

Travelers Championship

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Michael Thorbjornsen

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Michael Thorbjornsen to the interview room here at the 2024 Travelers Championship. Michael, you're making your professional debut first as a PGA TOUR member after finishing No. 1 in the PGA TOUR University ranking. You're a New Englander making your third start here at TPC River Highlands. What does it mean to you for this to be the place that you're making your first professional start?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: It means a lot. This is definitely my home, I would say, on the PGA TOUR. Obviously made my first PGA TOUR start here two years ago as an amateur. Love this place. It's close to home. Love the golf course. Travelers, they do an amazing job of hosting the players, the caddies, incredible hospitality and, yeah, I couldn't ask for a better start.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of home, do you have any friends or family making the trip to support you this week?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, I got my dad out here who is obviously my coach, so, I mean, he kind of comes to all the tournaments. But I think my mom's coming out, a couple friends from high school. I kind of live in the area, so I'm sure I'll see them around here and there.

THE MODERATOR: Then you had a chance to go see the course earlier this morning. Any thoughts on some of the changes out there and how it's going to play this week?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: I actually like the changes a lot. I think first off it was, what -- making the greens smaller on 11, I thought it was a little big before. I think I've heard that Rory had a lot of input on these changes.

I think 12 as well, kind of cutting off the fairway, adding some rough on that little down slope there kind of forces you to play the hole the way it was supposed to be played, the way it was designed.

I think the last one I can remember is 9, moving that tee box up further to the right I think, again, it forces you to

play the hole the way it was supposed to be played. Not a lot of guys are going to be taking driver out there. So, yeah, I really enjoy the changes that they made.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. With this being -- you've obviously played this event, but first event as a pro. Does it feel any differently walking the range, playing the course this week than it has in previous years?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: I would have to say no. I think that's one of the big things with getting sponsors invites and being able to play PGA TOUR events as an Am, kind of makes it an easier transition for when you do actually turn pro. So doesn't really feel too different, yeah.

Q. Have you talked to any of recent college grads, Ludvig, Adrien, guys that may have maybe you've competed against that came up through PGA TOUR U, just about what to expect?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: A little bit. I saw Ludvig yesterday. We were talking a little bit, just seeing how things were going on his end. Talking about the U.S. Open a little bit. But we text back and forth here and there too, so I know it's not too hard of a transition, just because I think I did three, four weeks in a row at the beginning of last summer, so I kind of get a general gist of what it's like out there. But obviously there's a lot of stuff to manage, but I'm going to do my best that I possibly can and, I mean, this is just the start, so hopefully I keep getting better at managing everything.

Q. This is your first professional tournament and I want to know how your personally feeling, like with all of the media attention and even being in this room and all of this, what's going through your mind as this process has started as a professional?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Definitely a little overwhelming at times, I guess, with -- I mean, there's a lot of people in here. But, no, I mean, growing up as a kid you always want to be playing at that top stage, playing on the PGA TOUR. You just don't really see much of this. And,



again, the past couple years I've been exposed to more and more of this, so it's not too much of a shock to the system. I guess I'm getting used to it. It's okay, I really don't mind it at all.

Q. Can you tell us why -- you were at the IMG Academy, why you went back to Wellesley High School, and what did that do for you, and how was it to play public high school golf with your friends?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, I spent, what was it, three years at IMG, and kind of felt like if I did four years at IMG and then four years at Stanford I would, I wouldn't say burn out, but you kind of need a break in there at some point. IMG is basically like a junior college in a way, so I feel like coming back senior year -- kind of got blessed too, we were quite lucky that I wasn't at IMG for one COVID hit my senior year. So, yeah, it was good to kind of re-ignite some friendships back from middle school and the ones that I kept in touch with while I was at high school down south.

Playing on the golf team was a lot of fun. Didn't know golf could be that much fun at times, even though if you don't play too well. Yeah, again, really enjoyed it, being up north, and kind of just having somewhat of a down year. Worked on my game a little bit here and there, but also kind of relaxed and prepared for the next four years at college.

Q. With the success that Ludvig had last year, kind of set a high standard for how players could come in right from college and do this. As you're starting with a lot of the season already done, how are you kind of approaching this year and into next year and what you want to accomplish and your goals?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, I'm just trying to play the best golf I possibly can, kind of check off all the boxes, those progress goals, like process goals each and every week. Just whether I can manage myself really well, whether it's attitude, manage my body the best I can, see if I can manage the course as well. I'm not really too concerned on results, especially this summer and the summers to come. I know I'm a good golfer, I know when I play good golf I can have some good results. So we're just focused on the process right now and I know eventually it will all pay off.

Q. I wanted to ask you, I remember talking to you a couple years back being here in contention, I just want to know, in your eyes, what are the biggest areas of growth, what are the biggest changes you've gone through in the time since?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, I remember talking, kind of answering a similar question to that last year, after my junior year. I felt like I did really well managing my body. Obviously not so much because I fractured my spine a couple months later. I feel like being injured gave me kind of a new perspective on kind of where I am in my life when it comes to golf and off the golf course as well. Definitely more appreciative of being at Stanford, being surrounded by some of the smartest minds in the world, being able to play golf and eventually turn pro and that being my job.

So, yeah, I guess I'm more appreciative and I feel like I've matured a lot more than I have even the past year. So I'm sure, again, this is just the start, so it should all get even better.

Q. Kids that are coming this weekend, high schoolers from New England, they don't have many examples of New England-based golfers, you know, professionals, Keegan and now you. And I'm sure there's going to be a lot of kids here this weekend that are kind of taking that in. Have you thought about that, that you're kind of somewhat of an example now for New England kids that are trying to be where you are now and if you have thought about that I guess what kind of, what goes through your mind?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: I haven't really thought about that too much. I know, I remember growing up -- well, I guess to answer your point, yeah, obviously I know Keegan's from Massachusetts and I would see him winning the Bridgestone, winning the PGA Championship close to a decade ago. But obviously, like I think it was Tiger, Rory, those were my favorite players. But come to think of it now, some kids growing up here in the northeast and the Massachusetts area, them looking up to me, that's kind of a dream come true. Just trying to set a good example for these kids and inspire them to be the best golfers and best human beings they could possibly be, because that's what the guys ahead of me did for me as well. So, hopefully one day in 10 years we'll have some of these kids out here playing and beating me and winning this tournament.

Q. Would you have any message for 'em or any helpful advice maybe?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Yeah, just because you're from the northeast and it snows for more than half of a year, that's no excuse. Just keep working hard, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Michael, for the time. Good luck this week.

MICHAEL THORBJORNSSEN: Thank you.



