

# PGA Championship

Sunday, May 21, 2023  
Rochester, New York, USA  
Oak Hill Country Club

## Michael Block

### Flash Quotes

**THE MODERATOR:** Michael Block is joining us following the 105th PGA Championship. First of all, congrats on an incredible week. Has everything you accomplished the last few days begun to sink in yet?

**MICHAEL BLOCK:** Not quite yet. I just got a call from Colonial, and I'm in next week as the last sponsor's exemption, which is really even more mind-boggling now. So I'm readjusting flights to head to Dallas and Fort Worth, so I'm looking forward to that, to say the least.

No, this week's been absolutely a dream. I didn't know it was going to happen, but I knew if I just played my darned game, right, that I could do this. I always knew it.

I had this intuition that it was going to happen -- I always had this thing: It was going to happen with Tiger Woods, it really was. I always saw myself coming down the stretch with Tiger Woods. I was like, I'm going to do it, even if I'm 45 or whatever it is, I'm going to come down the stretch at an event with Tiger.

It just happened to be that I was in the 2023 PGA Championship at Oak Hill, and I had Rory McIlroy in my group. I wasn't coming down the stretch to win, but at the same time, Sunday at a major with the crowd here at Rochester was unreal.

**Q. Just the emotions finally caught up to you after the CBS interview and you had to go into a tent and kind of take a breath. What did you think of as you took that breath?**

**MICHAEL BLOCK:** I didn't cry when I had my kids. I cried, for some reason. If you love golf, you know. I cry about golf, to be honest.

I have cried only a couple times in my life. When I won the National Championship in 2014 in Myrtle Beach. At The Dunes Club I cried. And after that, my wife hasn't seen me cry until this week.

If it makes any sense, the one thing in the world that



makes me cry is golf. If that puts into context as far as how much I love the game, you know now. It's everything to me.

Obviously I love my family and everything else and my job and everything, but golf is my life. I live it, breathe it. I made sure of one thing in my life: That I was going to drive to a golf course every day, whether it was a caddy or an onsite service kid or an assistant pro or a head pro or general manager, I what was going to be as a golf course. I came to the golf course today at Oak Hill and played in the PGA Championship.

**Q. What was it like, as CBS showed you the tape from your home club with all the people celebrating and cheering you on?**

**MICHAEL BLOCK:** Yeah, it was the most people I've ever seen at O'Neill's ever. It was crazy. It's busy a lot because it's a great spot and the food is great and the drinks are great. Armando serves a fantastic cocktail.

But to see how busy it was and to see they actually had what looked like a watch party to me, was pretty darned cool. I can't wait to get back to them and celebrate with them.

But sad to say, not sad to say, is that I will miss them this week because I'm going to Colonial, so I'll see them next week.

**Q. We asked you yesterday how much fun you're having, so I'll ask the same question now. How much fun was this?**

**MICHAEL BLOCK:** It wasn't nearing as much fun today. I got some really bad lies starting an hole one. The lie I had on one was ridiculous, and I make a bogey. No putts dropped in. I was rolling it the same, but as everyone knows that's a golfer, right, today they weren't breaking and dropping in the hole. They were going right over the edges, and I kind of knew it was going to happen. In my heart, I'm going, dude, for three days I made a lot of putts; right?. I'm, like, just stick with it, you know it's not going to last for four straight days, and so not to get too frustrated.



So I almost preemptively told myself, I'm not going to make everything today. Don't get frustrated with it. And I did, because I kind of knew what was going to happen. I went through it. I was 2-over and made the hole-in-one out of nowhere. Got back to even par, and I was, like, you know what, that's what you do. I hate being over par. That's my deal. I hate being over par.

So I was over par by two. I made a hole-in-one, got back to even, and then I made a really bad bogey on 16 to go back to one, but then I made some crazy up-and-downs on 17 and 18, which I play as short par-5s to finish at 1-over, and to make a decent check.

**Q. If at the start of the week someone were to have rattled off, say, Wednesday -- if they were to rattle off all the things that have happened this week, what would you have told them?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: So I was at the Pittsburgh Pub on Sunday night. Not one single person knew me. I'm going to go there in about an hour, and it's going to be on. We're going to have a crazy good time tonight, and I look forward to it.

My life's changed, but my life's only changed in the better. I've got my family. I've got my friends. I've got the people that really love me and care about me here. It's an epic experience. I can't thank the PGA and Oak Hill enough and you guys enough for being so awesome and enjoying the experience.

**Q. With those people at the Pittsburgh Pub and the people on 18 chanting your name like that, your story has resonated with a lot of people this week. Why do you think that is?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: I'm like the new John Daly, but I don't have a mullet, and I'm not quite as big as him yet. I'm just a club professional; right? I work. I have fun. I have a couple boys that I love to play golf with. I have a great wife. I have great friends. I live the normal life. I love being at home. I love sitting in my backyard. My best friend in the world is my dog. I can't wait to see him. I miss him so much it's ridiculous, my little black lab.

But, yeah, it's been a surreal experience, and I had this weird kind of sensation that life is going to be not quite the same moving forward, but only in a good way, which is cool.

**Q. Just thinking about your crew back home, your assistant pros, the whole squad at the course, what do you think that -- what do you hope that they take away**

**from your performance this week and your success?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Well, I want to take all the assistant pros, not only at Arroyo Trabuco Golf Club, but all the assistant pros and head pros and future pros that are even thinking about getting into the golf business to say, you know what, you have the opportunity to go play in your section championship and finish, whatever it is, top 5, top 10, whatever it might be, to go to the National Championship. And then there, you finish in the top 20, you're going to come here, or wherever it might be that year, to play in the PGA Championship.

So the way I've always looked at it in my life is like, so you're telling me this: I'm going to finish top 10 in the Southern California Championship, and then I go and finish top 20 in the National Championship, and I'm going to be at a PGA Championship, which is a major championship. The PGA of America gives you that opportunity. What an inspiration that is; right?

And I've lived with that mantra, same way with the U.S. Open. I've always said if you shoot 69 at a local qualifier, you're in the sectionals, and then if you shoot 69, 69 in the sectionals, you're probably in the U.S. Open. So three 69s, you're playing The Open; right? That's how I've lived. I've lived in those world terms where it makes reality easier.

You don't have to go shoot 63, 63, 64, something like that, to go do what we're doing. You just have to be real. You've got to practice, and you've got to commit your life to the game, and hope you have a supportive family, like I do, and a club like I do. And if you don't, move on to the next club and find one that does.

**Q. The up-and-down on 18, were you nervous over that putt, and did you know where you stood in terms of qualifying for next year's PGA?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: I had no idea. I made sure that I had no idea. I told my caddie, John, at the beginning of the day, I'm not going to look at leaderboards throughout the day, no matter what happens. Good, bad or indifferent, I'm not looking, because in the past, sometimes I get ahead of myself. I start booking rooms at hotels that I've never even qualified for, and it's never worked out well. I no longer get ahead of myself.

I had no idea where I was. And if you put me at 120 yards out on 17, hitting my third shot, and if you put me on 18 hitting my third shot from that 40 yards, sidehill lie out of the rough to a tight pin on 18, and you're telling me I'm going to get up-and-down on both of those to make next year's PGA Championship, there's no way in God's green earth I would have done it.

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So lucky enough, I didn't look at the leaderboards. I was just grinding my butt off, and I did it.

**Q. Can you walk us through what happened on 15?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: The hole-in-one?

**Q. What you were thinking?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: The hole-in-one?

**Q. Yeah.**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Rory hits. He misses the green right. I'm just like, oh, yeah, you can't go there; right? So I'm over my tee shot, and the crowd goes crazy. Like, the crowd went nuts and I had not even hit yet. So I had to step back. I'm, like, this is pretty cool; right? This huge reception, and I haven't seen hit.

So I sit back for a second. I'm, like, this is cool, but I've got this nice flight at 7. I could hit a hard 8, but all day long when I tried to hit anything hard, I was pulling it. So I was, like, I'm going to flight a little 7 in there into the breeze from 150. It was playing about 167 in my head.

So I hit it, and it's just right at it, but I can't say it, just like now, and all of the you sudden it disappears, whatever. I'm like, cool. I'm like, thanks, guys. Rory is walking down the pathway 20 yards away from me and turns around and starts walking back towards me with his arms open to give me a hug. And he goes, you made it.

I go, what? I'm like, seriously?

He's like, yeah, you did. He had to tell me five times that I made it. So it was a pretty cool experience to have Rory be telling me that I made a hole-in-one in front of God knows how many people that were supporting me.

**Q. How many hole-in-ones have you had?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Three before. Never in a tournament in my life. I've always talked about how I never had one in a tournament, and the situation under that, I mean, that was it. I don't need to have another one. I'm good.

THE MODERATOR: Before we take a few more questions, we have something special for you.

(Presentation of 15 flag by Oak Hill Country Club.)

MICHAEL BLOCK: This will be going up in a great spot. I greatly appreciate the thought about it.

I blew the hole out. Rory was like, we need to recut that thing. I walked up there, and half the hole, the hole back was just blown out. So yeah, pretty cool. Great experience. I still just feel like I'm on a cloud nine right now.

**Q. Have you bought any drinks yet?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: No, I haven't. They surprised me earlier. They are, like, Michael, so we've got some downtime. Just come in this little room. You've got some downtime. You can just hang out. I'm like, okay, but I'm going to go sign some autographs. They are like no, no, come on. I'm like, okay.

So I end up walking in there, and it's a table, and we've got a couple bottles of Casamigos and a couple IPAs, which you might have heard. I had all my friends and my general manager right here, Mike Donovan, who allows me to do this.

We sat there and while we're sitting there, they hand me the phone, and it was on a conference call, speakerphone, and it was Michael from the Colonial event, which is next week in Fort Worth, and he said that -- he was offering the last exemption into the Colonial next week for me, which, as you know me, I got emotional again.

And I'm in Colonial next week, which is pretty darned cool, so I've got to change my plans for tomorrow's flights.

**Q. Awesome weekend. On that, I mean, with how much you love golf, it is apparent how much you love golf, how does it feel to have these doors opening, Colonial immediately, and then coming back to Valhalla next year for the PGA Championship? You've already said your life is changing, but you're now going to get to do this more often because of today. Has that sunk in at all?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Yeah, and the cool part is I'm super comfortable. I just played with Justin Rose on a Saturday in a major and Rory McIlroy in a Sunday at a major. I'm not sure how it gets any bigger than that.

So when I go play Colonial next week, it's not going to feel like a down, but it's going to be like, no problem, right, compared to what I just did the last couple days.

So I'm comfortable. I'm happy. I'm kind of built for this, to tell you the truth, I mean, in a way. I'm just being me, which is the most important thing that happened a year ago with my wife and with Matt where they told me just to be me and not just to be a club pro when I come here and to



be a tour pro, which I guess I proved this weekend with a 15th place in a major that -- I mean, that makes me choke up even thinking. I didn't think about it yet, but I got 15th place in a major championship.

**Q. Talking about Colonial, what do you expect the reception to be from the PGA TOUR players?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Oh, they are all great. The PGA TOUR boys are great. I mean, inside the clubhouse here at Oak Hill, every single one of them that saw me was like, "Keep it up, do it." Zach Johnson came to me, he literally sought me out on the putting green yesterday morning. Came up to me, goes, "Just keep being you," which is cool. We are Iowa boys from back in the day and similar age, so to hear that from him and Min Woo and a couple other guys. Rory and Rosey were fantastic.

Everyone was super supportive. All the TOUR players have been amazing. I'm actually looking forward to seeing how the Fort Worth, Dallas fans are with me. We'll see how it goes. But, hopefully, you know -- and it's going to be hard to live up to the Rochester folks, but we'll see how it goes.

**Q. A couple of things connected with that. Clearly you were saying you were ready for this moment. You had a vision of this moment. So what is your vision starting next week with Colonial, and what do you expect to do?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: The way I'm playing and from what I've heard about Colonial, I've never played the golf course before, but I think it's going to set up very well for me, from what I know. It's tight, it's fast, it's hot. Great greens. That's me. It's bermuda. That's what I play on in California.

So all in all, am I expecting I'll make the cut? Absolutely. I want to go there, top 10, whatever it is. I want to get more phone calls. I want to get more exemptions. I want people to start calling me and saying, we want you in our event because it makes it better. That's great to me.

**Q. You seem very comfortable with the cameras and with the fame and all that. There's an element here that maybe connects with your student, with the kids at your club and everything which is being a role model. So how do you see that?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: That's just me, to be honest. I mean, I love kids. I love dogs. When I see the kid out there with his hand out to give me five, I had a really big issue with passing him by or her by, I really do. If you would have watched me today, I had 80 hands out, but this little thing

was down here, right, and I'm like, I'm giving that one five right there, you know, no matter what. Whether I just made double-bogey, bogey or an eagle, I'm going to go give that person a high five.

That's how it is. I was born that way, and my parents raised me that way. I'm just having a good time, and I'm going to take that same vibe to Fort Worth next week and have a good time.

**Q. You mentioned that you thought you had this in you. Was there any part of this week that surprised yourself?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: The hole-in-one. Yeah, that was it. I honestly just played golf outside of that. Blocky golf, hit fairways, hit little baby cuts out there. Putted how I normally do. The greens were perfect here. So the hole looks huge to me.

You know, that's the big part is I come here, the hole looks like it's six inches wide. It really does. It's cut so perfectly. The greens are so good. The hole looks huge.

So I feel like I had an advantage. I'm over a putt, and I'm going, that hole looks big. And then I know a lot of people that get over the putt, and you guys know as golfers, you get over a putt and you're like, dude, is there even a hole there?

That's how I felt this week, and hopefully I inspired a lot of people to practice and to work hard at it and to understand the fact that just because they are not on tour right now, they can't come and live a dream like I did.

**Q. You talk about only crying over golf moments in your life. Did that ever lead to any awkward conversations when maybe you didn't cry over other things?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Oh, 100 percent, yeah. My wife was very disappointed in the fact that I never cried when my children were being born.

But she understands now how important the game of golf is to me, which is, this is it, you know. I live it, breathe it. Like I said, I'm going to go to the golf course no matter what, whether I'm working outside service cleaning clubs on the weekend or cleaning shoes or running the club. I don't care what it is. I'm going to drive over that hill, and I'm going to go to the golf course in a polo and live my dream.

**Q. You've said it a few times, and I don't mean this in a disparaging way, but what's it like to be living every**



## **hacker's dream?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: Yeah, no, I'm -- I'm as normal as it gets; right? It's a thing for me where I'm not trying to be an inspiration.

I'm not trying to do anything, and that's kind of the big deal is I'm not trying to be anybody outside of myself. Hopefully people gravitate toward it and appreciate it and be themselves and succeed in their goals as I have this week, as they kind of documented my big goal this week was to be the low club pro; right? And that maybe meant shooting 9-over after two days and beating other guys and then shooting 25-over on the weekend; right? I could have been happy with that, but I wasn't.

I wanted to be low club pro but also changed my aspect and my thoughts about it, and just said, let's finish as high as we can. I didn't look at any leaderboards, and now that I know I'm 15th place and I made \$288,000 or something like that, is insane, that I did that playing golf and I love the fact that I sit in my backyard by my fire pit with my kids and my dog, and I always tell them this.

I always say: Do you guys know that golf built this? Golf fed you tonight. Golf has the yard; golf supplied the home that I have in Orange County, California. Golf did this for you guys. I always tell this to my kids that golf did it, and golf just did a little bit more for me this week.

**Q. I know you have a meeting at the Pittsburgh Pub, so just one more question. Why now? Why do you think all this has come together now at 46, and what might have it been like -- why now?**

MICHAEL BLOCK: I think I was the second best player at my high school. I played tennis. So I played varsity tennis all my high school years, and then finally my senior year they allowed me to play golf and tennis in spring sports, and so I played both.

Then I wasn't recruited by anybody to play college golf. I won the St. Louis Amateur Championship my -- when I was 19 or 20 or something like that, and all of a sudden the coach from St. Louis -- it's called University of Missouri St. Louis, came up to me and said: Hey, we'll give you a scholarship, come play for us. I'm like, okay, cool. So I went and did that and played college golf.

And after that, I mean, I didn't do anything. I opened up a golf course with these guys, with Matt and Jeff, I opened up a golf course with these guys in Orange County, California in 2004 and didn't play golf for eight years. The only thing I played was the Tuesday morning Skins Game with my outside service kids, that was it. I didn't have my

Class A, I didn't worry about getting my Class A at that point and I just made sure that we were worried about running golf tournaments and keeping the members happy and keeping Jeff and Matt happy and that's what I did for eight straight years.

Someone at some point said: Hey, Blocky, you're throwing money out your sunroof by not going out and getting your Class A and competing against the best PGA professionals in the world. I went out and did that in ten months. Got my Class A in ten months, which is not easy to do by the way and ever since then, it's been a storybook deal, and especially now.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Michael, congrats again.

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