

Charles Schwab Challenge

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Colonial CC

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Michael Visacki

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: I'd like to welcome Michael Visacki to the interview room here at the Charles Schwab Challenge. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. I know things have been kind of all over the place for you in good ways.

If we could just kind of take you back to Valspar and what an incredible opportunity that was. I know the story just kind of consumed the entire golf world. What an amazing story. I would imagine you got just hordes of positive feedback from fans and people that probably didn't even know you just inspired by your story.

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yep, it's truly amazing. Everybody has only given me positive thoughts through this whole process. I really am thankful for everybody cheering me on and giving me great support.

Q. Did you in fact receive messages or comments or feedback from a lot of people afterwards?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah. You know, keeping my head up, stay positive, and one day I'll probably get another opportunity, and I did, so I'm hopefully going to be able to cash in on it.

Q. What have you been up to since Valspar? Have you just been playing tons?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, I've actually been able to play a little bit more, now that it's a little less crazy than that week. Been able to focus a little bit more with my coach and my trainer, so we've been able to get a little bit of extra work in for the last couple weeks. It's been really good for me.

Q. What about your game? What are you most confident with coming into the week here?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Definitely my ball-striking tee to green. I've been swinging a little bit better, being able to rotate a little bit more, and just going day by day the process.



Q. I understand that Mr. Schwab himself reached out to you. If you could just share that story with us and how special that was.

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, it was awesome. We were expecting a phone call but we didn't know who from, and my dad answered the phone, and he goes, Can I speak to Mike. He was like, Yeah, but he's right outside; how can I help you. He goes, Well, my name is Mr. Charles Schwab, and my dad almost like kind of dropped the phone a little bit. He was like, What? He's like, Yes, just a couple-minute story, and he's like, Can I speak to Michael, please. And then my dad gave me the phone. I said hello, and he goes, Hello, Mike, this is Charles Schwab; how are we doing? I was like, Whoa. Shocking. He gave me the great news. It was awesome.

Q. I was certainly inspired by your desire to pursue your dream at all costs. A lot of times the most significant dreams aren't the ones that come easy, and I'm sure you'd probably say that given your background it hasn't always been easy, but the fact that you are sticking with it just speaks volumes to your character. Do you even know of another way than to just continue working hard and staying passionate about the game of golf?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, I've been looking at more inspirational quotes lately, and it's just trying to get 1 percent better every day. Just trying to be the best I can be every single day and just continue to get better and better. As of lately, it's definitely been -- I've been in a little different mindset, so it's a nice feeling.

Q. I know you had a chance to get out and see the course here. Just your thoughts on Colonial and how you think it might set up for your game this week.

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, it's definitely nice for me off the tee. I like to hit a little peel cut, and greens are really small, so that's what I'm kind of used to back home, small fairways and small greens, which I like a little better than wide open and big greens.

Q. Have you been playing a lot since Valspar? What have you --

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah.



Q. What have you been up to?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Just playing a lot of different golf courses back home, some nicer courses, and just kind of been trying to take it easy. I've only really had like one day off where I didn't touch a club since then because I know I have this opportunity and I want to cash in on it, and I'm just 100 percent focused on it.

Q. What has this meant to you? Can you put into words all the things that have happened and changed in your life since that video camera was in your face?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, going to -- just going to a local restaurant and an average golfer comes up to me and goes, Are you Big Mike, and I go, Yes. And they go, I was really touched by your story. Congratulations and keep up the good work.

Q. Did you think something like this would come along, a sponsor invite into a PGA TOUR event?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Not really, no. I thought with my performance at Valspar it probably wouldn't, but Mr. Schwab thought it was great to give me -- well, he thought about it and they all offered me a sponsor's exemption, so I'm truly humbled for it.

Q. Have you pursued any other sponsor exemptions, written letters to tournaments or anything?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Nothing yet. I've been just trying to stay focused on this and get ready and let my game do the talking hopefully for the future.

Q. You mentioned playing a lot of golf. Have you played some mini-Tour events since?

MICHAEL VISACKI: No, the mini-Tour that I play back home, the West Florida, we've had like a month and a half after of break, so I really haven't played -- I did have U.S. Open locals last month, but that's really it. Just that one event. I missed by two shots.

Q. Having the experience of Valspar, how will that help you this week at the Charles Schwab?

MICHAEL VISACKI: I'm not going to be as nervous as Valspar. First nine holes was a little overwhelming from practising back home and playing tournaments with nobody watching you to now you have 20 to 100 people watching you, and it's completely different. You're like, oh, don't do this, don't do that, where back home playing in mini-Tours you're like, just step up and hit one right down

the middle. It feels a lot different.

But I'm much more comfortable right now.

Q. I think you mentioned being a Vijay fan at Valspar and meeting him. What about Phil Mickelson, and what did seeing him win last week, what did that mean to you?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, he's obviously changed his body to be more fit and swing faster. I used to be able to have 125 club head speed, but I knew that wasn't the right way to play. Dialed it back a little bit, tried to find more fairways, but now with how long the golf courses are I might start have to kicking it back up to that club head speed to get out with the big guys out here.

Q. Going back to the day when you qualified, every Monday for most tournaments there's these four spots open and somebody has a story kind of similar to yours. How important do you think it was that there was that camera that captured you crying and telling your dad what this meant to you?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, when I made the putt, I didn't know any of the cameras were on me. That was just true emotion, and he just said, hey, we just want to grab a shot of you talking to your dad. To give him that phone call was unbelievable. We've worked so hard for it, and to finally see it pay off, we just literally almost dropped to the floor and started crying because this is what I've wanted since I was seven years old, being playing to play in a PGA TOUR tournament.

Q. What's the goal this week?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Top 10 for sure. I feel much more comfortable out here. I know what I need to do. I realistically feel like I can top-10 it.

Q. And then you go on to the next week.

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, yeah. Everybody may have some doubts, but I know with my game and if I play well, I know I can compete out here.

Q. Who are some of the players that you've had a chance to meet and get to know a little bit and some of the guys that you really look up to out here?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, Bubba back at the Valspar was talking to me for a little bit, Patrick Reed, Kevin Na, Paul Casey, Justin Rose, Henrik Stenson. This week Justin Thomas, we were supposed to be playing a practice round today. That will be really cool, a cool experience for me.

Q. Were you in any way surprised by how big your story became? I know that's probably a tough question for you to answer, but were you a little bit kind of beside yourself at how big of a story it became?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Oh, I was -- I mean, if you told me that on Monday morning or Monday afternoon that my story would blow up like that, I would have said, there's no way. I mean, everybody -- it just feels like normal to me, but to see it explode like that, like it did, I was like, wow, I look at my phone every 10 minutes and then another 25,000 people are mentioning me. It's just unbelievable. I'm truly humbled by all the support and love that I've gotten so far.

Q. How did the practice round get arranged with J.T. for today?

MICHAEL VISACKI: Yeah, he messaged me last week and he said, hey, bud, do you want to come have a practice round on Tuesday. I was like, double yes, please. I've been here since Friday, so I've gotten to see the course a couple times. It's going to be truly amazing seeing it up with J.T. and whoever wants to join us.

Q. Who do you have on the bag this week? Is your father here?

MICHAEL VISACKI: My dad is here with me, and one of my best friends from back home, we went to high school together, he's known as Skinny Mike and I'm Big Mike, and Pop Sr., who's also Mike, so we have three Mikes with us this week.

DOUG MILNE: We appreciate your time, wish you the best of luck this week, and hopefully be talking to you right here after an incredible round this week. Thanks for your time.

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