

BMW Championship

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Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Wilmington Country Club

Harry Higgs

Media Day Press Conference



BMW
CHAMPIONSHIP

VINCE PELLEGRINO: Thanks for joining us here today.

HARRY HIGGS: You got it. Good morning.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: First things first, what do you think of the Eagles' chances this year? I know, hard-hitting question.

HARRY HIGGS: Swell. I guess it would be, what, 17-0, then three playoff wins, so 20 wins, no losses, and to the Super Bowl. That's what I always think of the Eagles' chances.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: You were born in Camden, New Jersey, but I know it was a quick stop before your family moved to Kansas City. Still, it's clear that this region has left a mark on you. How did that happen?

HARRY HIGGS: Yeah, just the hospital. Just the hospital was in Camden. Then we lived in Malvern, so a suburb just outside Philadelphia, for 10 years. So I spent a good bit of time there. Mom and Dad were from here obviously before they moved us to Philadelphia, and then all aunts and uncles are in the area or have stayed in the area, and I guess it's probably also just with the kind of sports teams tie as I'm sure everybody in the room knows all too well, a Philly fan is just a little bit different, and I guess even as a young kid, leaving but still following Philadelphia sports, that kind of tied me back to the region, and we would get back and see family every now and again. Go down to the shore in the summer, run around with all my cousins and aunts and uncles. Yeah, big fan.

Now it's a bit of a shock having spent a little bit of time in Kansas City, or a little bit more than a little bit of time, and then now living in Dallas, coming back to the Philadelphia area and just the -- I don't want to call the people mean, but just that everybody kind of can throw a dirty look at you versus the Midwest where everybody will say hello to you and say, how are you, how can I help.

Here in Philadelphia you're on your own, which I kind of love and respect, as well.

So yeah, big fan of the area. I'm here now, as you said, which is a treat. I haven't been back in a little bit.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: We're down in Wilmington today. How does it feel to see a big event like the BMW Championship come to this region? I know you were up in Aronimink a few years ago, but being down at Wilmington Country Club, how does it feel to see a big event like this come to this region?

HARRY HIGGS: Yeah, obviously for me personally, last year at Caves Valley was the closest we had gone all season long so that families could drive and watch me play basically. Then it's even easier for them now being in Wilmington, which is just a much, much shorter drive.

Yeah, I think it's awesome. Crowds have been getting louder and louder and rowdier and rowdier. I guess Canada had two years off and then we were just up there, and they were hell-bent, and I guess the Philadelphia area has probably had four or five, six years off. I cannot wait to get there. It's going to be loud and rowdy, and they're going to be thrilled that we're there.

No, looking forward to it. I need to play a little better golf to ensure that I'm there, but I certainly plan on doing that so I can play in front of some friends and family.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: It's our first time and the first time for the PGA TOUR being in Delaware and we're really excited about that. It seems like the golf fans here in Delaware are really excited, as well. There's so much really good golf in and around this area, including Wilmington Country Club where we're playing. Do you have a favorite course in the area, and have you played Wilmington Country Club?

HARRY HIGGS: I have not played Wilmington Country Club. I have met -- I was at a sponsor deal about two months ago and I met one of the members. He just kind of ran me through some of the holes. I've heard nothing but good things.

We moved to Kansas City when I was 10, and I really wasn't like that into golf just quite yet. So I have sadly hardly played any golf in the Philadelphia area, or greater Philadelphia area. I know how good it is. I'm going to get

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off this call and hopefully find some rain and go play Merion this morning or I guess this afternoon, and I couldn't be more excited. It'll be my first time there. Obviously has a ton of history. I've watched it in U.S. Opens and the like.

No, I think Philadelphia and the area surround is maybe even a little bit underrated, New York and Long Island get probably a little bit more love in terms of golf-wise, quality of golf. But I know it's really great. I'm looking forward to checking one of them off the list today, hopefully checking another one off the list come August, and then seeing a few more because I know there's plenty of great ones in this area.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: You mentioned you haven't played Wilmington Country Club, and I think a lot of the players, the top 70 players in the world will descend upon Wilmington Country Club, and they haven't played it, either. How do you prepare for a tournament that you've never played the golf course? What does it look like? What does your week look like? Would you come in early? I know the playoff is obviously a three-week span. Would you have more practice on Monday and Tuesday? How does that look for you?

HARRY HIGGS: Yeah, for me personally and a lot of guys, I can't remember who said it, but one of my first years out, somebody had said -- gosh, I forget who it was, but one of the players had said whether you show up Monday, Tuesday, whatever it is, whether you see all 18 holes or your caddie walks nine and you play the other nine, you need to turn this place into your home course. I would say that those of us on the PGA TOUR are very good at doing that.

I would be shocked if any one of the 70, maybe one, two or three have been to Wilmington before. Well, yeah, probably have even been to Wilmington. I may be the only one that has ever been to Wilmington.

No, it requires -- me personally, I'd like to see every hole once get kind of the lines off the tee and then hit an approach into the green and that really doesn't matter, you walk up and look at the green and see, okay, to right flags I actually can miss it to the right. Where short-sided normally is a big no, you can do that here.

It's a little bit of that, and then I think some of us also just like newer golf courses, less scar tissue. You haven't seen yourself hit bad shots on any of the holes quite yet.

No, I would imagine it'll be -- for a lot of the 70 that are there, it will be a little busier. Somebody will probably have to go play nine holes on Monday and then you'll play nine holes Tuesday and probably nine holes Wednesday, nine

holes in the pro-am Wednesday. You can't really get a whole lot of work done in the pro-am, so you'll see guys probably out playing on Monday, which is pretty rare especially in a playoff event as you're trying to conserve energy.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: Let's talk a little bit about your career. In a few short years on TOUR, your personality has really resonated with fans. You talked about larger and larger crowds out here, especially the Canadian Open. I know we've had a history of having some tremendous crowds. What's it been like to see your personality grow with the fans and that relationship you have with them?

HARRY HIGGS: Yeah, it's been hard at times, if I'm being honest. Well, I'm fortunate that I'm being recognized for just being myself. I'm not playing a character. This is just who I am, which is nice, very nice. Then I've also just had a hard time not necessarily playing in front of people, but just dealing with -- I guess almost their expectations of what I should be like. I take this very seriously. I want to be very good at this. There's a lot of things that I'm trying to achieve in this game that I have not quite done yet, and some that I have.

It's been a little bit of a juggling act. It's a great problem to have, but there are times where I certainly wish I could just play in front of my mom and dad, back to the old days where there's no one walking around screaming and yelling the crazy stuff they scream.

I'm learning, certainly, and I never really thought that this would be -- you have some success and then just also kind of have some fun out there with either the players or every now and again with the fans. I never thought that this would kind of take off in the way that it has. Also I look quite a bit different than most everybody else. There's a lot of what we call a 5'9", 165. I am not 5'9" and 165 pounds. People seem to take a liking to that, as well.

Yeah, it's been a learning curve for sure. I'm continually trying to get better at just kind of like dealing with -- I guess what goes into playing with me, and I'm the one that has to play with me. Getting better for sure.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: We remember you from just a short few years ago playing in our Evans Scholars Invitational in Chicago and the Korn Ferry TOUR and the pro-am participants always had a great time playing with you. The stage is a little bit different now, and you've been shown to be able to deliver on the big stages. You tied for fourth at last year's PGA Championship, which is tremendous, and that was your first time, and then a tie for 14th at the Masters and the three major appearances. What is it about those weeks that brings out your best?

HARRY HIGGS: I mean, I have found that my focus is even more intensified, that, no disrespect to let's say the Travelers last week, although they sneaky have it, but some of the courses we'll play throughout the year, you have an 8-iron to the middle of the fairway and there's really no penalty, whether you miss it right or left or short or long. Of the four, if there are four misses, there's probably one that you can't do.

In a major, of the four misses there is three that you can't do. There's one that's acceptable that you would have a chance. Just something about that has heightened my focus, I guess, in kind of preparing just for each golf shot, and I find that if I'm kind of locked in on the one place my ball could go, it's going there.

Yeah, that's really been about it, and then it just doesn't require six, seven, eight birdies a round. You can still shoot even par. Heck, you can still shoot a couple over in a major and still kind of be right in it. You shoot 1- or 2-over the first day, all you are is two or three birdies the next day in a four or five-hole stretch, moving up from 50th to 10th.

I just like that. I like the challenging -- having to be really, really exact throughout the day in all facets of the game.

We're getting more and more regular season events that are also like that, as well. But there are just some where you have 150 yards and you're just trying to fly it in the hole because there's no consequence to where the ball goes after that.

That doesn't always get my juices flowing, but I need to make sure that I find a way that it does because those also still matter a whole lot. They always reward you for good play.

Yeah, I would say just in total, my focus can certainly be more intensified, and I wind up just going through my processes and kind of landing on a more exact kind of outcome.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: The other thing that really matters and matters to a lot of people in this room are caddies. As you may know from playing the championship the past couple years, all the proceeds of the event go to the Evans Scholars Foundation, which is obviously all about caddies. What's it like to have your brother on the bag, and how important is that to spend time with him but also in more of a business relationship, and how does that player-caddie dynamic lead to success on the PGA TOUR?

HARRY HIGGS: Yeah, you know, I would say that I love it. I'm sure that he would say that there are times where he

doesn't love being around me that much.

No, it's been great. We started a little over two years ago now. It's been fun to share it with obviously somebody who I love and kind of -- I think the most fun has been trying to like grow and get better for the both of us, him and kind of -- all that he's expected to do as a caddie, and then me, as well, and all I'm expected to do as a player.

He is vitally important. In a little over two years in my opinion he has turned himself into a world-class caddie, and I'm sure there's plenty of caddies that would also agree with that. There are times where especially me being the older brother I'll get a little hot under the collar and I'll kind of usually complain about something or other, and that's really about the only time that he is not always going to basically interject and tell me to basically shut up.

But yeah, he runs a tight ship now. When we're out there, it is not really brothers. This is a business. We are here to achieve what we both set out to achieve. He'll give me a good talking-to if I get a little too whiny, which we all can get too whiny. Get your rear end out of -- get your head out of your rear end. I hear that every now and again.

But no, it's been a lot of fun. It really has. I always joke, and it's 100 percent true, if he's not caddying for me, it's not because I fired him, it's because he left me. I'm more than happy with the arrangement.

There was probably a little bit of doubt early on, like is this a good idea mixing family and business, but for me at least, it's been a great idea. I think he would say the same. But he's not here, so we'll say that he loves it, too.

VINCE PELLEGRINO: Thanks, Harry, for your time. We really appreciate it. We are excited to see the best 78 players in the world come here to Wilmington. We hope to see you in August for the BMW Championship at Wilmington Country Club, and really appreciate all your time. Thanks so much, Harry.

HARRY HIGGS: You got it, guys. Take care.

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