I was just able to sneak in for the second spot to make this team and certainly working hard to do that.

I think for the Canadian team, definitely the fairest way, and all of us are pretty much playing on PGA TOUR right now.

**Q. How often have you played a golf course on a simulator before playing it in person?**

COREY CONNORS: Pretty much never. Typically the events that I'm playing in now, I've been to the venues before. So yeah, it's something that's kind of new for me, I wouldn't say.

It's something that I would try to do again possibly if it was a new venue but not something that's part of my typical preparation?

**Q. Do you gain anything from it or are you just passing time practicing?**

COREY CONNORS: Probably a little bit of the latter. Just kind of practicing hitting shots and passing time. But I definitely did think that I learned something, and even talking to Nick in lead-up to coming here, just some of the things that I learned from playing that, I noticed that I was hitting a lot of 5-woods or 3-woods off the tee in the simulator, and it really is the case, it's been kind of the case here in person, as well, where you kind of have to position yourself off quite a few of the tees and it doesn't really give you an option to hit driver on a handful of holes.

**Q. I was curious about this year as an energy and mental energy question. Last year, you were not trying to qualify for the Presidents Cup or that much for the Olympics, but this year, it feels like there's this an Canadian battle. I'm sure it was on your mind, might have been a little bit more safe but is it hard to keep up your mental energy to focus on the right things when you have multiple qualifications going on in the background?**

NICK TAYLOR: I think some are probably better than most. When I was talking to Corey after the U.S. Open, he did a great job of just playing golf. He was essentially oblivious to what was going on.

You know, I think coming down, it was one of those where I was peeking over my shoulder too much and just thinking about -- I almost wanted it just to be over.

Obviously I wanted to be here as much as I could but I wanted to forget about what was going on because so

many guys were playing great.

It's something that we obviously wanted to be here. We want to be in The Presidents Cup. But again, if you block it out as well as you can and focus on the job at hand, that's the best case scenario but it's easier said than done.

COREY CONNORS: Similar on my part. When it was finalized that I qualified to be here, I felt like I did a pretty good job of just playing golf. Like I said before, we've got big events every week, so just try to do what I could, week-in, week-out, just prepare for those events and really try to putt in the back of my mind as much as possible.

It's definitely still there. It has been still there throughout the year, and yeah, did a great job at the U.S. Open. I honestly had no idea what I had to do to qualify, and it wasn't until putting in on 18, I think my caddie, Danny, was very aware of what I needed to do and he told me. I was, you know, surprised but relieved.

**Q. How does Danny get that information? I'm always curious when guys know, like we know what the cut line is or T-10 shared three ways. How does he get that info?**

NICK TAYLOR: A lot of people knew outside of Corey.

COREY CONNORS: My wife knew, as well. He was just the person to tell me. I think through social media, someone had crunched some numbers and it was floating around there. They probably said it on the Canadian TV broadcast.

Again, I really had no idea. I knew I needed to probably play well but again, was pretty oblivious to the situation.

KIRSTEN SABIA: One more question for you all.

It was 120 years ago when the Olympic golf medal was won, Gold. What would it mean to bring a medal back to the Great normal?

COREY CONNORS: It would be incredible special and spending time with some of the other athletes and athletes who have won medals in Canada for the past, it's something really special. Being here at the Olympic Games is an incredible honour and being able to win a medal for your country would mean the world and be quite amazing.

So definitely be playing hard this week. Didn't like dream of winning a medal as a kid but it's almost like a dream come true to be able to win a medal at the Olympics.

NICK TAYLOR: Yeah, I agree. I think winning a medal I think would touch outside of just golf. I think, like he said, didn't dream of winning a medal in golf, maybe hockey or something.

But to be able to call yourself an Olympian, be here, have a chance to win a medal would be really special. We'll try to break the streak over 20 years.

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