

PGA Championship

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Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

Max Homa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the 106th PGA Championship at Valhalla Golf Club. We're joined now by Max Homa. Max, welcome to your sixth PGA Championship. What are your impressions of the golf course so far?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's good. It's big. It's very long. Looks kind of familiar, just from all the highlights on TV. But it's good. It feels like kind of the new stock standard of a PGA Championship.

Obviously it won't be as firm as last year but kind of a similar type vibe. Need to drive the ball well and hit your mid to long irons really good. But it's in awesome shape. So it should be a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Start to finish at Augusta, what did you learn that week that you can apply to this week?

MAX HOMA: I think just my process throughout the week was really good. My prep was really good. I felt like I had a better kind of plan. Didn't build it up too much. Didn't try to be too perfect. Played the week before. Things like that.

Then just the actual event just kind of learned that I can handle my nerve. It was a long week just on the butterfly side, playing with Tiger the first two days with some weather, long couple days, and then being in the last group Saturday, second-to-last group Sunday, feel like you have a chance through 11-ish holes.

Just knowing that I still played really good golf, so kind of take both of those. The prep part is what I've been struggling with, the Thursdays and Fridays of majors, but it was also nice to see that as it got down to the nitty-gritty I was kind of able to hang in there.

Q. You had already won so many PGA TOUR events and big events on big hard courses, but did it take a week like Augusta where you were in the mix all week

at a major to sort of believe that it's possible?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I think I believed it's possible, but like I always say this about people who haven't won a TOUR event before or just a major professional event; like you could have all the people in the world tell you it's possible and you can or whatever, but it kind of almost takes you doing it once to truly be able to confirm that to your own mind.

So obviously didn't win it, but it was nice just to -- I didn't play bad golf on the weekend; it's not like I shot myself out of the event. Like I said, after the 11th hole I was very much stoked to know I had a very real chance to win the Masters, win my first major, get a really bad break on 12 on not a bad swing, and that's the stuff that kind of leaves you at a loss for words at times and super frustrated. But in the end as far as this journey of professional golf goes, it was kind of good, because I could rest my head easy knowing I did what I was trying to do.

I think I always knew in the back of my mind my golf was good enough. I didn't know if I would be able to handle all of that chaos the night of a Saturday night or being in the final group Saturday, so Friday night and then Friday morning. So knowing I could do that, I think that definitely has given me some solace in the fact that if I am in that position again I am ready for it. I just need to make some more putts and see what happens coming down the end of the event. But, yeah, I guess that's what I take from that experience.

Q. You mentioned that the PGA has kind of leaned into a certain identity. Each major kind of has that, U.S. Open, The Open Championship, kind of ways they style a course, Masters obviously because it's the same course. Wondering what you think about the PGA leaning into its own thing and what they have chosen?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I like it. It's actually kind of the old model of the U.S. Open, but a bit easier. Typically hasn't been super firm. But from tee to green it's incredibly similar to what the old U.S. Opens were, maybe a little bit more forgiving fairways, but really thick rough, a lot of



drivers, need to be in the fairway it feels like to score.

The biggest difference is it feels like at PGA's in you're in the fairway you can score; you can go pretty low. The U.S. Open's gone to a slightly different model, which I like. It's a lot more -- they have kind of leaned into the firm, so a lot more fairway grass, a lot more strategy.

I feel like the PGA's don't in a way don't have as much strategy but it tests skill a lot, like in a different way. You really need to strike the ball well. You kind of get away with it even at U.S. Opens just because it's so hard that you the skill kind of shifts to almost a short game and a patience and a grinder mentality.

This is, you know, when you look at a course like last year and you see who won, Brooks wins and you're like, yeah, that makes tons of sense. He hits the ball really far; he hits it very straight and he's a really, really great iron player. So it feels like that's, they have leaned into it, and I think that's good because I like variety. Even if you're just looking for a season of like the TOUR season, you have a Hilton Head, but then you have a Quail Hollow and then we'll have Colonial and then we'll have -- I like the environment and I feel like these four majors now have a pretty good style of variety.

Q. With this being an Olympic year, have you given much thought to being a guy who is kind of within reach of that? Has it been a goal of yours to want to be in Paris this summer?

MAX HOMA: It's funny, last year when I kind of realized I had had a pretty decent chance, I kind of laughed it off and just, I never dreamt of, you know, playing, being an Olympian (laughing). I'm probably faster than most people out here but not much faster than anybody else.

So it kind of was like, yeah, I'm not going to make it a massive goal, but it would have been cool. Then as we've gotten closer, it's become a goal. I think it would be pretty amazing.

So, yeah, and now it's like on the tip of my mind. We were just talking about it actually at breakfast, so it would be -- I think it just felt kind of not real. As a golfer I don't think the Olympics ever feels like a real thing we're going to do, and then you get a chance, and now I would really like to be a part of that. So yeah, we have like a month and a half or so left. So pretty excited for that opportunity.

It's actually kind of like a win-win again because never really imagined myself doing that, so if I don't get it wouldn't hurt quite as bad, but for sure it would be an amazing experience and something I'm very, very much

gunning for over the next few golf tournaments.

Q. As a golf pro who is a dad, what advice would you give to Scottie Scheffler?

MAX HOMA: Man, be really nice to your wife. Find a thing that you are good at, that you can help as best you can. Watch your back. Dad back is a real thing. But I think, I mean I'm sure he'll just be giving me advice soon because he's so good at everything. Just being really good with your time.

I feel like one thing I've gotten good at is, and I have a superstar of a wife, but when I'm at the golf course I feel very much at the golf course. I try to be super efficient. I try to make sure I'm really getting my work in.

Then when I'm home I feel kind of the same. Really, you know, not to make it sound like it's the same, but really efficient when I'm home I feel I'm as present as I possibly can. Really try to soak in all those moments as best I can and give my son as much attention as I can because I know I'm gone most of the day and some weeks.

So, just getting really good at time management. I feel like that's probably the hardest thing when you're trying to be -- or he already is, but when you're trying to be the best at something in the whole world, yet, you know, I want to instill that work ethic and whatnot with my son, so I still want to be doing that, but I also want to be really good dad and not neglect and all that.

So I would just say that if you can kind of find a good plan of time management and I feel like you'll feel the fulfillment of both things. I think Scottie's going to be just fine at that.

Q. You mentioned playing with Tiger. You recently announced you're on his team in TGL. What do you expect it will be like now being on -- I guess him being your captain on a team with him as the captain and then just a little bit more what are your expectations of TGL, what it will be like? Will it be difficult fitting it in schedules, things like that?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I think if you look at our team, with Tiger and Tom and then myself and Kevin Kisner, I think they got me and Kev for, you know, our mouths. Tiger and Tom can play the golf. It should be fun though. I think it's -- I think you're going to have to see it to fully get it for everybody. Like it's a lot bigger than playing like simulator golf. It is straight up supposed to be fun. I'm hoping everyone doesn't take it, make it sound like it's too serious if a thing. It will be serious competition but I think a lot of it is just supposed to be fun, showcasing some cool golf.

We're hitting off -- you know, the facility is insane, from what I've seen of it. It's like grass and you can adjust the putting green and it will be very unique. So I think it will be fun.

I think also that kind of intimate environment should bring out some more personality, and as I've been kind of talking about for months now, all of this is supposed to just be for the fans. I feel like this is something that is leaning into the fans' experience. Obviously a lot easier he to broadcast since we're all in the same building.

So, yeah, again, going to be one of those things that probably ebbs and flows as we go about doing it, but to believe obviously a lot of great golfers and a very unique and cool stadium type golf thing that we've never really seen before.

Q. Obviously this is a hometown week for Justin Thomas and you're a guy that wears LA on your sleeve pretty strong. Curious what the challenges are having done well in your home event and what's the challenges of trying to not want it too much and put too much pressure on yourself?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's tricky. I think though if you lean into the support you're getting, it helps a lot. It's easy to make it nerve-wracking. I'm sure he really, really, really wants to win this even more than another major.

However, he's going to have tons of support, as he should. I think that's the part, if you use that to your advantage that's where you get kind of -- we don't typically get a home-court advantage in golf, but I think that's where you can kind of find it a little bit.

The difficulties actually aren't so much the wanting it more, it's just a lot more people here, a lot of people messaging you, asking for stuff. You want to oblige, and Justin's a great dude and he's going to want to still be that great person, but I think -- I know he'll do a great job of it, but just having a plan of like, hey, probably not respond to too many people and just kind of go about it like it's an event not in his home state, but, yeah, I think when you lean into just how cool it is to get to play something in your hometown and have all that support, I think that kind of boosts you.

Q. To follow-up on one of your answers, what is your thing as a dad?

MAX HOMA: Well now it's gotten different. You have to just do everything. But in the very beginning I'm a pretty damn good at diapers. I don't mind it. So, yeah, if there was ever like a spare -- if there was ever we were butting

heads on who was next, I would take that one. Never great at swaddling. That one killed me.

But now it's just, now we're at a year and a half, so it's just straight up chaos, so my thing is just I'm the relief pitcher. I come home after practice and it's just my turn, so just doing my best to relieve my wife as best I can.

Q. Having played with Tiger two rounds at the Masters, what's your assessment of how much he has left in the tank?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, his golf game was incredible. Two days I played with him he hit a great. If he had made anything he would have been right around the lead. So, it was tough draw for him in that we had to play 20-odd some holes the second day. He wasn't limping too bad. So, yeah, I think he's got a decent amount.

I think at some point it probably just comes down to him, just how badly does he want it. I feel like we all know he wants it real bad, so I feel like it is just kind of on that. But his skill level, his talent is still just mesmerizing. So, yeah, I don't know his playing schedule going forward, you know I know he plays in these big ones. I feel like it would, it always would be crazy to think he would win another one.

But watching him play those two days at Augusta, I very much thought he could win another golf tournament. So I don't know tank-wise, but he works his ass off and he's really, really good at golf so I would put nothing past him at this point.

Q. Curious how you came up with the major prep plan that you think works best for you. Was it something you came up with on your own, trial and error, consulting with your team? Just curious how that came about.

MAX HOMA: Error and error, pretty much. Yeah, it was mostly just honestly through the Scottish Open helped a lot. I thought it was so obvious to go over and play the Scottish Open before The Open because it's such different golf. You want to kind of get comfy hitting a lot of different shots around the greens, getting used to the wind, and then also the time change. So that always seemed obvious to go over there, and started to realize that the most comfortable major I've played in is the Open. I always feel like my game is the most ready and my mind is in the right spot, and started to realize, well, a lot of it is probably because I'm just playing golf the week prior, and I was doing the skip-the-week-before-the-major thing to get my prep in and realized I was leaving Scottsdale with like this perfect golf game and then I was going to let's say Augusta Monday and if it wasn't perfect I was trying to find

it again and hold on to it instead of this year I played the Valero and had a really good feel for my golf game, but as the week went on, even though I didn't play amazing, I knew what shots were kind of uncomfortable, I knew what shots felt good, I knew what my misses were, and I felt like that was a better way to spend my time and get better instead of trying to hold on a perfect golf swing for an extra seven days.

Build it up too much, being perfect is -- overly perfect is my one of my bigger struggles, so yeah, it was just kind of -- almost just hits you in the face at some point. Played well at the Open this past year, and I talked to Joe and Mark, and I was like, I feel like it's fairly obvious we should just start playing the week prior and maybe it will get me out of my own head.

So it's only one, one very, very, very small sample size, but it sure worked at Augusta. I hadn't played worth a damn there and went out there and actually played some real golf. So I just think that for -- everyone's different -- but for me what I was doing at home was good for long-term success, not so good for the following week.

Q. You mentioned Scottie earlier. Curious as a fellow competitor what's it like to kind of see what he's doing. Is it frustrating, motivating, a little bit of both?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, no, I think it's just motivating. It's inspiring. Sometimes it's pretty cool to see somebody kind of push the limit on what you thought was possible. I did not think you could hit a golf ball this well this long. I did not know that was possible. We saw it with Tiger but I wasn't around then, and Tiger feels like a mythological creature, especially when you look back on some of those seasons he had from 2000 to 2008 or 2009 or whatever it was. I mean just like absurd golf.

So to get to see that up close and know that that's a real possibility I think it's super motivating, and, yeah, I feel like it gives you something to work at. You really got to push yourself harder and reach even more for what you thought almost was unrealistic and start to realize that it is realistic and if you want to win majors and you want to climb that World Ranking, you're going to have to do some special, special stuff.

Q. You mentioned watching some of the past tournaments here. Did you watch something coming into this? What are your memories of those past PGAs or what did you pick up watching them?

MAX HOMA: I rarely like pick up much. I'm watching them just because they're fun to watch. Appreciate what they do on YouTube. It's cool to watch. I saw AK play Sergio. I

watched that match maybe like two months ago.

I think everybody's seen the Bob May-Tiger thing like a million times. Then Rory coming down the stretch. Haven't watched that one a ton, just actually remember watching it in 2014.

I think what you pick up though -- it's pretty obvious when you get out here, it's just going to be a lot of well-struck 7-irons, well struck 6-irons. Hit the ball well off the tee and then see what you can do going in from there.

So, yeah, again, not picking up a ton, but it's one of those where it did feel like watching -- if you were in the fairway, you could make a lot of birdies. When you were out of position it was going to be quite a struggle. Like I said, that seems like what the PGA model has gone to, which is good. You kind of have a plan going into the week even before you get here.

Q. I wanted to ask you, there's been a lot of talk about the state of golf now and what impact all of the off-course stuff is having on casual fans in terms of popularity and whatnot. I wonder from your advantage point where do you see the state of the game now in terms of casual fans and why?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's been a bit tricky. I do feel like the internet probably makes it seem worse than it really is. It's a very small community and they're incredibly loud. So I think if you spend a lot of time on the internet, it does feel like professional golf is crumbling.

It's tough to decipher, because when we're on the grounds of events, it's amazing. Last week at Quail Hollow was awesome. Felt no different at Bay Hill. Felt no different -- THE PLAYERS felt no different. So it's odd, it doesn't feel like it's dying, yet you hear a lot of very valid complaints on the internet.

So I think it's been, it's very troubling. I don't like where it's going. It's got to be exhausting to be a casual golf fan at this point in time. I don't know why you would want to hear about the business side of this game.

As a fan of other sports, I do not care about the business side of what the Lakers and Dodgers are doing. So, yeah, it is troubling, however, it's just difficult because we come here and yesterday was slam packed and it was awesome and everyone just seems like in such a good -- in such good spirits to just see us playing a somewhat meaningless practice round to their point of view.

So it's tough to kind of completely figure out. I hope at some point soon we can just get back to entertaining

people and playing golf and seeing who shoots the lowest score and not talking about what our Player Advisory Council is going to do and who -- the fans of golf should not know who is on the board. Like that just seems like a pretty obvious one. So that would be the goal going forward.

So I think, you know, in some positive light as a fan of just the game of golf, the benefit is golf is thriving. That's cool. Men's professional golf might be in a weird spot, so hopefully we can continue to get more people to play golf and then once everybody can get this thing figured out hopefully we get those people playing golf to also enjoy watching a little bit of golf. We have a lot going on here, but hopefully at some point everybody can find the plot again.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Max. We appreciate it.

MAX HOMA: Thanks, guys. Have a great day.

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