

PGA Championship

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Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

Tiger Woods

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Welcome to the 106th PGA Championship at Valhalla Golf Club. Four-time PGA Champion Tiger Woods joins us now. Tiger, welcome back to Valhalla and your 23rd PGA Championship. You were part of the one of the most memorable finishes in this championship's history back in 2000. When you look back at that, what do you remember most?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I just remember the pressure that I felt, the chance, an opportunity to do something that Ben Hogan did in 1953. The summer was a whirlwind. I was playing well, then coming into this event, being able to play in Jack's -- play with Jack in his last PGA Championship, and also just the timeline. Jack played with Gene Sarazen in his last PGA, and I was playing with Jack in his last PGA, so just the connection with all that.

Obviously making a putt on 18 and getting into the playoff and making a nice putt on the 16th hole, running after it. A lot of great memories from that week. To be able to go head-to-head with Bob May, who was arguably probably one of the best junior golfers that Southern Cal ever produced. It was a fun week and a fun -- unbelievable moment, really.

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

Q. Expanding on that a little bit. When you look at this great collection of victories and majors you've won, where does that Sunday with Bob May fit in?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I think that the duel between us both, I think if I remember this correctly, Bob shot three straight 66s, and our back nine, we both shot 31 on the back nine. With leading a championship and both of us playing as well as we did, with all of that pressure and we kept feeding off of one another. He would make a putt, I would make a putt, I would make a putt, he would make a putt. It was a fun back nine.

That was the first year they went to the three-hole playoff, and when we got in at the scoring table, I remember that

we were informed it was a three-hole playoff and Bob was completely shocked by that because I don't think that it really got out that much that potentially it could be the way it plays out, and going back to 16, as I said, I made a nice putt there, ran after it. He made an unbelievable chip from the right rough and almost holed it. Again, we never really missed shots on that back nine and then in the three-hole playoff. For us to shoot those low of scores, it was special.

Q. Since the last time that you were here in 2014 do you feel like the course has changed a great deal or is it pretty much the same place?

TIGER WOODS: It's gotten bigger. Gotten a little bit longer. I think they extended six tees since we played in 2014. Opened up some of the areas so there's more flow, less trees. Definitely different than when we played in 2000. But it's still the same framework that we played in 2000. So, the same corridors, but it's just gotten a little bit bigger, a little bit longer, just like all golf courses or all championships that we go to now. I'm looking forward to one day they say we shortened this hole up, because it seems like every time we come back and play it's always getting longer.

Q. State of your game, state of your body and state of your ability to play what's a pretty hilly golf course?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, my body's okay. It is what it is. I wish my game was a little bit sharper. Again, I don't have a lot of competitive reps, so I am having to rely on my practice sessions and getting stuff done either at home or here on-site.

But at the end of the day, I need to be ready mentally and physically come Thursday, and these days of practicing, eating on the golf course, that's one of the reasons I came up here on Sunday was to knock off some of the work that I have to do in charting greens, get all that stuff done early, so I can focus on literally playing and plotting my way around.

Q. The internet is loving the goatee.

TIGER WOODS: (Laughing).



Q. Is that a conscious choice or laziness, and is it here all week?

TIGER WOODS: It's the second. I'm definitely lazy. I cut myself this morning trying to trim it up so it is what it is. (Laughing).

Q. 10 years ago when you were here you were dealing with back issues and then obviously it got worse and you went through a lot. How is it compared to then? Is it better or are you just dealing with something different with your back now as you try to play?

TIGER WOODS: It's not different. At that time I was maybe one back procedure into it. Now it's a hell of a lot more than that number. Back is now fused, as you know. Yeah, coming into 2014 I wasn't feeling very good. But I'm always going to feel soreness and stiffness in my back, but that's okay. Just need other body parts to start feeling better.

Q. We just had Max in here earlier this morning and he was talking about the two rounds he played with you at Augusta and was raving about what you still do on the golf course and the shots you're still able to hit. Curious, how much of a tease is it for you when you know you still have it in there even at this age and how do you kind of deal with that as you go?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I can still hit shots. It's getting around is more of the difficulty that I face day-to-day and the recovery of pushing myself either in practice or in competition days. You saw it at Augusta. I was there after two days and didn't do very well on the weekend.

Q. As a quick follow do you still feel like you have it in you because you are still able to hit those shots?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I still feel that I can win golf tournaments. I still feel I can hit the shots and still feel like I still have my hand around the greens and I can putt. I just need to do it for all four days, not like I did at Augusta for only two.

Q. Given the news yesterday that Jimmy Dunne said that there's been no meaningful progress made on the divide in golf right now, what's your level of confidence that agreement will get done at all, much less on any kind of schedule?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I think we're working on negotiations with PIF. It's ongoing; it's fluid; it changes day-to-day. Has there been progress? Yes. But it's an ongoing negotiation, so a lot of work ahead for all of us

with this process, and so we're making steps and it may not be giant steps, but we're making steps.

Q. Just following on from that, what are the specific things that you would like to see for a deal to go ahead and are you personally open to a deal with the Saudis?

TIGER WOODS: Well I'm not going to comment on whether or not our negotiations and in that nature, except that we're making steps. That's all I can say.

Q. Are you personally open to it?

TIGER WOODS: I'm personally involved in the process.

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

TIGER WOODS: Say that again? As a --

Q. As a dad who is a golf professional, what advice would you have for Scottie Scheffler?

TIGER WOODS: Get some sleep. (Smiling.) I mean, he's got obviously he and Meredith, fantastic, having their first, and those are -- as we all of us who have had children, those are some tough years and ahead of them.

As I said, try and get some rest as much as you possibly can. He's the No. 1 player in the world, and having a great, stable family life at home is important to having a great life out here on TOUR.

Q. The crowds you still see for practice rounds or even just the people who come out to watch you now at 48, do you feel differently when you see that now as opposed to even maybe 10 years ago or five years ago?

TIGER WOODS: I think that I appreciate it more now, just the fact that I don't come out here very often. I don't play much, and I'm at home where it's quiet and it's so different to coming out to practice rounds when there's thousands of people out there like it was at Augusta.

A bunch of people came out today. Unfortunately the weather didn't really cooperate. I'm sure there will be a lot more tomorrow now that it's cleared out. But appreciating the warmth and the support of the fans is something that I probably 10 years ago certainly didn't appreciate that then as much as I do now.

Q. Rory said last week in Charlotte that you and him see the future of golf a little bit differently. What's your position, what do you see as the future?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

TIGER WOODS: Well I think that we see the -- it's good to see it differently, but collectively as a whole we want to see whatever's best for all the players, the fans, and the state of golf. How we get there, that's to be determined, but the fact that we're in this together and in this fight together to make golf better is what it's all about.

Q. Justin mentioned earlier when he was in here that one of his core memories here is watching you when he was a kid win in 2000 here. What's your sense for what as close as you are to him what this means for him to have this championship in his hometown?

TIGER WOODS: Well I think that, I don't know if JT was in diapers still or not, but I think that having a major come to your hometown where you grew up and it's special for him, it's special for Mike and Jenny and everyone who's been involved in his life.

This is his hometown. The fact that he's able to play a major championship where he grew up is special. Unfortunately I can't say that I ever have, just because I missed the U.S. Open at LA Country Club. It would have been nice to play in my hometown. But to have JT come here and -- he's going to get some appreciation from the fans and the ovations are going to be loud for him, as they should be.

Q. You said at the Masters that you were going to talk to Seth after that week about maybe captaining next year's Ryder Cup team. Did that meeting take place, and if so, is there any update?

TIGER WOODS: We're still talking. There's nothing that has been confirmed yet. We're still working on what that might look like. Also whether or not I have the time to do it. I'm dedicating my so much time to what we're doing with the PGA TOUR, I don't want to not fulfill the role of the captancy if I can't do it. What that all entails and representing Team USA and the commitments to the PGA of America, the players, and the fans and as I said, all of Team USA. I need to feel that I can give the amount of time that it deserves.

Q. Scottie's playing with the consistency that is very reminiscent of you at your peak, and Rory showed on Sunday he has another gear, which is also reminiscent of you at your peak. What do you see when you watch those two play golf?

TIGER WOODS: Well, two very different styles. Obviously with Scottie, what he does through the golf ball and with his footwork, or you have Rory who has arguably the best finish of a swing in golf. It looks like a statue, right?

They're two totally different players.

The commonality is I think the focus and when you're on the range and watching them hit golf balls or listening, more so listening to them hit golf balls, there's a different sound to it because they just don't miss the middle of the face. I think obviously Scottie's not as long as Rory and can't probably separate himself on a golf course like that with pure length, but his ball striking, the amount of greens he hits, he just wears you out that way. And then he has an amazing pair of hands around the greens. If he putts awful, then he finishes in top 10. If he putts decent, he wins. He putts great, he runs away. So, he's just that good a ball-striker and that good an all-around player. Rory, just the way he's able to take over a golf course and just overpower it, I kind of remember that back when I was younger, but it's been awhile.

Q. In resigning from the PGA TOUR board yesterday, Jimmy Dunne assessed his role as superfluous. Do you agree with that?

TIGER WOODS: No, I think that he was -- Jimmy and the amount of work and dedication that he put into the board and to the PGA TOUR, it's been incredible. It was a bit surprising that he resigned yesterday and just how it all came about, but, no, his role and his help, then what he's been able to do for the PGA TOUR has been great.

Q. You've talked the past couple years about how you've got the shots, but maybe it's managing your body and the walk of 72 or 90 holes. What does this course present as a challenge to your body?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I wouldn't say the walk's that difficult. I know it's a long walk, it's a big piece of property. More than anything, just stay out of the rough. This is a big golf course and if you get in the rough here, yeah, things could get a little bit sore, but if I drive it well and do the things I need to do and what I did 24 years ago, hopefully it works.

Q. In resigning Jimmy Dunne sort of hinted at the fact that the players kind of hold the majority on the policy board. Do you believe that the players are best qualified to hold sway in terms of determining the future?

TIGER WOODS: Well, the PGA TOUR is for the players and by the players. So, we have an influence and there's roles for the player directors and there's roles for the independents. We're trying to make the PGA TOUR the best it can be day-in and day-out. That's one of the reasons why we have arguments and we have disagreements, but we want to do what's best for everyone

in golf and the TOUR. Without those kind of conflicts I don't think there's going to be that much -- the progress is not going to be there. So it's been good.

Q. Obviously this is not going to be an apples-to-apples comparison, but you've played Augusta so many times and you've played Torrey Pines so many times, and given that you won there and you've won here is there just a comfort level in coming back to a course where you know hey, you know how to get the job done?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, it's been 24 years and 10 years ago I did not play very well, but the memories of coming back here and reliving some of the shots that I was able to pull off back then, we were talking earlier this week or sorry, earlier in or sorry, Wednesday last week when we came up, and how many 2-irons I used to hit off this property. Now it's everything is drivers. Just because they moved it back, it's longer. But the first hole I hit driver and a 60-degree sand wedge in there. Today I hit a driver and a 5-wood. So it's a bit different.

Q. Earlier you mentioned the state of golf and fans. Wondering from your advantage point where you think that relationship stands now and why?

TIGER WOODS: I think the fans are probably as tired as we are of the talk of not being about the game of golf and about not being about the players. It's about what LIV is doing, what we're doing, players coming back, players leaving, the fans just want to see us play together. How do we get there is to be determined.

Q. How much damage do you think has been done by all of this?

TIGER WOODS: We made some progress, yes, for sure. But there's a long way to go still.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks for your time Tiger, we appreciate it.

TIGER WOODS: You got it. Appreciate it.

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