

Senior PGA Championship

Congressional Country Club

Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Richard Bland

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2025 sponsorship. How does it feel to be here as defending champion?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, it feels very special. I got a first look at the course this morning in the pro-am, and I like what I see. It's set up pretty fair. So yeah, looking forward to tonight. It's going to be very special, hosting the Champions Dinner. It was a privilege to be at the Champions Dinner last week as Xander's guest, and that was a night I'll never forget.

The PGA, they make a -- they go out of their way to make their champions, no matter what tournament you've played, they make you feel very special. I'm thankful for them for that, and yeah, just looking forward to hopefully a really good week.

Q. Last week a solid week for you at Quail Hollow. How would you summarize that performance?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, yeah, I took a lot of positives out of the week, especially on that golf course. The weather we had at the start of the week, it really kind of suited the longer hitters. I think I got to get a new 4-iron. I think I've worn mine out.

But yeah, I kind of -- I took a lot of positives out of the week, but I actually came away actually a little disappointed that I felt like I played well enough to compete, and I felt like I didn't putt that well the whole week.

I'm not saying I would have given Scottie a run for his money, but I felt like I certainly -- there was a top 10 to be had there for me, which would have been an unbelievable week.

I think if I would have putted above average I would have been pretty close to that, looking at what top 10 was, 5-, 6-under par and I was 1-over. I think on Saturday I missed four or five inside of eight feet, and I missed sort of, I think, three on Sunday inside of five feet. So yeah, I thought I just kind of cleaned up a little bit nearer the hole, it could

have been a really special week.

Q. Was it a great entry point into this week going from Quail to this week?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, it really kind of showed where my game is at, and that's what I wanted to see. I felt like this game my game has kind of been just a little off. It's not a million miles away, but it's kind of that frustrating stage where I've been hitting the ball very well on the practice ground and just not taking it to the golf course. Actually last week I had to do that; I had to hit the golf ball very well if I was going to have any chance even just to make the cut. It was nice to be able to do that and actually put sort of three and a half really good ball-striking rounds together, which I've not really done as consistently this year as probably the last couple of years.

So it was nice to see that hopefully that's kind of sort of trending back in the right direction.

Yeah, you're going to -- looking at the course this morning, you're going to need -- again, this is a ball striker's golf course. You're not going to be able to fake it around here for four days and expect to be in there come Sunday. You've got to drive it well. There's a lot of bunkers that are in play, and then the greens are going to be tricky if you get in the wrong spots.

It's going to be -- it's a first- and second-shot golf course this week, so you've got to be on your game.

Q. So you're playing, I believe -- did you play round 3 with DeChambeau?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah.

Q. If you're on a weekend round with DeChambeau in a major, you've got to be doing something pretty good.

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, whenever you play with Bryson -- I played with him last round in Korea where he won, so I was -- yeah, I was tied second with 10 holes to play and just kind of -- I guess that kind of showed you where my

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game was lacking a little in the last LIV event.

So under the highest pressure if you're not quite where you want to be, it's going to find you out, and it did. But that's fine. You learn from that. I felt like I improved on that last week, so yeah, it's always exciting to play with Bryson. The energy that he just brings, the buzz of the crowd, yeah, it's always -- he's just a good guy to play golf with. I get on with him on and off the golf course, and I always enjoy playing with him. It's nice to see a golf ball hit like that.

Q. This championship, does this even bring back more memories of what you did last year?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, of course, yeah. You always bring back -- whenever you've won and you go back to defend, of course you're always going to have fond memories. Yeah, it was my first ever senior event, so yeah, I was kind of going into it a little bit last year -- what's the right word? A little bit sort of blindsided a little bit. I knew obviously there's a lot of good players out here, but having not competed with those guys for quite a while, you don't know where your game is going to stack up against them. I was confident that if I played the golf that I was playing at the time and I took that forward into the Senior PGA, I felt I would have a say in how the championship would pan out.

Fortunately on Sunday it went my way.

That can only help boost your confidence coming into this week.

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