

# PGA Championship

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Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

## Tony Finau

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Tony Finau joins us now at the 105th PGA Championship. Welcome to Oak Hill in what is your ninth PGA Championship. You recently claimed your sixth career win at the Mexico Open. How are you feeling about your game coming into this week?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, thanks. My game feels good. Just won not too long ago it feels like, just a few weeks ago in Mexico as you mentioned.

Coming off I think just a solid season overall. Whenever you can win leading up to a major championship, I think it gives you some confidence that you can play well, and I think that's definitely the case this week.

**Q. As you look at the ninth PGA, played a lot of majors now, all the pieces are in place, how do you make it happen at a major?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I don't think the recipe changes too much for me with the type of golf I've been playing lately. I've won four times in the last calendar -- if we kind of go back, the last calendar year, so it just tells me that my game is better than it's ever been, and confidence I think is as high as it's ever been leading up into major season.

That's the exciting part for me, and I look forward to this week.

Yesterday I played 18 holes here, and it's a golf course that fits my style. It's long. You've got to hit it in the fairway. Those are things that I've done well over this last year, and hopefully I take that right into this week.

**Q. Is momentum as a player -- you talk about winning so much in the last year. You feel that as a player, don't you?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, no question. I feel like a different player, more so than I've ever been. More confident in my game and my abilities than I've ever been and just who I am as a person and as a player. I think those things will serve me well as I continue down my path in my career.

**Q. I was thinking back about Whistling Straits 2015 and kind of the first time, I guess, that you felt like you were major material. Can you take us through those memories a little bit about that first PGA Championship?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, that was a lot of fun. It was my first PGA. It was my rookie season. I think I was leading this golf tournament kind of halfway through the third round, maybe the beginning of the third round. It was cool just to get a taste of it.

At that time I think I knew that someday I could win a major championship. It didn't happen that week and hasn't happened since, but it definitely gave me a fun taste of what major championship golf was like and that my game is fit for major championships.

I've played in many majors, been on some international teams, which has been a lot of fun. It's nice to be back at the PGA Championship kind of where my major -- I would say my major championship history started.

**Q. Is the PGA, the way they set up the golf course, the whole concept of it is, is that something that you prefer, and why would that be?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I love playing the PGA Championship. It represents -- the PGA of America does a great job of running this golf tournament. They run the Ryder Cup. It's just a tournament that brings back so many great feelings for me, being involved in a couple Ryder Cups. I know a lot of the people that run the PGA of America. It's always good vibes.

As far as the golf course, golf courses, I feel like they've used some U.S. Open venues. This is a U.S. Open venue. I feel like PGA Championship has changed in a way where the golf courses are starting to become a little tougher, which I think fits my game well.

**Q. Why so? The tougher the test fits you better; why is that?**



TONY FINAU: I just feel like mentally you've really got to be there, and emotionally. I think it's been proven the guys that win kind of have that mental fortitude to do that, and I feel like I have that. That's something that I've got to prove to myself and win a major championship.

But I feel like I do have those tools to kind of overcome these type of tests. They're really tough golf courses, and this definitely fits that bill. This is going to be a big golf course to handle.

None of the holes I played yesterday I looked at and said, I'm going to birdie this hole this week for sure. It's going to be that type of test.

I think that's, again, the guys that can mentally overcome the hurdle of just trying to stay patient, and you just have to play well for all four days if you're going to win this week.

**Q. As you made your way around here, what did you find was the biggest thing the golf course asks of a player?**

TONY FINAU: You've got to hit it far and you've got to hit it straight. This golf course is going to start from the tee box. If you're not hitting enough fairways, you're not going to be able to play this place very good.

The rough is long enough to where you're not going to be able to advance the ball to the greens. The reason I say long is if I remember right, there's four par-4s over 500 yards.

Yesterday after hitting some really nice drives up the fairway, even with some roll, I was hitting 5-, 6-iron into these par-4s, which I'm really not used to doing unless it's a par-5.

It's a par-70, as well, so we're only going to get two cracks at a par-5, and both par-5s are over 600 yards. Even though I might not be able to reach in two.

It's all you can handle, but that's what you want in a major championship. But it's a golf course that the guy that's going to win this week is going to be driving the golf ball very well.

**Q. What sets you apart from a lot of golfers is you travel with your family. How does that help you when you're going from tournament to tournament?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it is no secret that I'm with my family every week. It's a wonderful thing. We have a good time together. I've mentioned this before, my kids are only young once, so watching them grow as we travel together

is pretty amazing.

I look at it as -- I have a lot of fun with them. I think it keeps my attitude even keel. I've learned how to separate work life and family life. My kids love coming out and watching me. I think it gives me that extra inspiration.

But when I get back off the golf course, when I get back to the hotel room, to our house, whatever it may be, I'm just a dad. I'm just a husband. I love it that way. We play card games through the night, board games, and we just have a lot of fun together, and for me that's what it's all about.

**Q. I see you on TikTok getting your W on. Did you teach you that or you taught them that?**

TONY FINAU: My son taught me the Griddy. Yeah, not the Dougie, but he taught me the Griddy. My oldest boy is into all the new trends, and he reminds me how old I am with all the new stuff. I've got to follow him with all these new trends.

**Q. Kind of an open-ended question here, but we're coming up on the anniversary of LIV Golf launching. Where do you see the game in, say, a year from now with everything in play?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's hard to predict where the game is going to be. I probably have an easier prediction on where the PGA TOUR will be, being a member of the PGA TOUR.

They're going to drop their schedule pretty soon, and excited about what that looks like, with some more of the other tournaments being elevated next year and what that looks like.

I'm excited for that opportunity. I think the elevated events have been a cool thing for the PGA TOUR this year. You've seen some new rivalries, and I think that's what the game needs. That's what we wanted going in, is some top players playing against each other more often.

So this week we have that opportunity to play against all the best players in the world, and it's been cool playing in the elevated events.

**Q. Going back to the golf course, for the common golfer like us, can you explain why is this rough so tough, and if you can maybe give us a lesson on how to play this rough into the green and around the greens. What do you do? What shots do you have to pull?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, well, hopefully I have the answers

when I'm presented with the shots this week out of the rough. It's hard. The rough, I would say it's three to four inches long, which is the proper thickness, and it's almost like backyard grass where it's really thick, so it's hard to get the blades through the grass.

Usually when that's the case you've got to be a little bit steeper, your angle of attack, because you can't catch too much grass before you catch the ball, especially around the greens.

If you catch too much grass before the ball you're going to shut the club face and you're got to hit everything hot and left. I think one of my favorite pieces of advice I have for amateurs or for anyone, what I like to do is you've got to chip with a little bit more bounce, a little bit more of an open face, and then just get a little steeper so you can get closer to the back of the ball when you're hitting out of the rough so you're not catching so much grass as you get through.

That's a shot that I tried yesterday and it seemed to be pretty effective around the greens, so hopefully it works this week.

**Q. When you start a week like this at a major, do you have a vision of what you would like to happen, your goals or your aspirations?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I mean, I think every week that you're out playing you have the goal to win. As a top player, I think I can say that with confidence, most guys will have that goal this week. We want to win this week.

There's so much that goes into every week. Every week is special in its own way, but it's a journey throughout the week. Monday, Tuesday, we're here Tuesday today, I'm going to get some work in after this, and then Wednesday brings the final day before you tee it up.

So with my experience, you just take it day by day and try to learn the golf course, not get ahead of yourself as far as thinking about winning. You're just trying to be properly prepared for whatever comes your way throughout the week, and then hopefully on Sunday you have a chance to win the golf tournament.

**Q. Back on the family front, I think one of the coolest pictures of the year was you chasing your kids around in Mexico on the golf course after you'd won. In a capsule, is that kind of your perfect day?**

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it was a perfect day and it was a perfect week. I told my kids after, we had a little family council, and I was like, this is going to be a hard week for

us to top throughout our career. We were together for the whole week. We had a great time. I played with my sons every day after I played the tournament. We were out on the par-3 course under the lights.

They ended up capturing that after my win, but it was a given, you know. I was doing that every single day with my kids, and it was just a perfect day. It was a perfect week.

That's going to be a hard one to top. I do just enjoy being out with them and having those experiences with them.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Tony. We appreciate it.

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