

# Travelers Championship

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TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

## Garrick Higgo

Press Conference



## TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

**THE MODERATOR:** Garrick, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to the 2021 Travelers Championship. Fourth career PGA TOUR start, and you didn't waste much time getting that first victory in your second PGA TOUR start a few weeks back at Palmetto.

Just a couple opening comments being here this week and how excited are you to make your first start at the Travelers Championship?

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Yeah, it's pretty cool. This is one of the ones -- I've watched all these events as a kid. I mean, the bunker shot that Spieth hit to win, I remember that. So, yeah, the course is great. I've got a good group on Thursday and Friday, so, yeah, should be fun.

**THE MODERATOR:** Okay, and just take you back to post Palmetto Championship, just a little bit on your expectations going into the week. I'm guessing that may have exceeded your expectations coming away with the victory, and how your life has changed since then.

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Yeah, so I always kind of go in with not low expectations, but I just want to play my game and see what happens. Yeah, to get the win was amazing, but just to play well was really a bonus.

**Q. I just want to ask you if you could describe your relationship with Gary Player, how you met, how he kind of became an influence on you, and what kind of influences he's had on you.**

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Yeah, so I met Gary when I was about eight or nine. They've got a holiday house in Plettenberg Bay where I grew up. Yeah, I used to obviously play and practice there a lot, and when he was there over December holiday, I used to play nine holes with him in the afternoon.

Every since then, I mean, we went through a similar thing. His mom died when he was nine or the age I was when my dad passed away, so we kind of have that connection. Only thing I can say is it's real and it's amazing how it's worked out.

But we had that connection before all the good things happened, and even if good things didn't happen, we still would have had that connection.

**Q. You were playing with him when you were only eight or nine, but you could not have been at that time really aware of who he was and what he had done. When did you become aware of what Gary Player is and what he's meant to golf?**

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Yeah, that's true. I think only when I was about 12 or 13 I really understood. When you kind of watch golf more and watch the majors and every time on screen they show who has won what and you see his name always popping up.

And we've always stayed in touch. He calls me a lot, we chat. He's helped me with my game. He's been a big part of why I've kind of won a lot and the mental aspect of the game.

**Q. Congrats on your fantastic play this year.**

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Thank you.

**Q. I would like you just to confirm for us that you're going to take up your position in the South African team for the Olympics? If so, what will playing in the Olympics mean to you?**

**GARRICK HIGGO:** Yeah, I will play in the Olympics. It's going to be awesome. I mean, any time I can represent South Africa is a massive honor. I mean, it's going to be awesome playing with Christian. I know him very well and I know his caddie well.

It's just going to be a massive honor, and hopefully one of us can maybe get a gold for South Africa. It'll mean a lot for the country and everything, and all that everyone in South Africa has been through, I think something like that would be similar to the World Cup in 2019.

**Q. You missed a cut at last week's U.S. Open and you actually played well in the second round. But looking**

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**back, do you think all excitement, fanfare, and maybe wonderfulness from the week before at Palmetto possibly prevented you from playing your best golf at Torrey Pines?**

GARRICK HIGGO: I mean, it had its impact. I was very tired mentally. I feel like all the wins I've had in the last 12 months, each one has changed my life, and this one has been the most significant. So it is hard. It's hard to -- you know, I think each one after this it'll get easier to play well the next week.

But a lot of things happened. My caddie, who is also one of my best friends, Nick, his wife went into labor the Monday morning, so he had to fly back to London. So it's not easy playing with a new caddie, although Mick is great, Mick Doran who filled in for him, and he'll do this week as well.

And then with all things considered, I think I played all right. Had a couple bad breaks, but it wasn't the worst thing to miss the cut. I had a couple days to just relax and get fresh for the rest of the year.

**Q. Good luck this week.**

GARRICK HIGGO: Thank you.

**Q. Just quickly, you play left-handed but you're right-handed. Why is that? At every level of golf that you've played you've tended to win a tournament very quickly. We know in this game some guys struggle for years to get that first victory. Why do you think that is?**

GARRICK HIGGO: So the left-handed thing, when I was at school when I was really little they kind of not forced me to write right-handed, but I had to write right-handed for some reason.

Yeah, I do a bunch of things weird. I write right-handed, I kick left, I throw left. So I'm a little mixed.

And then with the -- what was the question on the winning thing again? Sorry.

**Q. Just most golfers struggle as they go up the levels to win. Takes them a while. At every level you've won very quickly. Why do you think that is?**

GARRICK HIGGO: I think I treat each event the same. I don't make it a bigger thing. That helps mentally. I go about my business and just do the same things. Whether it's a Big Easy Tour event or a PGA TOUR event, I treat to the same.

Obviously the guys you play against it's harder, but I think because I don't really worry about what other guys do it makes it easier for me to play well.

**Q. Just curious what you've heard from other players about playing at the Travelers Championship and what were your biggest factors to being in the field this week?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Well, I'm a member here now. I can't wait to just play every event here. I don't think you need to convince me to come out and play events over here.

Yeah, it's a great course. Obviously I've watched it on TV quite a lot. I played couple holes yesterday. Looks amazing. Greens are great. Yeah, it's going to be a good week.

**Q. Good day, Garrick. So congratulations on your whirlwind 12 months, as you said. What are you expecting from American tournaments going forward, and are you going to juggle Europe and USA going forward?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, so America is obviously a lot stronger. The depth out here is unreal. Anyone can win. I mean, I'm just looking forward to playing over here a lot. I'll play in Europe as well and hopefully in South Africa as well.

I'll have to sit down and see which events I'll play, but obviously the majority will be over here. If I can play a couple back home, that'll be great. If not, I'll try my best.

**Q. You made mention of the younger players coming through in South African golf, and Wilco is definitely one of those guys. You guys have probably this rivalry going and probably spiced up a little bit. How much would you welcome a rivalry to go hit in the PGA TOUR in the not too distant future?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, I wouldn't say we have a rivalry. We really, really like each other a lot. We're very good friends. Obviously we want to beat each other, but we don't really see it that way. I want him to do as well as I want myself to do well.

Yeah, obviously there is maybe a little bit of rivalry. I think it makes us play better. We learn from each other. We always play practice rounds together. I ask him questions about how to hit it further and all this stuff. Yeah, he asks me questions, and we just learn from each other's games.

**Q. You alluded to the fact that you were a bit mentally**

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tired after that win a couple weeks ago and going into the U.S. Open last week. How much did you learn from that, from debuting at U.S. Open, and how much did the event mean for you as Garrick Higgo going forward and in trying to improve your own game?

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, I learnt a lot from that. I always learn from each week. I think it was tough that I won the week before the U.S. Open. Would've been nice if it was before in another event.

But, yeah, I learnt a lot. I think I can take a nice positive away from the fact that I didn't play my best and I just, just missed the cut even being mentally drained and all that stuff, playing with a different caddie. I think I did pretty well considering all those things.

**Q. Just wanted to ask what aspects of your game did you and Cliff identify as aspects that you needed to work on prior to leaving for Europe?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, it was mostly just short game. Obviously there were a couple things in my swing that wasn't what we would've want it to be. We went to kind of back to the way I like to hit the ball, which is draw. I kind of changed it a little bit. We all want to get better, but I figured out that wasn't working and I had to go back to what I'm comfortable with.

Short game we worked on technique, hitting different shots. The pins out here are always tucked three from the edges, so I had to figure out how to get a lot more spin while hitting it a lot shorter.

Yeah, I changed to the new Pro V1X from the normal Pro V, which helped a lot. Yeah, and then putting, I just had to work on my pace to make sure I three-putt less and make a lot more from about 20 feet.

**Q. Just South African golf has always had a steady stream of stars on the PGA TOUR. Is there a sort of very definite sense from your side that there is this new generation of youngsters, yourself, Christian, Wilco, and a few more down the line? And how excited are you that this might be a flood of some young South Africans that can make it onto the PGA TOUR?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, it's going to be awesome. I would love to have all of them out here every week. You got your buddies out there. So I can't wait for that. Hopefully it happens soon. I'm sure it will. All the guys, even the guys on the Sunshine Tour, their games are definitely good enough. It's just about doing it when you've got the opportunity to do it.

Yeah, so hopefully there can be a lot more of them out here. That would be awesome.

**Q. Congratulations.**

GARRICK HIGGO: Thank you.

**Q. (Audio cut out.) At this point in your career is it putting, driving, irons, short game, or mental capacity?**

GARRICK HIGGO: So we lost that one. We couldn't really hear that question very well, to be honest. It kind of broke up the whole time.

THE MODERATOR: Jeff, if you could type your question into the chat function there, I'll ask it for you.

**Q. Garrick, you've spoken a lot about missing the cut at the U.S. Open, but of course you made the cut at the PGA Championship. What did you learn about the highest level of golf from that experience?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Just I think you have to have all of your -- everything working. Have to do everything really, really well. You almost have to play better than what you would even if you were winning a normal event.

You can't lose your focus. You can't hit it just slightly offline because you'll get punished. So I think it's just one of those the more you play the majors the better you get because your focus, you tighten up your misses, and just by playing those, you get more comfortable with the rough and the greens and everything going on.

So I would think as we play more of those, the younger guys will start to do better.

**Q. What is your strongest suit right now? Is it mental, putting, or irons?**

GARRICK HIGGO: I think it's probably mental and putting I guess. Iron play has always been really consistent and solid. I would like to get it even better, give myself a lot more birdie chances. Off the tee I'm a little streaky. I hit it a decent distance. I hit it straight.

But I would like to hit a lot more fairways to give myself the chance to improve my iron play. Those two kind of if you don't do the one well the other one won't have the chance to do well.

But my putting and short game and my mental game is definitely my strongest part of my game.

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**Q. And how are you adapting to the PGA TOUR conditions compared to what you're used to with the European Tour and the Sunshine Tour?**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, I think I was lucky that I came over here and played one year at college where I played a lot of the U.S. courses. So it's not actually that different. Obviously I was used to playing here. Haven't been back here for a while, but I had that experience.

So obviously my game is improved a lot since then, so it's nice to bring this game to these courses. I'm actually feeling quite comfortable.

**Q. Nice special win last week in Wichita with Harry Hall, close friend of yours. Comments on how probably didn't surprise you to see him win.**

GARRICK HIGGO: Yeah, didn't. There is a lot of guys from Vegas that went to UNLV that are very, very good. I think it's tough in America with the Korn Ferry Tour. There are so many guys that can win. They just need the opportunity.

It's nice to see that he's taken the opportunity that he has because his game is really, really good. I mean, his short game is unreal. He putts great. Hits it long. Yeah, and I guess his mental game is also pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we sure appreciate your time. Thank you and have a great week this week.

GARRICK HIGGO: Awesome. Thanks for joining us so much.

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