

Travelers Championship

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Andy Bessette

Jimmy Canton

Nathan Grube

Harris English

Chris Berman

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP

but he has an entire plan in place and routine he's going to go through when he's going to execute that shot.

The last two years for us as a tournament, we had no idea where our ball was going to land off the tee. If somebody would have said to us, hey, where is your ball going to -- what are you going to do here, what are you going to do here, and while we didn't know the answer to that, we did have a process in place.

We had a caddie; we were checking wind speed; we were checking where the pin was placed; we had cleaned our grips; we had gone through the training beforehand. Everything that you saw the last two years was not an accident. It was training, it was preparation, just like Harris had done to that point to that shot. Everything that had been done beforehand allowed him to execute that shot.

I'm going to bring Andy Bessette up here. The preparation that it took to get to the point to execute what you saw the last two years was an immense amount of time, energy, resources to get to the point where I think we were all incredibly proud of what our community produced.

In '20, under those circumstances, in '21, and I just thought about it this morning going, it was kind of that same feeling, hey, what are you guys going to do about this? I don't know, but I promise you when we get there we are going to apply the disciplined approach to actually execute what we need to execute.

The man behind that strategy and that process to get us there, to get to those results, is the chief administrative officer and vice president of the Travelers, and I call him the chief golf officer, Mr. Andy Bessette. Welcome him up.

(Applause.)

ANDY BESSETTE: Of course you know what I'm going to say now, is nobody does this alone. This is Nathan and I having a lot of fun. This is our 16th -- actually 17th year, because back in 2006 before we started all this we were together visiting with players, visiting with broadcasters. I'd never forget the conversations with Chris, with Tirico, Mike. It was unbelievable.

HAN GRUBE: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here this morning. Obviously a little surreal, I think, to have all of us here in person. This is something I think we've been talking about for a couple years now, like hey, what's media day going to be like, what's the tournament going to be like, and to actually be here, to see your faces, to see the excitement, to hear the stories, the camaraderie, it's very, very good to be back.

Welcome. 47 days away. I know you're counting. We are going to get started here with a little recap video from last year's event and then we're going to get started with today.

(Video shown.)

It's interesting, I'm going to introduce Andy Bessette from Travelers. I know everybody knows Andy. But before I do that, looking at that video, I was thinking about it this morning, I can imagine a situation where on Sunday morning one of you in this room could have interviewed Harris and said something like, Harris, where is your shot going to land when you tee off on 15 today, and he probably would have looked at you and gone, what do you mean?

Well, where is your shot going to land? He would have said, well, I have no idea where my shot is going to land, but I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to go up and see what my lie is and I'm going to talk to my caddie and we're going to talk about what shot to hit and I'm going to look at the wind, I'm going to think where the pin is placed, and then I'm going to hit a shot and I'm going to execute my shot.

So he would have no idea where his ball was going to land

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Every time I see Mike I say to him, I'm still working on your list. He goes, Andy, you finished my list like 10 years ago. Just keep going. So I laugh.

But the friends that we have in the players and J.J. Henry, and the list goes on and on of the golfers that were back in the day, I think J.J. was the last champion before we took it over as the title sponsor in 2007.

The support from all of you is so, so incredibly important to what we do. Think about like Nathan said the last couple years how crazy this has been. My gosh, this is just actually -- who would have ever thought in 2019 that we would go into a worldwide pandemic for two years plus, and it's still running. Getting better it looks like, I hope, but it changed all of our lives a lot forever. Masks, vaccines, booster shots, my gosh, I had to get my second booster last Thursday and it didn't really do -- my arm was sore and I felt a little crappy on Friday but I still went to work.

Why did I do it? Actually I was talking to Nathan and I said, I'm not sure I'm going to get it, but then I thought, we're going to be around a lot of people that week of the 20th to the 26th of June and so it's probably safer since I'm not a spring chicken and everybody says when you're over 50 -- that's really generous, right, over 50 -- you should get a second booster, so I did.

It's great to be back in person with media day. My gosh. I look forward to this day. This is one of my favorite days of the year. I know it is for Nathan, and you're all so helpful to us. And what a great time for golf. Just listening to Nathan about ticket sales, oh, my gosh, we're going to have massive crowds. I can't -- I'm already nervous about the crowds.

We're going to have some of the biggest crowds we've ever had here. And on Wednesday for the celebrity pro-am, Michael, I think you're going to help us out again, right? So I want to make sure because I get words through -- so Chris is with us as usual and Chris is a great support. I wanted to rename it the Chris Berman Celebrity Pro-Am. But he does, he always says no to me. It's like, oh, geez, I'm going to keep trying, though. 16 years. I'm going to keep trying until at least 30.

But thank you to you all and you both and everybody else who's playing in the celebrity pro-am. It's going to be such a great day.

Today is all about Harris English and what we did last year. He did win in dramatic fashion. But also the drama was Alan Schnitzer, our chairman and CEO, walking all eight playoff holes. My phone was ringing like crazy after we

were done, and they said -- and actually my doctor called me. How scary is that? And Jack said, are you okay? And I'm like, yeah, why?

He's like, man you were sweating and you were hot. I'm thinking after, so I'm reflecting after back in the office at Travelers, and I said, you know, I think wearing a wool sports coat to walk eight holes on Sunday afternoon was not a smart idea.

So I thought, hmm, how do I break this to my boss? How do I break this to Alan? So Andy -- I'm kind of a chicken so I said, eh, let's let it ride and see what happens. This is July.

So in September Alan walks in my office and he says, hey, I've got an idea. Sure, what? I don't think we should wear our wool jackets on Sunday anymore until the closing ceremony. I stood up and I said -- he probably thought I was crazy. Yeah, let's not do that. What do you want to do? He said, let's get white shirts. We'll have a bigger logo like the players want and we'll wear that walking.

He said, if we have to walk eight holes like that we're both going to die. I don't know about Alan, but it looked like he was comfortable and I was ready to die.

So we dressed -- it created change, right? Change is all around us. What was a hot day, a great playoff, really exciting, was a challenge for some of us, and now it'll never be again because we're going to wear a white shirt.

We're really excited to have you all back here for this year's Travelers Championship, and this year we raised over \$2.2 million for charities. All net proceeds go to charity, and over 125 organizations benefitted from what we do. How great is that? That's kind of the ethos of Travelers. Travelers gives over \$22 million a year to different organizations in need of help and assistance, and our primary beneficiary is Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. We're lucky enough to have Zaire here with us today and his mom Cheryl.

But what that all means to us is so, so important, and we can only do that with a great player field. I saw Scottie at THE PLAYERS, Scottie Scheffler at THE PLAYERS, and he's ranked No. 1 in the world and he was helping us with a little competition that we were filming.

What's it called, Scratch Golf? It's lucky I got that. Usually I call it switch, call it all kinds of stuff, but switch is the Game Boy thing.

Scottie was so excited about coming and we had a great conversation. I saw Patrick Cantlay, he's excited. He's in



the field, No. 4. Rory is in the field. Rory is always excited. He's terrific. The story there is my brother who's an orthopedic surgeon in Rochester New York repaired Rory's wife's father's knee. Pretty cool, huh? That's actually cool. She said, is your brother Dr. Gary Bessette? I said, yeah, he is, thinking oh, my God, what's this going to lead to. She said, well, my father told me to tell you that your brother is an 11 out of 10. Really? Wow, that's great. I'm not surprised because he's meticulous about details.

So all these relationships are so important. Justin is playing, 8 in the world. Justin Johnson, 10 in the world. And Xander is back, Brooks Koepka is back, Bubba is back, which is great. So start off with six, seven of the top 10 golfers in the world and build from there is great.

We've been the title sponsor, as I mentioned before, since '07, and we've generated -- the tournament has generated with all the great work of Nathan and Tara, Kevin, and the entire staff, which is world class; more than \$22 million for 800 local charities.

So you think about what this tournament does. This is not about profit. It's not about a wealthy owner. It's about charity.

But we care about players, too, and I want to tell you -- I'm going to shorten this story. But at THE PLAYERS I was sitting on the back of a golf cart with Harold Varner III, and Harold is a good friend and he has been for a lot of years. We're brutally honest -- well, we're honest with each other.

We have really good conversations. I love him to death. But he became so special to me over a five-week period. I'm just going to briefly tell you that while we were sitting on the back of this golf cart he got a text. He goes, oh, boy. I said, what's going on? He said, J.J. Spaun, he was diagnosed a couple years ago with type I diabetes which is what my son has. I said, I kind of thought so.

So I said, what's going on and he told me. I said, you tell him to call me and we're going to get on a call with the CEO of JD RF who's a great researcher. He understands type I like nobody I know. I said, tell him to call me. So J.J. called me the next day, and thank God he had texted Harold and Harold and I were sitting on that golf cart talking and he told me.

About three weeks later I set up a call with J.J. and with Aaron Kowalski who is the CEO of JD RF, and Aaron asked him all the -- I wouldn't ask these questions, but he asked him all these questions because he's a Ph.D.; he's a researcher in this stuff.

And J.J., we get done talking after about a half hour, J.J.

said, I can't believe the two of you guys came into my life. That was enough for me. I was ready to lose it. Thank God it was a Zoom call.

What happened, and I'm not saying all this -- and Aaron set him up with Dr. Anne Peters who's the leading endocrinologist out in Los Angeles, and she deals with all the top race car drivers, hockey players who have type I diabetes, so this doctor knows type I.

So guess what, J.J. hooks up with her. We'll see where this all goes. But two weeks after this meeting -- and I'm not connecting them, please don't connect them. But two weeks later, guess what, J.J. won at Valero. Really? J.J. won at Valero? I was calling Nathan every two seconds. Even now I have goosebumps.

Think about that. Here are three guys, right, two young guys -- well, one older, middle aged guy -- okay, older guy, and all different backgrounds, different ethnicities. Harold is African-American; J.J. is I think it's Filipino, some Mexican Heritage, as well, and me, connecting together to help each other in life.

Is there anything better than that? I don't know. If there is, I give up, because that so defined how we do things at the Travelers Championship.

This is just not about getting the top players in the world. We care about the top players in the world, but we care about the other aspiring players in the world, right? We care about J.J., and J.J. goes from whatever he was ranked in the world and now he's ranked much higher with his victory at Valero.

I just had to share that story with you because to me, that's who Nathan is. That's who I am. That's who our teams are. We care about people.

We're not just here for a show. We're here for charity. We are here for charity. But we're here to help people, too. And if we can help somebody like J.J. Spaun, and Harold Varner and I are sitting in the back of a golf cart -- I will never forget that.

When I saw both of them under the tree at the Masters, I said -- I gave them both a hug. Thank God it was like five apart. I said to Harold when I hugged him, I said, you know, Harold, I love you to death. I said, you cared enough to tell me about what was going on with J.J. that I think we helped him. I think. Time will tell.

I saw J.J., and I said, I hope all that helped with Aaron. He said, Andy, it helped more than you know. I just love these two guys. That's what life is about. If we can help people,

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if we can help the best golfers in the world and they get better, wow. That's pretty cool to me.

With all of that -- and I didn't mean to divert too much in the story, but I felt that was a really important story because that really tells you who we are, I think. It defines who we are and how we care. We care about camp. We call about all the charities that we serve. And finally, we care about each of you, too.

Each of you play such an important role, and you're always here to help us, but if we can ever do anything to help you, we're here. We're here for you.

So thank you. With that, I'll turn it all back over to Nathan. I hope you have a great day. I was assured by our weather people in the audience that it would not rain today, so it's going to be a beautiful afternoon for golf and you'll have a great time.

Thank you very much and thanks for your support of the tournament.

(Applause.)

NATHAN GRUBE: I've told this to many of you before, that I get asked the question about my peers, hey, how do you get your title to come out with you on TOUR. Like I'm trying to make that happen like six months from now. We've kind of penciled in an event. I'm like, uh-huh. You are never going to get a title sponsor that cares about the event and the players as much as Andy does and as much as Travelers does.

You have no idea what that means to the players. That story that Andy told resonates with the players. J.J. needed an exemption last year. Like J.J. wasn't like a top guy going, how do we recruit this guy to this field? This is a player struggling with something much bigger than his game, and that outreach just matters. It matters. It's a personal touch that not every other tournament, no other tournament probably gets.

Obviously we wouldn't be here with what this is without Travelers, and I was thinking about it as I was sitting there, kind of that analogy about Harris and hitting the golf shots. The last couple years I've got to say thank you to some of our partners, too. Going into a meeting with some of your top sponsors, your presenting sponsors who invest a significant amount of money with the tournament, you know, Stanley and Trinity and Eversource as our presenting sponsors.

So you go in and have a conversation and say, all right, we're not going to have any crowds out there this year, no

hospitality, no way for you to actually justify your investment with us; are you in? Like that's not an easy conversation to have.

But when they know what the tournament is about and when they know where the net proceeds are going, it actually was an easier conversation than I ever would have guessed. I have to say the last couple years were just a testament to what this community feels about this tournament. It was a no-brainer. Yep, we're in. Here, keep the investment. Have it go to charity. And you're going, hmm, this is -- people know what we're about.

Thank you to Travelers, thank you to our sponsors, our top partners for being here.

I have to say, too, that having a board of directors that understands what we're trying to do, as well, I know Ted May is here; Dan Kleinman is the chair of our board. I don't see Dan here this morning.

But to have that guidance and leadership from your board when you lay out a plan to say, hey, we're going to put on a TOUR event with no revenue, who's with me? And to have your board go, okay, let's unpack this, let's figure it out. Ted, thank you for your leadership to be able to get to where we are.

Having said that, I now get to introduce Jimmy Canton, who's going to introduce a special guest this morning. I know we're in the golf world so you know this reference. The show Inside the PGA TOUR, right, where you get to go and see the players. Like hey, what kind of cars do they drive? Hey, what kind of mowers do they use on their lawn? Hey, what's their favorite wine? You get this behind-the-scenes look on who players are.

I always find it pretty cool to go, oh, that's what they're like away from the office. More importantly, though, that's what they're about. You find out about things they care about. You find out about stuff that matters to them. Do they like baseball with their kids? Do they like golf with their kids? Do they try to get away from golf? You learn about them. You learn the why.

Well, Jimmy is the why about us. You want to do an Inside the Travelers Championship? Jimmy is going to give you, hey, what do we like to do away from our job? What do we do with the funds that we get? What do we do with our life?

Well, we at the Travelers Championship, our life, what we do, is put back into an organization like this. And this is your Inside the PGA TOUR glimpse of who we are away from the office. And who that is is what they do in their



mission.

And you're going to hear from a camper to tell you a little bit about what we are so honored to be a part of. So Jimmy Canton, the CEO of Hole in The Wall Gang Camp. Jimmy.

JIMMY CANTON: Good morning, everyone. Andy, it does feel great to be back. This is awesome. This is always an exciting time of the year at the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. Right now we're in the middle of our spring family camp programs.

It feels so good after the winter to have our families back onsite. And with June right around the corner, the staff is right now getting ready for the start of our summer program.

I know that the championship and camp are both looking forward to safely taking whatever steps we need to get us back closer to normal.

For the last couple of years, the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp has done its fair share of pivoting. Last summer we provided a full season of family camps where we created customized camp experiences for each individual family so that everyone could safely participate.

This allowed our campers and our families to get back to camp and experience a different kind of healing during a really difficult time.

This year I am thrilled to report that the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp's 35th summer we will be providing our more traditional camp program for children with serious illnesses and their siblings.

These campers will enjoy a safe five-day session, seven of those five-day sessions filled with their favorite Hole in the Wall activities while being surrounded by friends who remind them that they're not alone.

Vaccines will be required for all participants. Campers will be placed in cohorts, and we will utilize other safety measures that our medical team has prescribed for us.

For those unable to attend these sessions for whatever reason, two additional summer family camps will be made available. The healing doesn't end there. Our family outreach team is back visiting families at their homes, putting on regional events, and hosting parent and caregiver retreats to provide more frequent camp connections to all those we serve.

The team is also continuing to produce a number of mailing

series, incredibly popular over the last couple years, as well as other virtual and alternative programs that are allowing us to meet our families where they are during this continued challenging time.

Hole in the Wall's hospital outreach team also continues to bring camp-style games and activities right to the bedsides of children and at special events in dozens of hospitals across the northeast and mid-Atlantic, and Travelers has been an incredibly generous champion of this program for years now.

Andy Bessette even got a chance to make a little mischief with the hospital outreach team in one of our Connecticut partner hospitals a couple years ago.

A camper dad recently wrote to me. They say you're only as happy as your saddest child. Trying to find happiness for these kids is a struggle, and camp has the answer. Independence, freedom, and love.

All of us at the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp feel so privileged to continue on what our founder, Paul Newman, started 35 years ago. From the 288 campers served in that very first year to the thousands and thousands of children and family members who now experience our programs all year-round every year, always free of charge, it has been an incredibly rewarding adventure.

We are deeply grateful for everyone who has taken this journey with us. I especially want to thank Alan Schnitzer, Andy Bessette, Nathan Grube for being in Camp's corner all of these years.

We've got some exciting things coming up ahead, including the opening of our new creative complex in 2023. Once again, I want to thank our friends at Travelers Championship and Travelers and everyone in the community inspired by your generosity to support the rebuild efforts last year after the fire and who continue to stand in solidarity with our campers and their families.

We could not do this without you.

Zaire, you have been a camper for years. We love you at Hole in the Wall. You inspire us, and everyone, you'll get a chance to meet Zaire right now. He is magnificent. He's going to be a part of camp for a long time. Come on up and share your camper story.

ZAIRE: Good morning, everyone. My name is Zaire, and I have a blood disorder called sickle cell anemia. Most people's red blood cells are circle shaped, but some of mine become shaped crescent moon or death's sickle, hence the name.



The sickle cell shape causes the blood cells to die quicker than regular blood cells. They're kind of sticky and they can ball up in the joints causing bad pain. This can become a sickle cell crisis. Thank goodness I've never had a crisis before like most people with sickle cell do, but I do have chronic pain.

There is no cure for this disease, but there are many donors, organizations, and hospitals working on a cure. If people are suffering from sickle cell and have a risk of dying they might try a bone marrow transplant, which hopefully would reverse the symptoms of the disease, but the procedure includes chemotherapy and months of hospitalization for healing.

Sickle cell weakens my immune system so I get sick very often, especially during winter. Some years I've even missed my own birthday. I get sick much more than the other kids at school, and usually when I get sick I end up in the hospital. It also prevents me from keeping up with class which can make school really hard sometimes, but I'm lucky to have teachers who accommodate me when this happens.

When I was seven years old my mother's friend was telling her about the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. She sent her son who was a friend of mine that also had sickle cell to camp for the first time and he really liked it. Whenever I was in the hospital, Camp's amazing hospital outreach program would always bring some camp magic to my room.

Mom asked me if I wanted to try it. It was a new experience for me. I had never been away from my family for so long and I'm not really an outdoors person, but I wanted to try something new, and I knew I would have a friend, so I wasn't too nervous.

When I arrived at camp it really was magical. I remember seeing the pond and driving past the horse barn all the way up to cabin circle. Immediately I knew I was going to like it here. They greeted me cheeseburgers, which if you know me, that's how to sell me on something.

But I soon realized that it was much more than the cheeseburgers that gave me a good feeling about camp. It didn't take long for me to adapt to my new surroundings at camp. My counselors were some of the nicest people ever, and my new camp friends were extremely special because they were people who I could relate to who could truly understand my experience.

Unfortunately, I've been separated from camp for two years due to COVID-19, and because of my disease I've had to

stay really vigilant about the virus. So in one of the darkest times in the world, it was extremely difficult to not be able to go to one of the brightest places I know.

Camp continued to shine a light on my summer with their online summer programs, which allowed me to have camp-style fun from the comfort of my own home.

However, it was also heart wrenching to hear about the tragic fire that burnt down our wood shop, arts and crafts area, kitchen, and camp store. I was brought back to those memories of making Carnivarty cupcakes - Carnivarty is camp's mixture of carnival and party - and my diverse collection of wood-burned plaques over the years.

It was bittersweet because those buildings might never be the same again. Some of the best things about those buildings were the beautiful art and camp artifacts that decorated the walls. It broke my heart that I wouldn't see those again.

But then I realized that the memories will always be there for me to look back on and cherish, and that so many people donated so that we can rebuild and create new memories.

And then I had another realization. As I said before, camp isn't just a place. It's always with me in my heart, a memory I can escape to when I need a little light. I'm tremendously excited to return to camp this summer as a senior camper. I'm excited to swim in the pool, perform on stage night, and make new friends.

Camp for me is an escape, a chance, a privilege, but mostly camp is a home.

So thank you to camp and to the Travelers Championship for having me speak today. Have a great day, everyone.

(Applause.)

NATHAN GRUBE: We've missed the stories, Zaire, thank you. Honestly it makes us want to do our jobs as well as we possibly can. We see the direct connection in what we do and being able to support camp.

Carnivarty, that is actually what took place on Sunday, so thank you for the word because I was having trouble describing it.

We're going to have Harris and Chris Berman come up here in a second, but I have to say, Andy has been talking about this, it's personal with the players, it's personal. And you've heard me say this about Chris before, this is personal for him and you can't fake that. You can't

manufacture it.

He was out here yesterday during an event that we had helping out. He was doing a shoot down on the red umbrella. He said, I hit it three times. I said, Chris, I've never hit the red umbrella so you're three times more than I have.

But he's here. He's present. He did radio for us yesterday for two hours. Just, hey, happy to help out. Let me know what I can do. He cares. He knows what we're about.

So to have him here is just so important for us. Harris is going to be here virtually. He's going to pop on the screen here in a second. But when you look at Harris, I don't know if you got to see this, when he won it was -- gracious is probably the best way I can describe how he responded.

I mean, you have Kramer who was -- came out of nowhere. Harris shoots 65 on Sunday, they go through that whole epic playoff, and immediately Harris acknowledges Kramer like man, great job, amazing. He is so gracious and such a gentleman. We are very, very fortunate to have him be representing us as our champion.

We're going to hear from him, but we're going to show Carnivarty here from last year because that's really what it felt like. You would think on the longest day of the year that daylight would never be a question, and after two and a half hours when the TOUR rules official came up to me and said, you maybe have one more hole, I'm like, seriously? We had like 19 hours of daylight this year.

Anyway, Carnivarty is taking place, and we're going to see that and then bring Chris and Harris up.

(Video shown.)

NATHAN GRUBE: Chris and Harris, come on up.

CHRIS BERMAN: That was unbelievable. What's up, Harris? How are you, man?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Chris, doing well, man. I hadn't seen you since the awards ceremony last year.

CHRIS BERMAN: But we're going to get your advice on 18 for everybody here who's going to play in a minute, all right, because I think you might have it tattooed on.

Well, welcome back, if you will, and defending champ is always a defending champ here. Let's see, you played 18, what was that, seven times on Sunday, then Thursday, Friday, Saturday, so that would be 10. Pro-am, you played in the pro-am, right? So 11. Practice round, 12, 13?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Probably so. Probably so.

CHRIS BERMAN: I mean, do you wake up thinking of each blade of grass on that hole? That's a lot of times to play it in one week.

HARRIS ENGLISH: I feel like I know that front right pin. I feel like I've had a putt or seen a putt from about everywhere around that hole. I feel like if you give me about a 10-footer on that hole I can read it for you.

CHRIS BERMAN: You're hired. I know this is how you and other pros are schooled, if that's the right word, but what was almost as impressive to us, at least to me, is not only the way you hung and this and that and unbelievable playoff and 13-under par, et cetera, but to stay in your routine, in your moment as the pressure mounted each playoff hole.

As you look back at it, I know, hey, that's what we're supposed to do, but here is the 6th, here's the 7th -- I mean how did you stay exactly the same routine you wanted to stay? How did you do that with all the pressure?

HARRIS ENGLISH: That's a good question. It actually got easier. The more and more we went on in the playoff it kind of got easier. I felt like the pressure was off. I mean, the first playoff hole, and then I felt like that's the most pressure, and then the more and more you get into it, it's kind of a lot of fun.

We were going back and forth. We were making some clutch putts, hitting some clutch shots. I mean, looking at that video, how many close putts Kramer had to win the tournament, barely lipping out. I mean, we were giving each other everything we had, and that's all you want.

For me being a playoff like that, it takes the pressure off when it's just me versus the other guy, me one-on-one, boxing match. To me that's a lot of fun, and it's why I enjoy playing match play, it's why I enjoy playing one-on-one like that.

I don't know. I mean, looking at it, it's like, how did I stay that calm and collected, like plugging that ball in the bunker on 18, really knowing that I had to get it up-and-down and that was the only option, and just knowing you can do it and actually pulling it off is a great feeling, and to keep the playoff going and coming out on top ultimately is a great feeling.

CHRIS BERMAN: Calmer as it went on. We have putts on the second hole for five bucks and we can't stay in any routine, but that's neither here nor there. You obviously



didn't know Kramer very well, and I'm not saying that you guys hang because pros, as the events go on, you don't necessarily see everybody every week when you're playing.

Have you become at least friendly out of that? I would imagine there's no other way to describe that, right? Respect for sure.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, respect for sure. I knew Kramer a little bit before we played. I had never played with him before I played with him in the playoff. I knew his caddie William Lanier pretty well. He had been on the bag for a few friends of mine. We were definitely friendly.

I knew kind of Kramer's backstory growing up in Dallas, went to Texas, and I knew how great of a guy he was. It wasn't like playing a playoff where I didn't like the guy or knew the guy really well, played a lot of golf with him.

We really didn't know anything about each other's games and it made it fun. It made it interesting. You could see in the video. We were pulling each other. We had respect for each other when we were making those putts, when I was making those putts, we were fist pumping, and it was cool.

It was a cool camaraderie we had and we wanted to bring out the best in each other, and I think that's what you got.

CHRIS BERMAN: Look, it was an unbelievable win but it was wonderful for golf, and again, it was good that it was on the longest day of the year, thank God.

For about a year and a half you've been -- I mean, I think maybe, but I don't want to say it started with, but what, Winged Foot, which was in the fall of 2020, the Open; you played great.

Of course won at Maui, which is the top players only; another great Open at Torrey. I'm leaving some things out, of course. Then a win here, Ryder Cup. This is kind of what you dreamt about, right, this year and a half run that you were on at that time? I would imagine.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I was definitely playing a lot of confident golf. And, yeah, starting back at Winged Foot in the U.S. Open, anytime you can play well in a major and have a chance to win, that was by far the best finish I'd ever had in a major championship, finishing fourth at Winged Foot, and then getting back in the winner's circle at Maui obviously gives me a ton of confidence.

I've learned how hard it is to win out here. I went through a drought of six, seven years of not winning a tournament,

and it definitely makes you relish those moments and remember those moments of winning a golf tournament. It's so much fun. It definitely kind of showed how much hard work I had put in.

Yeah, coming into Travelers last year I was playing some really good golf and had a lot of confidence. Had a chance to win the Palmetto Championship in South Carolina at Congaree, which is right before the U.S. Open at Torrey.

Played really well at Torrey; finished third; had a great Sunday and felt like I had a chance to win coming down the stretch there.

So yeah, I was riding high, feeling great about my game coming into Travelers, and once again, put myself in the hunt again to win the tournament.

After regulation, had to stay ready for the potential of a playoff, and Kramer made a great putt on 18 to get in a playoff and we were off to battle.

CHRIS BERMAN: What's your favorite Ryder Cup story other than part of the U.S. Team first time and we won? I'm sure those are memories for a lifetime.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah. God, there's so many memories it's hard to pick out one. Really we're all friends with those guys on the European squad. You play so hard for your country. You leave it all out on the line on the golf course.

And then after we won we went and partied with them. That's cool to battle that hard and to go at each other like that, and then to be able to come together and have a couple drinks together, have fun, tell stories about each other during the Ryder Cup was incredible.

Hanging out with Shane Lowry and Viktor Hovland and Rory and Sergio and all those guys you're trying to beat so bad Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and here you are hours after the Ryder Cup and you're hanging out with them.

It just shows how big of a fraternity it is and how gracious everyone is in victory and defeat, and it was really cool to be a part of that.

CHRIS BERMAN: Do you think that your great year and a half spurred your alma mater, Georgia, on to such great heights in football? It had to have something to do with it, right?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I would like to think so, Chris. God, it's been a long time coming. Kirby Smart has built such a great team there and a great culture, and hopefully this is

not the last one we'll have for a while. I think it's kind of the first of many.

But wow, it was incredible to watch that. Watched that with a bunch of Georgia guys out in Hawai'i this year. We're lucky to have 10, 11, 12 guys on the PGA TOUR, that a lot of Bulldogs have been playing great this year.

Yeah, it's great to be a part of that, and it was nice to finally bring home the big one.

CHRIS BERMAN: 15 guys got drafted, you know, this past week from Georgia. That's ridiculous. That is ridiculous. But they say that they may be just as good this year. I'm sure you're on top of that, but 15 guys --

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I guess if we wouldn't have won the national championship and had 15 guys get drafted then we would have had a coaching issue.

Kirby recruits well and keeps reloading, so hopefully we'll have a chance again. I know Bama is going to be out to get us, so I'm sure we'll see them again maybe at the SEC championship and then they'll be out for revenge.

CHRIS BERMAN: Let's get to you because we haven't seen you play this year except in the beginning when you wanted to go to Maui and do the best you could to defend, and then Sony.

But you're on the mend from hip surgery, and correct me if I'm wrong, on Valentine's Day. I don't know how your bride felt about it, but if you could walk around the house and help with the chores I'm sure that was helpful. Tell us what's up with you.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I've been battling a hip injury, a torn labrum in my hip for every bit of 10 years or so. I struggled with it a little bit in college. I think my first or second year on TOUR I got it looked at and was struggling with it a little bit, and had a torn labrum and sort of a bone spur on my hip that I've had for a long time.

The doctor said, we can Band-Aid it, we can do injections, we can do rehab, kind of everything to help it, but it's really not going to get better. The only thing that's going to help it is getting it surgically repaired and getting the bone spur shaved off. I kind of knew this day was coming.

I had really been struggling with it the last probably two or three years. Been having more back issues because of my hip, and it kind of reached a breaking point where nothing I really did got it better, so I needed to get it done.

With golf, with our season as long as it is, there's really no

great time to do it. So it is what it is. I hopefully can get back in the next month, month and a half and be ready for U.S. Open, Travelers to defend, and hopefully my game will be back in form and back to where I can compete again, and I'm looking forward to that moment.

CHRIS BERMAN: So the doctors and you are feeling that like come June, like you just said, U.S. Open which is up the road from here, as well, and we're interested in having our defending champ back as long as he can play like him, you're pretty confident at this point that everything is a go for here?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I would agree with that. I think the biggest thing for me the next few weeks is really getting my golf stamina up, of walking four, five, six days in a row, up and down hills, hitting golf shots, walking 18 holes for that long.

So that's kind of the next step, and these next seven to ten days I'm really going to get after it and see where my body is at.

CHRIS BERMAN: You referenced this yourself, Harris: Won a couple times in '13 and then in '15 played, but then the three, four years, not the way you were playing then, but my God, you were better than you've ever been that year and a half up until your surgery that we talked about.

You've had time away from the course for the wrong reason, for rehab. Do you now -- you can't press a button and be great, I get it, but do you have a couple thoughts on, okay, so now I see what I needed to do those few years? Did something click or it's not that simple?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I felt like with my coach and my team here at Sea Island, I feel like I've developed a great practice routine, and knowing not to get into some of the habits that I did those couple years of -- I was kind of brought up to if I wasn't as good at something or I wasn't doing well at something to work harder, and to put in the time and effort.

For me sometimes that can be a detriment of literally working tirelessly all day long, hitting hundreds of balls and almost trying to dig it out of the dirt too much where I would almost go backwards. I feel like I'm way more diligent with my practice now of separating out time and putting myself on a ball count of knowing that it's in there, I've just got to work on my fundamentals a little bit, my technique, and I don't need to stand out there for hours and hours trying to beat balls and ultimately getting tired and getting worse and getting more frustrated.

I feel like I've definitely matured in that aspect and knowing



more about myself and how to prepare for golf tournaments.

CHRIS BERMAN: Love it, Harris, a pitch count. I love it. That's perfect.

I've got a couple more, but if there are some questions, come on up. If not, we'll do a couple more. I see the food is starting to make its way out so you know the way we're going here, Harris. Once the food comes it's all over but the shouting.

Q. You made mention of plugging that sand trap on one of the playoff holes. I remember standing behind you in that and there was a couple of guys asking, how is he going to hit this, and actually I said watch out because it might come our way. The way that that was literally in a wall. I thought that was the best shot of the whole entire tournament; doesn't get talked about enough. Can you explain exactly what you did, how you got underneath that and put it in contention to make par?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah. I mean, when you practice -- my coach likes to put me in some pretty bad spots to kind of see how I react. Practicing golf, you know you're going to be in spots like that. You never want to be shocked or surprised or get up over a shot and say, I have no idea what I'm doing here, I've never really hit this shot.

Luckily I've practiced that some, and you couldn't really tell, but it was on a little bit of a upslope, which really helps that plug lie of you getting under it and getting it up in the air.

Obviously it's a difficult shot, but it was one that I looked at and said, I know how to hit this shot; I'm confident in what I'm doing. I thought to myself, if I just get it within 10 or 15 feet, I've hit a good shot and can try to make par.

It was one of those that came out perfect and left myself in a good spot and then made a great par to keep it going. But there was no doubt in my mind that I could get up over and hit it. I've practiced it before, and I knew I wasn't dead, and I was actually trying to see if I could hole the shot.

CHRIS BERMAN: I guarantee we've been in some spots that your pro hasn't put you in. I can guarantee you that, pal.

Q. I wanted to know, now that you've had the surgery, do you expect to be an even better golfer than you've been in the past because you won't have that pain in your hip, in your back?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, that's a good question. Yeah,

ultimately I want to be a better golfer every single year, but I'm definitely going to have a different range of motion, a lot more range of motion than I've had in a long time.

For me it's just about the pain. I kind of got used to being a 3 or 4 on the pain scale in my right hip every single day, so I'm looking forward to having less than that, and hopefully will help me play longer and just be healthier playing golf.

I know we play a lot, and playing golf for 20 plus years, you're going to have some stuff pop up and you're going to have some injuries. Hopefully I can get this one taken care of finally and be able to play golf, have a good golf career for the next 10 or 15 years and do what I want to do on the PGA TOUR and Ryder Cups and Presidents Cups and all that.

So we'll see. Every single year, every single day I want to get better in golf, and if this hip surgery helps me get a better backswing and be more free in my swing, then hopefully that will help me get better.

CHRIS BERMAN: More range of motion. What a concept, huh?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I know you've got a lot of range of motion, Chris. I've seen it.

CHRIS BERMAN: I don't think so. We're working on it, but I don't know that I want that surgery to get better.

Any other questions? We've got our champ for a couple minutes and we'll have one or two more. Like I said, I smell food and I smell a golf course.

We talked about it at the awards ceremony, you and I have texted about it a little after. The tournament has been around for 70, now 71 years here, and there's some pretty good names on that Cup, of which you're the latest one. Pretty cool, right?

You look at it and see -- you can tell me. Some of them are pretty damn good. You're on it. What do you think when you look at those names, Harris?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it's incredible. This has got to be one of the oldest PGA TOUR events still going. It's really cool for -- like Arnold Palmer, anytime I can get my name on a trophy with Arnold Palmer, he's one of my heroes, one of the greatest to ever live, one of the greatest to ever play the game.

It's incredible. I watched the 30 for 30 on Greg Norman a couple weeks ago. His name is on this trophy. Just how big this tournament has been on the PGA TOUR, how

much of a mainstay it's been on the PGA TOUR is awesome. We don't get that a lot on TOUR.

But it shows through the support and the community of Hartford how everybody's parents, everybody's grandparents have been coming to this tournament for 70 years, and it's awesome to be a part of it, and I know it's going to continue to go on for another 70 or 100 years.

For me to have my name on this trophy along with these other unbelievable names in the game of golf is incredible. It's really cool to see that.

CHRIS BERMAN: It's very cool. Sam Snead, hello. We could go on. Billy Casper. Pretty good names. Lanny, I think Lanny, that was his 20th and final one on TOUR, et cetera. We can go more modern, too.

We're all about to go out and play, and I know you can give us basic advice, but look, you are Mr. 18th hole. When we stand on the tee, take us through -- understand we might not hit it quite as far as you with our lack of range of motion. Harris, tell us what we're thinking about to try to par this thing today from whatever tees we're playing from.

HARRIS ENGLISH: All right, Chris. That tree on the left is pretty big, so you might want to avoid that off the tee. Don't hit a pull-hook in that tree.

It's a great hole. They've definitely made it harder over the years. It just frames it really well. I love that tee shot. I love getting on the right side of the tree and just peeling it right off that tree. Such a good, I don't know, amphitheater hole. It frames it so well coming into 18 green with that hill behind it, that horseshoe around it.

I mean, goal number one is hit the fairway, and then try to leave it below the hole. I don't know where the pin is today, but just -- I know I played it 12 times or something last year and I can't remember how many times I birdied it, but it's one of the harder holes on TOUR. Just to hit the fairway, it's a tough fairway to hit. But if you do hit the fairway you've got a relatively short shot in.

I don't know, keep it below the hole and do your best, and I know he'll go out there and make a 3 and make your team happy.

CHRIS BERMAN: Net 3 maybe.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Net 3. That's probably one of your shot holes.

CHRIS BERMAN: You mean that invisible bunker on the right, the one we're always hitting out of with like a

62-degree wedge?

HARRIS ENGLISH: The bunker on the right we can carry, and really the bunkers on the left, yeah, they don't look that great from the tee, but the lips on them are not that bad. So really it's not that bad. I'd rather be in those left bunkers than leave it up on the hill to the right in that thick rough.

I know today is a little cooler and probably wet out there, so I know that rough is going to be pretty thick.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, listen, I don't mind saying it because I knew you before your win here last year. We go back a way. You're one of not only the good guys, you're one of the great guys in golf, and you showed that last year.

We hope your rehab and everything goes great, and you can come and be the best you can here. You're always home here in Hartford, Cromwell, New England. You're one of us now. Don't fool us that you're from Georgia. You're one of us now and always will be.

I know Andy has -- we've got one other bit of business with Harris before he goes, but great being with you. Good luck, best to the family, and we'll see you in June, okay?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I appreciate it. Looking forward to it and hope to see everybody up there in June.

NATHAN GRUBE: Harris, we've got something for you, a little tradition here. By the way, seven years from now, 2030 Travelers is title sponsor, some kid is going to look at that trophy and go, I'm on that trophy with Harris English. That's his name right there.

We have a tradition, Andy has this tradition each year to give a little gift, a very personal gift, so he's going to come up and give you something. Andy, come on up.

ANDY BESSETTE: I was going to jump on that stage and I can't do that.

So we all know the Georgia Bulldogs won the national championship in college football, and we know, Harris, that you're a proud alum and you love the Bulldogs. I have to tell you, Chris, I'm sorry, this is nowhere good as your names you make up for players, but I came up with a name for you. I think we should call you "Harris the English Bulldog" because the English bulldog is a real dog breed, Harris the English bulldog. An English bulldog is medium sized by muscular and hefty. You're not hefty so forget that part.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Not yet.

ANDY BESSETTE: But you're muscular, you're slim, you're athletic. I think this is a perfect fit. Nobody will repeat that again after I made it up, but that's okay.

When we were down at the Masters, we were out at a place called Westlake Country Club for our media dinner, which you're all invited to. Everybody can come down and be a part of it. We've been doing it for 12 years, it's become a tradition. I know a lot of us were with us, so thank you. It's great to see you again.

While we were there, our whole staff, my staff, Nathan's staff and others, You have to come see this. I said, Where are we going? There was an auction for children that the club was doing with a really well-known auction company, and they said, you've got to see this. So I said, What do I have to see?

So I went over, and I saw this thing, and we all said, Wow, what a great gift.

Every year, Harris, we give our defending champion a gift. We've given sticks, fishing rods, all kinds of stuff. But this year what we have for you, and we're going to send it to you FedEx tonight so you'll get it tomorrow, is a Georgia Bulldogs helmet signed by Stetson Bennett. Maybe you already have one, but it says --

HARRIS ENGLISH: I don't. I don't. I need to meet him. I've never met him before.

ANDY BESSETTE: Really? This is Stetson Bennett signed, 2021 National Champs MVP, because he was also the MVP of the national championship game. Congratulations, you'll have this in your hands tomorrow and put it on your bookshelf at home and enjoy it.

Thank you so much. You're a great defending champion. We look forward to seeing you in June.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Andy, I appreciate it, man. You might need to put that thing on. You look good in Georgia red.

ANDY BESSETTE: Put it on? Are you kidding me? I would not do that to stat son. Harris, I wouldn't do that to you, either. Plus it has a thing in there.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Must have fought off a lot of good bidders down there in Augusta. That's a pretty hot commodity these days.

ANDY BESSETTE: I won't tell you, it was actually very good. I called the auction company, I said, I have to have

that helmet. I said, I'll pay \$25 higher than anybody else bids on the helmet. But it was very reasonably priced. I know you're going to enjoy it, too. It's a real helmet.

HARRIS ENGLISH: That's awesome. I appreciate it.

ANDY BESSETTE: Congrats. We'll see you soon. If you need anything, call us. Nathan and I are always here, and it will be in the FedEx for you for tomorrow.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: Thanks, Harris. We appreciate the time. Again, Andy or Chris mentioned this, Andy mentioned this, it's going to be an awesome year. The crowd feedback, the fan feedback, how ticket sales are going, it is just a momentum and an energy like I've never seen, and we are all going to experience that here very, very soon.

Thank you for today. Thanks for being here. Enjoy golf. Just let's have a good time leading into the tournament and enjoy the 52 degrees. We're going to add about 25 to that for the summer.

Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thanks, Harris.

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