

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Muirfield Village

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference

the Memorial  Tournament

PRESENTED BY



the golf course or redoing -- digging up all the greens on Monday, in six days, so they're not scared about stressing the greens out at all and they can kind of do whatever they want. If there's no rain, I expect it to get really firm and fast.

Q. Did you feel at all like the defending champion last week, or do you feel like defending champion this week? It's obviously a weird dynamic. Was there any part of you that felt like the defending champion last week even though it was a different tournament, so to speak?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Not really. Definitely coming back on-site and seeing all the guys in the locker room and obviously being on the same golf course kind of reminded me of last year's win. But this week is going to feel different just with the elevated feel of the tournament and the course being back in that classic Memorial setup with the greens real fast.

Yeah, it's kind of a weird scenario, but no, I mean, I'm sure I feel a little more like defending champion this week. This feels more like the Memorial this week.

Q. Two questions, Patrick: What can you not get away with this week do you think that you could last week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: There are some short-sided shots that I had last week, especially the first couple days, that you're just not going to be able to get away with this week. I played with Jordan and Phil, and so I saw some crazy up-and-downs from spots that I didn't think you could get it up-and-down, and this week I don't think some of those would be possible.

Q. And secondly, you're in a featured pairing with Bryson. I don't think you've played with him -- I think Hero, but first two rounds last year would have been Vegas. What are you expecting from him now that he's a thousand pounds bigger and swings from the heels? Is that fun to watch or do you kind of close your eyes and do something else?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, I'll expect to play at least second most of the time coming in from the fairway, but I mean, I'm expecting him to hit it really far. I don't see why he'd do anything else. This would be a golf course that

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started here with our defending champion, Patrick Cantlay, at the 2020 Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide. Patrick, obviously unique circumstances, playing back-to-back at Muirfield Village. Does it feel any different on the property this week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I mean, after playing last week it's kind of weird being at the same tournament or the same tournament site two weeks in a row, but I just finished nine holes and the greens are already much faster than they even were Sunday. It's nice to see the golf course back how I remember it.

THE MODERATOR: A final round 65 at last week's Workday Charity Open. Do you feel as confident this week as the defending champion and coming off a great round?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, definitely knocked some tournament rust off last week, and that's two good Sundays in a row for me. If I can get Thursday through Saturday a little better and keep those Sundays rolling, I should have a good shot this week.

Q. What did you do yesterday?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yesterday I went and got tested again and went to the gym. So I didn't play any golf yesterday, just kind of treated it as a rest day, and just it was pretty relaxed.

Q. Just to follow up on what I think I asked you on Sunday, I think you mentioned you think the greens are getting a little bit harder today. Do you envision that's going to be the case from last Thursday through Sunday that it's going to get incrementally harder?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I would think so, as long as there's no rain. Obviously no one can control that. And if it rains, that'll slow down the golf course a little bit.

But that combined with the fact that I think they're redoing

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

actually sets up really well for it. There's a lot of bunkers that he can carry that other guys can't. I'm excited; I'll see it in person, and I'm sure I'll be impressed at how far he's hitting it.

Q. Do you expect 14 to be up at all this week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think so, but I don't think it would be bad if it was up. I actually think it's a decent hole from up, but depending on the hole location, it still might not be -- the play may not be to go for it. So I actually haven't seen the stats, but I'd like to see the stats from last week with it being up so many days, if guys scored better from going for it or scored better from laying back. I haven't seen those yet.

But I think it'll probably be just the classic setup. But if we do get it downwind one day, I could see guys even hitting driver from that back tee.

Q. I think like half the field it turned out ended up going for it last week. The other thing I wanted to ask you is you talked about the weird feeling of playing the same place. In terms of routine, how do you reset? Is there anything you can do differently? Have you ever played back-to-back, not on TOUR but anywhere?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think so. I can't remember a time that I did. But last week -- more last week was the adjustment than this week is. This week will feel like return to normal in my opinion with the conditions of the golf course. Last week with the hole locations and the slowness of the greens, that was the adjustment week.

Q. Following up on Bryson, do you have a level of fascination as to kind of what he's doing and where he's taking this as a fellow player, and do you see at all guys trying to copycat that? Sports are such a copycat world; do you see a lot of guys trying to take that route?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think the game has been headed there already. I think that's pretty obvious, that guys are embracing more of the stats idea of just bomb and gouge it and the farther I can hit it and the more trouble I can take out of play, then when I do time it up and hit a bunch of fairways, then I'm really going to explode. So I think we've already seen that kind of start to happen. This is just the most extreme example that we've seen so far.

I don't know if guys that are currently on TOUR will go to the lengths that he's gone to try and get the distance, but I do think that there's a lot of young kids watching that are maybe in high school or even in college or junior golf that are thinking to themselves, well, if I can hit it really, really

far, there's a definite advantage. So we might see -- the distance may be even more of a factor in five or ten years just because of the influence that may have on the younger generation of guys coming up that are in their teenage years right now.

Q. You touched on it a little bit before, the first few tournaments that Bryson has played, the venues have been relatively tight. Obviously Colonial and Hilton Head, Travelers to some degree, as well. This is really kind the first bigger ballpark that he's going to have faced; would you agree with that? Are you interested to see kind of where he takes this at a place where he might be able to take more advantage than he has in the first few weeks?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, maybe so. The fairways are definitely big enough out here, and there's a few holes where you get like the double advantage. What I mean by a double advantage, like the 13th hole here and the 17th hole here, if you can carry it over those bunkers, the fairway actually gets bigger and then is on a downslope. So not only are you hitting into a bigger area than the guys that are carrying it 290, but then it also goes farther on those holes after it hits the ground. So there are some holes where it's even more of an advantage than a usual place.

But if you just look at strokes gained off the tee, I think he was almost leading in strokes gained off the tee in all those events, or close to it, so I don't know how much better he can do relative to the field if he's already strokes gained off the tee No. 1. We'll see.

Q. Six weeks into this restart, are there any aspects of this new normal that you enjoy that you would like to see implemented moving forward?

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, I kind of miss the regular tournaments, to be honest. There's not much about the current situation that I think is better. You can play your practice rounds a little faster with no fans, but other than that, I think I can't wait for it to go back to normal.

Q. What's your experience level at Harding Park, and how do you think that'll fit your game?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I've never played Harding Park, but I'm always happy to play a tournament in California. It'll probably be a little colder and the ball won't go as far, definitely not as this week. I've been hitting some crazy numbers this week here in the heat. But I've heard it's pretty decent. I remember watching maybe a Match Play there not too long ago when I was out, and it looks decent, but we'll see. I haven't played it yet.

Q. What kind of numbers have you been hitting?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Just hitting it -- you get on like the 12th hole here and you see the water short, and you're just hitting a 175 8-iron, and usually that's like a 167 club, and now it's in the back bunker and you're dead.

Q. When you were just talking about Bryson and how he may influence five or ten years down the road, was Tiger the one that influenced you, and if so, what is it that you liked about his game that you tried to implement in your game?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Definitely -- I mean, hard not to grow up at my age and Tiger not being a big influence on my golf. I think really more his mindset more than anything is something that -- because he has so many intangibles that I really didn't have growing up, how much farther he hit it than everybody else, he hit it much higher than everybody else, and so really just trying to adopt his mindset of -- I think he's so much more of a competitor than we've seen in golf before and so much more intense than people we've seen before, and so really putting that emphasis on winning tournaments and getting your mindset in a place where you're trying to win every time you show up, not just showing up hoping you have a decent week.

So definitely hearing his press conferences and watching how focused he is out there would be something that I tried to emulate after seeing so much golf with him on TV.

Q. Is it as satisfying competing in this situation as it would be if you had the normal situation that you're used to?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Definitely not. You know, I was watching the playoff on Sunday from up top behind at the clubhouse, and can you imagine what the 18th green would have been like after J.T. made his 50-footer and then Morikawa made his putt on top of him? I mean, that was really a big example of how much different it would have felt if there were fans there and how much really we just miss having them out here and how much they add to the feel and drama of an event down the stretch.

Q. Patrick, just curious, do you think long drives, maybe what Bryson is doing or long driving in general, the length in golf today, is it good for golf? What's your take on it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I thought it was interesting what Martin Slumbers said recently about the fact that when golf stabilizes, he sounds like he wants to do something to rein it in. I've been asked the question before even Bryson did

what he's doing right now, and really my answer was I don't think it's -- I don't think distance is a problem for like 99.8 percent of golfers, 99.9 percent of golfers. They don't have a problem with distance. The problem is the TOUR pros can't go play Cypress Point, and even to some effect a not tricked-up Pebble Beach without overpowering it a lot, and that's unfortunate.

Also I think it's unfortunate that everyone thinks the idea would be everyone is hitting it far, let's put the tees back farther. I think that's actually -- I think that actually plays into the guys who hit it far, it plays right into their hands. Like Merion would be a good example for me of a tournament that everyone says, oh, if it rains, they're going to shoot a million under par, and I think Justin Rose shot 1- or 2-under par and it was rainy all week.

It's a problem from an architectural standpoint that some of the integrity goes away, but for most golfers most of the time, it's not an issue.

Q. I wanted to ask you a defending champion question. What changed most for you since winning last year? What did it do for you, for the game, beyond just confidence? What's one or two things?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Not a lot. It's just another validating outcome that kind of tells me that the process that I'm working on is the right process for me, and really just gave me more confidence going into the bigger tournaments like majors. I think it's one of the tournaments that feels the most like a major and definitely has a field like that and has a golf course that's similar to a major setup, and so being able to come out on top a week like that really gives me a lot of confidence into tournaments like Augusta or the PGA or even a U.S. Open.

Q. For someone who does a pretty good job of taking the emotions out of what can be a very emotional game, if you think back on some of the losses you've had that have really gnawed at you, how long did it take you to recover from stuff like that? How do you handle that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, I think anybody that plays sport, especially golf, you have so many more losses than wins, golf specifically. And so it's important to take some type of learning experience from it and not play it up too much or totally dismiss it.

You know, it depends; there's still losses that I've had that I think to myself, well, that really -- I shouldn't have done that or whatever, but if I can try and change my perspective a little bit to, well, that happened and now when I am in a situation like that, I know not to do this, or I know what it

feels like, and so instead I need to focus a little differently or change my mindset a little bit, and that can only help you down the road.

Q. If you screw something up, it's not like you were trying to make bogey, right? So what do you learn there? That's what I don't get. It's not like you were trying to make a mistake if you made a mistake.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Sure, but your mental frame of mind that you had before making the mistake could have contributed to the mistake, and knowing that and knowing how it is down the stretch could impact your ability to handle that moment in the future. So if you've made a mistake from a certain frame of mind before, you'll know that when you get into that situation again and you mind yourself getting into that mind of frame, you can check yourself and say, that's not the right way to think, or I need instead to focus on the process or you can even practice, I need to practice the process more so that mistakes like that don't happen.

I think if you really do have the right perspective you can learn even when you do make mistakes, which everyone is going to make mistakes.

Q. Are you waiting for me to ask you what is the most devastating loss you've ever had in golf?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I wasn't, but you can ask it.

Q. Bring it; what do you got?

PATRICK CANTLAY: The U.S. Amateur that I lost was -- I really felt like I lost that tournament more than other tournaments. I've had tournaments that I've lost where someone else played really well, but I felt like I was supposed to win the U.S. Amateur before it happened, and I was playing well enough to win and then didn't. That was probably the most bothersome one.

Q. How do you get it back once it starts to go south a little bit? I know you learn from things, but is that how you get it back, you rely on sort of those memories, or is that maybe the most challenging thing you do in golf?

PATRICK CANTLAY: When you say get it back, like coming out of a slump or you just make a bogey?

Q. A bogey or you just know that you're not playing the same way you were a couple holes before when everything was perfect.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, I would say that would be a

mistake in mindset, if you make a bogey and then all of a sudden you don't think how you were playing 30 minutes ago. You know, you have to accept the fact that we're playing a game where I am going to make bogeys. I've had rounds before where you make a couple bogeys early and I think to myself, well, I've got to make a birdie or a few birdies soon, just percentage-wise, I've got to hit some close soon, like it's coming, and a lot of times it does turn around. You know, not having that mindset like you asked the question is a big part of it, thinking that, yeah, bogeys are going to happen and accepting them when they do and getting right back down to business and getting back in your process the next shot.

THE MODERATOR: Patrick, we appreciate the time, and best of luck this week.

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