

PGA Championship

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Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

Max Homa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Max Homa is joining us at the 105th PGA Championship at Oak Hill Country Club. Max, welcome to your fifth PGA Championship.

What do you think of Oak Hill so far from what you've seen?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's a really good golf course. It's quite difficult. It reminds me a bit of like a Bethpage, Winged Foot type golf course, but a little softened.

Feels like if you hit really good shots, you're going to have good looks for birdie. If you're just off the fairway within the tree line, feels like you can kind of have a lot of run-up so you can get up to the green.

The greens aren't too bad. They did a good job of the shorter par-4s. I feel like the greens are a little more complex and they're really long difficult par-4s; besides No. 6 they are pretty benign.

So I think it's going to be a pretty good setup for a major this week.

Q. A win earlier this year and several top 10s; how are you feeling about your game coming in?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, game feels good. It's nice. I went to Augusta playing really well, and that week prior at home, just golf swing got really weird.

And it's a bummer to show up at a major and know you're just going to be fighting just to score as best you can and it's going to be hard to contend. This week the game feels really good. It felt great last week at home, and I played well at the Wells Fargo.

It's nice to be here, feel comfortable, not feel like I'm really changing much or working on too much, just playing some golf.

Q. Do you like this classic northeast architecture?

MAX HOMA: I do. I think it feels like the traditional kind of what you would picture American golf to be. And I do, I think a golf course like this requires a lot of precision, and when you come play a major, I feel like that's what it should require. You shouldn't be able to get away with too much.

It's unique to what we typically -- I guess not typically. It's unique to what we play in a way because these days, although we'll have rough that's long, it usually feels like we can work our way around how difficult it is, especially around the greens.

But the type of grass out here is different than pretty much anything I've played on, so it's pretty demanding, and I like that.

If you're going to hit a poor shot, you should have a pretty difficult up-and-down. So it's nice, but I do like the look. I like how trees kind of frame the tee shots. I like how they kind of trick you with your eyes a little bit.

They don't show you a ton of the fairway on a lot of the tee shots. You have to do a good job in prep. So I think, again, for a major, this is just like kind of your traditional, ideal setup.

Q. It asks a lot of you across the board, but what's the biggest thing this course demands of a player?

MAX HOMA: That's a good question. I'm going to say I do think to make birdies out here, you're going to need to be in the fairway. Obviously it's going to need to be a little bit similar to like this new major thing, which is essentially if you keep making these courses narrow, long, with really long rough, you're going to miss a lot of the fairways.

There's some difficult tee shots out here, so you're going to have to do a good job of scrambling obviously. You're going to have to be good in every area. I just think if you're in the fairways, I don't find the second shots to be super demanding.

Again, the hard holes, the long par-4s, the greens aren't too crazy, so if you get on them, even if you've got 20 or so feet, they're not wild putts.



So just to me, it feels like if you're in the fairway you can feel somewhat comfortable.

But again, it's always tricky in practice round days because they put the pins in the middle of the green and you don't get a full taste of it, but so far that's what it feels like.

Q. Do you want this week to feel different because it is different, or do you want it to be as close to what every other week normally is?

MAX HOMA: I think you want it to feel like every week normally is until the walk-up on Sunday. Yeah, you try to prep the same way you would normally prep. We have no pro-am tomorrow, so it'll feel a little bit different. You get three full days of work.

But yeah, I think internally and in the practice you would try to just make it feel like another golf tournament, but we all know that it's not. It's one of the four biggest events of the year and has an unbelievable field and a lot more at stake if you do come out on top.

I think we all know that.

But yeah, you do your best. We play a lot of golf throughout the year, so it's kind of nice. You just get going. I would say Augusta is the one that always feels the most different just because it's Augusta and it's just -- I don't know, it's got that special feel when you're on the grounds.

This is unique, the rest of the majors, because you go to a new venue, and so it's always going to be a little bit different. But it's nice because you end up spending so much time learning and kind of diving into figuring out the golf course and hitting different shots that you -- spending more time around the greens than you probably would in a normal week.

You want it to feel a little different because it's a major, but I think you prep like it's a normal event.

Q. At Augusta, you talked about no matter what the result, it doesn't change your identity. Do you verbalize with your team your own expectations of yourself in weeks like this?

MAX HOMA: No, I would say I have a great little crew around me and we all know what a good and bad week would be.

But I think we also know that playing poorly at Augusta didn't mean that we had to reinvent the wheel. It was just a bad week. And that if it didn't go the way we wanted it to

this week, you just keep kind of chipping away, just keep getting better and waiting for when you're feeling good.

Like I said before, it was difficult at Augusta because I just wasn't swinging the club well on Monday, and I wasn't swinging the club well the week before, so we kind of knew it was going to be a little bit of crisis management when we got there.

This week has been a lot more relaxed and fun. Even like today, my coach Mark was just saying -- it's very windy out there. He said, it looks good, played nicely for nine holes. Let's not overwork this thing.

So, yeah, they know the expectations, but we don't need to talk about them. You don't need to put more pressure on yourself than necessary.

Q. Have you treated majors differently in the past? Have you put too much pressure on yourself?

MAX HOMA: I think I just did it with all golf tournaments. They just felt like the end of the world if it didn't go well.

They feel so important, and you think about a year later and they don't feel as drastically important. I just think I do that with most tournaments, so I've been doing a better job this year just going and playing golf tournaments.

Q. Can you pinpoint when you transitioned that? Is that something working with your mental coach?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I guess maybe just a little bit this year. I think as you make a progression in the game, last year played some really good golf, you start to get in that talk of, hey, I haven't had a good track record at majors, so you should play better at majors.

I had a better year last year. Still wasn't great, but I got 13th at the PGA and come here this year, sixth or something in the world, and doesn't play well in majors. I played one good one, so it's kind of irrelevant.

This year I've just been looking at it as -- like I said, I don't think it's just any other golf tournament, but you still need your game to be there, and you do your best to do that and then you move on Sunday afternoon.

Q. Coming up on the one-year anniversary of the first LIV tournament. What do you think professional golf is going to look like a few years down the road?

MAX HOMA: I'm not sure. There might be a golf ball rollback I've heard, so that would be different. But as far as the LIV and PGA TOUR thing, I'm not sure. I would

assume maybe a little bit different than it is now, but I'm not a fortune teller, so I'm going to leave that up to you to guess.

Q. The pollen and the wind are making the allergies pretty difficult for a lot of the spectators and the golfers. Is that impacting your game at all? And if so, how is that?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, somebody sneezed in my backswing yesterday, so that was tricky. Yeah, I don't know. I had really bad allergies last year in Tulsa. I didn't think I was going to make it. I thought I was going down.

But yeah, it's one of the few downsides of playing golf outside. But I will be thankful. I'll be all right. We'll readjust. This is why there's practice days, so you don't feel this way come Thursday.

Q. You talked about the finish last year was better. Did you feel some progress there, something you can carry into as far as momentum into the majors ahead?

MAX HOMA: No, probably not just based off anything specific last year, but I do know that I'm not really that worried about my golf game not being good enough to play well in majors.

I think that's just the benefit of just playing better in PGA TOUR events, and having one decent finish in the PGA last year.

But I just think that mentally where I'm at this year is I just understand if I play well, I'll finish well; whereas sometimes, especially when you're younger, you come to these big, big events and you don't know if your great golf game is good enough to compete.

I know that it is, which is nice. And I also know that it doesn't need to be perfect, and those are at least comforting things.

But yeah, I'm not riding high off momentum from last year, but fortunately that was a long time ago.

Q. Curious what you think of the golf that Talor Gooch has been playing.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, good. Two wins in the last three. That's really good. I think he shot 62-62 or something in Australia, which is quite decent.

Yeah, it's awesome. I imagine he's going to keep playing well. He's always been just like a tremendous golfer. He's a world-class ball striker and just a supreme talent.

It's always nice to see those people having success, and it's nice to see him -- winning back-to-back is hard, so it's awesome to see him get that done.

You look at a golf course like this and you imagine this is going to be a really good course for him. You've got to hit the ball really well. You need to be precise.

So I imagine he's going to keep playing great as he has been.

Q. We're still trying to assess what a LIV victory means in the landscape of things, but in your mind it has meaning and it's impactful when a guy wins over there?

MAX HOMA: He beat every single person and he shot 62-62 in back-to-back rounds. So yes, it's great. I can't tell you to a tee how he's great playing, but if anybody told me they shot back-to-back 62s I would assume they feel pretty good about their game.

So I'd say it's very impressive.

Q. It was your wife's first Mother's Day this Sunday. What does it mean to have your family here with you this week?

MAX HOMA: It's nice. It's weird. You appreciate the sleep you get when you're by yourself, but it's a lot less enjoyable when you wake up.

So it's nice to have everybody here this week with me. They're at Niagara Falls today living it up. I look forward to getting home. My kid has got a bit of a personality now, so it's nice that he recognizes me when I walk in, so it makes everything a lot more fun.

It's hard leaving them at home, so I'm very appreciative that she would use her Mother's Day or would go through her Mother's Day on two planes across the country. My son doesn't -- I don't think he cared. It was just another day of drinking milk and doing whatever he wants.

But for me, I'm very thankful.

Q. We had Tony in here earlier. He's won four times in a really short span. You're now building a record of winning and having momentum and all. As you come and chase the first major, would it change your life that much?

MAX HOMA: I'm not sure anything could happen at this point that would change my life, but it sure would change



my career. I think you win a major, and you just get vaulted. That might mean I might look at myself a little bit differently as a golfer, but my life, I like my life.

I can't imagine much is going to ever happen that I'm going to all of a sudden say, oh, thank goodness, my life is good now.

I'm pretty lucky and appreciative of everything that I've got going on, and then all the good golf is a cherry on top. And a major would be -- I'm not sure what's better than a cherry or taller on a sundae, but it would be awesome.

Yeah, golf changes our lives, but we do work at something, and it's always nice to see hard work pay off. I think I'd just be more proud of myself if I could clip off a major.

But yeah, I'm not going to let that dictate my happiness in my day-to-day life.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for the time, Max. Appreciate it.

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