

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference

MARK WILLIAMS: We'll get under way here. We'd like to welcome the 2021 the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide winner, Patrick Cantlay. It's your second victory at this event, 2019, your fourth on TOUR, and it's also moved you to No. 1 in the FedExCup. A lot of good things today. Exciting way to finish compared to the last win. Just share a little bit about the final round today with us and then the playoff.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Kind of the same par putt actually as a couple years ago. Even with a little new green it's about the same putt. This week was a really good week. I played very solid most every day. A little more up-and-down today. There were a few short putts, mid-range putts, that I normally would make that today I didn't, which made it a little more of a grind. But made a few long ones. So it ended up being just enough and a tough playoff where Collin and I were really trading blows all day. So it felt really good. I stayed within myself and comfortable and confident and I really did my best to stay present and I think I did a good job.

MARK WILLIAMS: We'll jump to questions.

Q. Jack was in here earlier talking about he wasn't sure how he would handle recalibrating based on the situation with Jon Rahm. How did you handle that? Did you have to fool yourself at all into thinking differently competitively or not?

PATRICK CANTLAY: You know, such a weird situation and very unfortunate. He played so amazing the first three rounds that the way I felt Sunday morning was obviously a lot different than I felt on, walking off the 18th green on Saturday.

Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do except reset and just take the new paradigm and run with it. I thought I did a good job of staying focused and it really felt like a battle between Collin and I all day and that's just kind of how it played out. I know Scottie made a few birdies early and he was up there, but with Collin right there in the same group

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it just felt like it was me and him trading blows all day.

Q. So at the end it feels just as special as any of your other ones, right?

PATRICK CANTLAY: It does. There's maybe a little hint of something I can't quite put my finger on, but I mean, the emotions I feel out there and the focus that it took today was just as any other tournament.

Q. A few boring questions to start this off with. But what kind of lie and club did you have on 18 in the playoff and how much was your par putt on the same line as your birdie attempt in regulation?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I had about 164 hole in the playoff and I tried to muscle an 8-iron through the rough. The ball was very above my feet. I thought 7-iron would maybe be too long and I actually, just with the ball that above my feet and the rough being so thick, it just turned the club a little bit. I hit it kind of the right distance I was trying to hit but a little left. The putt was extremely similar to regulation on a slightly different line, but I just had seen it, so I had a good picture in my head.

Q. Secondly, you kind of answered this a little bit with Rahm. It's such an awkward situation that was really out of your hands, but how do you think you'll look back on this win, similar to 2019 or will at any point when you think back of winning in 2021 do you think of Jon Rahm?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think I'll definitely remember it slightly different. But like I said, and I'll reiterate, you know, the way it felt today, it felt no different. And it is a very unfortunate situation and not anything I would wish on anybody. He played so great for the first three rounds.

So there's a little something that I can't quite put my finger on that make it's feel a little different but I really hit a lot of clutch solid shots today and so I think I'll remember that mostly.

Q. This was the new Muirfield Village. You won on the old and now the new. How different did it really feel and were the shots really that much different? Was the strategy different? Anything like that?

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PATRICK CANTLAY: I definitely went for a lot less par-5s with them being so much longer and I think a little less rewarding even on pushing the ball up there, especially with the rough as thick as it was this week. A lot of the shots are the same. A few shots are quite a bit different. That first hole is now a pretty big kick in the teeth just to start the day. 490 and you can't really hit driver off the tee. But it was in as good a shape as ever and a lot of the golf course is still the same old golf course so it's still a place I feel very comfortable.

Q. When you won two years ago you sort of talked about how you went and had a strategy session with Jack at one point talking about how to play the joint. Did you get a chance to do that before this one at any stage? And you also mentioned last time that he wanted you to smile more and you did when you were winning. Do you still carry that forward?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think, the first part of your question, that was the first year I played. I think I finished 30th that year when I talked to him about the golf course. I didn't talk to him this year about the golf course. I think the, like I said, a lot of the holes play almost exactly the same and the par-5s are just now mostly layups for me.

What was the second part? Sorry.

Q. Smile. He was talking about how he wanted you to get out there and enjoy it more.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, my natural disposition is pretty stoic, and so I'm pretty deadpan a lot, but that's not necessarily an accurate reflection of how I feel on the inside. So I do think it's good advice for me to enjoy it more and really enjoy the moment and show that I am enjoying the moment, and so I try to do a little more of that. But in general I feel most myself when I'm just locked in and really focused and kind of in work mode.

Q. Anything different with Jack this time when you won?

PATRICK CANTLAY: It's always special coming off the 18th green and shaking his hand. We have a great connection and we are, I would say, good friends at this point, and so that makes it just a little more special. So he's taken me under his wing and to do it at his place with the advice and encouragement that he's given me over the years is very special for me.

Q. When you left or when you were done yesterday and you were having an idea of six shots, did you already have a number in your head, like, I got to go up and put up a 63 or something like that? What were you

kind of already thinking about for today?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, definitely on the back nine, yeah, yesterday, I was thinking that I would need to be very aggressive in that final round given I would be six shots or so back. That changed obviously last night and I kind of obviously changed my mindset a little bit. But, yeah, I mean, it would have taken most likely a very, very, very good round today and most likely the round I shot today would not have been good enough.

Q. Whether you call him or when you see him down the road, like, how do you handle the next time you talk to Jon? What do you say?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I imagine there will be somewhat of a laugh and somewhat of a, you know -- there's not much to say. I don't wish that kind of scenario on anybody. I would much rather have faced him down today and shot an extremely low round and beat him that way. But unfortunately there's nothing I can do. I did everything I could with the cards I was dealt and I really did a good job of focusing today on the task at hand and staying present and that's all you can do in this game.

Q. The putt on 17. Difficult to begin with, but was it any more challenging when you're coming off a five-minute rain delay questioning what the green's going to do and that kind of stuff?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I maybe thought the green would be just slightly slower just because of all the rain. A ton of rain came down in just that five minutes, some of the hardest rain I've seen. So I maybe hit it a slight bit harder, but it actually rolled really well and carried a lot of speed going into the hole. So I don't think it was too much slower despite all the rain.

Q. Secondly, what did Jack say to you when you came off the green? Someone was talking when the TV was on.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think he said something about, How much -- or how did 18 play from that other fairway right of the bunkers? Because I just kept flaring it out to the right and, you know, he had to get a dig in there a little bit.

Q. I think I saw in the transcript from your interview yesterday that you mentioned that you did have COVID. When did that happen and what was your experience with it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: That was in December. And, you know, I was sick for three days or three or four days. It

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was like a bad flu. And then I was tired for maybe a week or so after and then felt normal 10 to 14 days after. That was my experience. I know it's different for everybody.

Q. What's your experience and comfort level with Torrey Pines, the site of the U.S. Open coming up?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I've played the tournament there a couple times. I don't think I've had great results, but I'm sure it will be much different than -- or it will play much different than it does in January. It will be firm and I'm sure the fairways will be small and the rough will be longer. But I like California golf and I think it will be a good setup for me.

Q. Did you ever attend the tournament as a kid or have success when you played Junior Worlds there?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I never played Junior World, but I did go to one round maybe Friday or Saturday of the -- I think I maybe went to Saturday of the 2008 U.S. Open. There wasn't one there since then, right? I don't think so. I think I went -- I think I went maybe to a practice round or one day there that week. I remember walking around. I remember walking, seeing Rickie Fowler hit a tee shot and thinking how much older he was than me, and that's funny now.

Q. Do you remind Rickie how much older you thought he was back in 2008?

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, I'll have to remind him. Him and I are good friends now. It feels like such a long time ago. But the memory is etched in my brain.

Q. Along those same lines, because this is such a unique test, difficult test, how much confidence do you take from being able to perform the way you did this week into Torrey Pines? I know they're vastly different golf courses, but similar ideas.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I imagine that driving the golf ball will be just as key there as it is here and I drove the golf ball really well today. These greens lacked some of the fire they usually have this week just because I think they were playing it safe considering the golf course is brand new. But I like poa annua greens and I like fast greens, fast, firm greens, so I think Torrey Pines will set up well, and obviously it's nice to have some confidence and be playing well going into a U.S. Open.

Q. You touched on this a little bit earlier and stop smiling because it's a serious question now, really. Earlier in the week, you've gone through a pretty long stretch by your standards of not really contending.

Has there ever -- and you played some decent golf here and there, but has there ever been a time when you felt like you badly needed a win and if so was this one of them?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Somehow --

Q. Besides every week.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Somehow I always feel like I badly need a win and a win will make things just a little bit better. I know what you're saying though, the last few months have not been the best golf I've played and the interesting thing is when I think about it, I always felt maybe a little closer than the result. It was a shot here or a shot there, an up-and-down or a putt. And maybe in the past I had those one or two shots that maybe were a made cut into a missed cut, I was able to pick those shots up and make the cut on the number or one inside and then a lot of times I'll play a great round on Saturday or Sunday and kind of vault myself up the leaderboard.

So there was just a stretch where the cookie kind of crumbled the wrong way a number of weeks in a row. But I've been putting in some good work with Jamie Mulligan my coach and I think we're on the right path and my game feels really good right now.

Q. And then on today's round, you missed the number of putts as you mentioned short and mid-range. Did, was there any point late that you thought that might cost you and when you go through a stretch like that of seeing more miss than make, does it make it tougher to do what you did in terms of 17 in regulation and 18 in the playoff?

PATRICK CANTLAY: You know, I missed a number of short or mid-range putts today and usually if you miss that many inside 10 feet you're probably going to fall a few short. But I was able to make some of the longer ones today and sometimes it's just how golf is.

Q. 2. I forgot about that one.

PATRICK CANTLAY: 2 was good too. So sometimes golf's like that. You just have to stay in the present and really think that the next one is going to go in and I think you're a lot better off playing golf with that mindset, thinking the putts I have left are going to go in opposed to dwelling on the past and I did a good job of that today.

MARK WILLIAMS: Before we shut it down and let you go, we mentioned the FedExCup lead. I know you are months away from the FedExCup playoffs, how important is it to you to retain that lead and how appropriate or important is

it to have that lead going into the playoffs?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it's a byproduct of doing my process and playing well at tournaments and winning tournaments. Obviously the points ramp up come playoff time and so as far as the FedExCup is concerned, those events are more important, but in the meantime there's plenty of big events between now and then and I'm going to keep my focus and attention at the week and the day at hand.

MARK WILLIAMS: We appreciate it and congratulations on a victory for a second time at Muirfield Village.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Thank you.

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