

PGA TOUR Media Conference

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Brian Rolapp

Tyler Dennis

Kirsten Burgess

Press Conference

BRIAN ROLAPP: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for coming. I thought I would make a few brief comments before we get to any questions you might have. Or actually a statement, I should say.

Yesterday our boards approved a number of eligibility related items that will help shape our new competitive model. This is an important milestone in the work of the Future Competition Committee as we continue preparing for implementation in 2028.

From the beginning, we set out to preserve the meritocracy of our sport and build a competitive model that rewards excellence and ensures a clear path for top performers at each stage of their career. The board has approved an eligibility structure that will do just that.

To summarize, we approved membership criteria and eligibility for new competitive structure; a PGA TOUR Championship Series points system that is easier for fans to follow and rewards wins; top finishes, and making the cut; a transition year eligibility for 2027 that will set the membership for 2028.

For our players, there is now a clear understanding of the pathways available to them, both as we transition to the new competitive structure and for the future.

As for our fans and partners, this provides a clear understanding of what is at stake each week and how players can earn their way into the highest level of competition.

This has been a collaborative process with our players across the Future Competition Committee, the PAC, the PAC subcommittees, and our members have devoted a substantial amount of time and energy helping to shape these decisions.

Before we get to your questions on this announcement, I will briefly address LIV because I know it has been in the news recently, and I expect it may come up today.

As I said a few weeks ago in Atlanta, there are really three things when it comes to anyone who wants to compete on the PGA TOUR. One, the PGA TOUR is built on meritocracy. Every player, whether they are a member or want to become one, must earn their place.

Two, we are a membership organization; we have rules, and those rules exist for lots of reasons, including fairness and competitive balance. Rules matter, and they must be enforced.

Which brings me to number three, accountability and discipline. These are essential elements for any sports league and are certainly for the integrity of the PGA TOUR and the sport. It's what holds the TOUR together. Those are guiding principles for us.

In terms of where we are today, we are not currently contemplating a returning-member program like the one you saw in January. Everyone at the PGA TOUR, myself included, has been focused on what is best for the organization. The items approved by the boards yesterday are part of the progression in building the optimal competitive model for the future.

With that, I would like to turn back to the purpose of today's announcement. I am pleased to be joined today as you will see by two members who have been critical of the work of the Future Competition Committee, Tyler Dennis, our chief competitions officer, and Kirby Burgess, senior vice president of competitions.

Tyler and Kirby have been deeply involved in this work, and are more importantly here to make sure you get your questions answered.

With that, we're happy to answer any questions you might have.

Q. There have been so many five-year exemptions, whether it's majors or players or whatever, and that's narrowed down to two for the championship and four for the challenger. How much did that drive the thinking on what you've done? And secondly to that, the winner of the new FedExCup, the TOUR Championship, whatever, currently gets a five-year exemption. What kind of reward does he get besides

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probably a nice bonus check?

BRIAN ROLAPP: On that second question, I'll turn it to Tyler in a minute, who can provide an answer. I think on the first part, in the committee and then in the PAC and the subcommittees, there was lots of discussions about how do you balance career performance and the meritocracy of the sport, and I think philosophically, it became clear that this is such a hard -- this is a sport with so much competitive parity, and winning on the PGA TOUR is such a hard thing to do, that there should be some acknowledgment of career accomplishments.

Now, this is where we landed as far as the metric you outlined, but I think that was the debate and the discussion. I think we've landed in a good place.

Tyler, I'll let you answer the FedExCup question.

TYLER DENNIS: As you saw, the thought that went into this on the winner exemptions as you look to the future state is standardizing, so we've got all of the -- you know, events are acting the same. That goes across the points system, the two years, as you said.

There's also a transition aspect to it. I'm not sure if that's what you were asking, but we looked at what people have earned through '26 and then something different in '27 and into the future.

Q. I was more interested in the guy who makes it through the two weeks of match play and is the TOUR champion. What kind of exemption does he get? I don't think I saw that in the Championship Series categories. Does he just get two years?

TYLER DENNIS: Correct, yeah.

Q. The release that came out was pretty self-explanatory in a lot of ways, but have you had any difficulty, or what's the progress in getting the Challenger Series events scheduled? To this date you've only confirmed one. On the question regarding our local coverage area, do you see the RSM Classic at Sea Island being part of the Challenger Series or the Last Chance Series at this point?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I think on your second question, we haven't made any decisions or announcements when it comes to that particular tournament.

I think in general on the Challenger Series, I mentioned this briefly in Atlanta, we are down to a handful of opportunities in the Championship Series. We have 14 active discussions from potential sponsors and sites for those.

We've asked for their best offer by the end of the month.

So I think we'll have a pretty good idea of where we fall with the Championship Series. It was always designed to get that in place first, and then move on to the Challenger Series.

Having said that, we've had some early conversations with the Challenger Series already despite the sequencing, but we're going to sequence in that way. So I think we'll have a lot more for you as the year goes on.

I think we mentioned in Atlanta we'd like to have some visibility certainly on the Challenger Series by the PLAYERS Championship, so as we go to work after we land the championship series.

Q. And do you think the RSM series with a little bit of history that's carved out with that spot in the schedule and its association with Davis Love who's in the Hall of Fame, do you see a place for that tournament somewhere on the schedule?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I think all of our options are open. We haven't made any definitive decisions on that tournament or a whole host of others, but we'll certainly get a fair shake.

Q. This is probably best for Tyler. Just looking at the exemptions for 2027, the transition year, will that impact field sizes in 2028 in Championship Series events? Because I know the idea is to keep those around 120 players, but it seems like there's a lot of opportunities coming out of the 2027 season.

TYLER DENNIS: Yeah, I mean, that's what we've been focused on, and Kirdy who's on the phone can add context here. But if you look at the 2028 championship system, it's a set number of members, and so we ideally want around 120 in each event. So we're working towards a set membership size.

As you look at the sort of what we have today, as I was saying a minute ago, through that transition system into that, we've still got a couple things to finalize, but we're trying to hit that sort of sweet spot there where we have the right number in the membership.

Q. Could you imagine 2028 Championship Series fields increasing?

TYLER DENNIS: Well, again, there's no set field size, so to speak, in the Championship Series, so when you get to 2028, all of the committed members for that particular week will be in the field.



So one week it could be 120 exactly, one week it could be 123, something like that. There's going to be some variability.

Q. Just curious, what was the thinking in having the recipient of the PGA TOUR accelerated player go to the Challenger Series as opposed to the Championship Series?

TYLER DENNIS: I was going to pass that one to Kirby who is involved in those details.

KIRSTEN BURGESS: As we looked through PGA TOUR University, one of the things that we found with the accelerated program is that the players that are staying the four years are No. 1 players.

As you know, right now we have 100 percent retention rate. They're performing very, very well. We want to look to continue that and continue to encourage players to stay all four years of school.

Now, we want -- we know there's going to be exceptions and exceptional players that might want to come out early, and we feel like it would be the best opportunity for them to come into the Challenger Series, get that time and get promoted that way.

They would have the option if they hit accelerated to take accelerated or to stay in school for four years and get that No. 1 spot.

Q. Brian, loud and clear on the front of no returning-member program being contemplated, but can you share anything about how the Future Competition Committee has been talking about any potential LIV players, just their overall thoughts about trying to bring any of those players back?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, I think the Future Competition Committee was really just focused on the competitive model that we've been discussing over the past few months.

Again, it's almost repetitive, but it's worth saying again, really leaning into meritocracy, balancing that with what you've seen today about winning and what that means in career milestones.

So I think it's also -- we've also, which we haven't announced today, but we're also thinking through and haven't made any decisions on how the DP World Tour will fit into that. You notice that's not part of the announcement. That's very much under discussion both

internally and as we continue our discussions with the DP World Tour.

So it was really with a broader lens of how do we build the best tour. It was not really looked at specifically on any one particular -- on LIV or any other consideration. So that's generally how we thought about it.

Q. One separate follow-up for you all. One related to the career Money List exemptions going into 2028 and 2029, is that the vision there to be a permanent fixture with the Championship Series, or could that evolve in any form over the years?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Tyler, do you want to answer that?

TYLER DENNIS: Sure. Of course we always are constantly looking at things and anything can change over the years, but that was an important feature of the overall eligibility system, that reward for a player who's had an incredible career.

And so as you saw in the release, we've put some guardrails around it and sort of the ways it's going to work. But we still have some work to do to figure out exactly how that works, and I imagine that'll continue to be refined and evolved over the years.

So more to come out of our next round of approvals in November.

BRIAN ROLAPP: I also think as a general matter, we're not sitting here today saying all of this is perfect. This is a brand new model that we're launching in '28, and I fully expect as we get into '28 and '29 and '30 we'll look and see what's working well and what's not, and working with our boards and the PAC on how do we improve and make it better.

We'd be naïve to think that we've nailed this 100 percent. We know it'll take some innovation as we go through the years.

Q. I had a question, first off, specifically about Tiger. As it reads now, he would have to take the one-time career money exemption to play in 2028, assuming he's not going to play a full schedule this coming year. Was there any discussion about carving out a special spot for him based on his career? And I'm curious maybe what he might have had to say about it in these discussions.

BRIAN ROLAPP: Tyler, do you want to take the career milestones category?



TYLER DENNIS: Sure, yeah. Again, Bob, what we announced are how that's going to work, generally speaking. You saw in the release the sort of general parameters. There's still work to do on that to finalize the exact calculations and everything. Obviously Tiger would be part of that.

So hope that answers your question, but the basic parameters are there.

BRIAN ROLAPP: Let me add one thing. The second part of your question about the discussion. In all our discussions Tiger has chaired this committee. Tiger has been consistent about he wants to do what's best for the PGA TOUR, that he's looking long-term about it.

There wasn't once about do we need to change rules for Tiger. His focus had been on trying to make the PGA TOUR live way past any of us, so that was clearly his orientation as well as the rest of the committee.

Q. Brian, on another matter, you just mentioned a minute ago about the DP World Tour and the spots that -- obviously you've not carved out any for them, and it must be contingent upon extending the strategic alliance. Can you update us on where that is? Is that close? Are there any hangups that is keeping that from being finalized?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, sure. We had a discussion yesterday. We had a discussion last week. Discussions are ongoing. The spirit of those conversations are very productive. Both sides are trying to think creatively about how we modify and improve the relationship we have.

So we'll continue the discussions. Like any discussions, there's things we agree on, things we don't agree on, things we're trying to work through, and we'll continue to do that.

Hopefully in the not-too-distant future, we'll have more to say about that.

Q. I understand wanting to keep everything uniform as far as the points. I'm curious about the decision to not have the majors and THE PLAYERS award more points when those tournaments pretty clearly stand out, at least in the mind of the golf fan?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Well, I think I'll let Tyler answer that, but I think philosophically what we looked at is we tried to create a competitive system where the top 120 golfers were competing week in and week out and were testing themselves against week in and week out, and we felt that we've accomplished that.

With a much more simple point system that fans could follow and more consistent fields, we felt that we've accomplished that with the point system and with the Championship Series.

But it's definitely hitting simplicity and hitting the meritocracy, and with that level of competition it makes it hard to refute that week in and week out, if you're beating the best you're not among the best and that's what we've created.

Tyler, Kirby, I don't know if you want to add to that.

TYLER DENNIS: I think you've got it. The simplicity and the meritocracy of it were the two factors that the members of the Future Competition Committee really focused on, and as Brian said, you've got the best players in the world competing against each other each week.

We feel really good about the system we've put forth.

Q. Brian, can you take us into the dynamics of the meeting? I'm not asking for specifics as much as for the fans to understand. Does staff pretty much present their vision, and would you say the players are more leaning toward a rubber stamp, or is there a lot of spirited dialogue to get it right?

BRIAN ROLAPP: No, it's definitely the latter. It is not a rubber stamp. It was an in-depth, collaborative process driven by data. A lot of people had opinions, had a view of what we thought it should be.

I should say this: We all sort of aligned our north stars of where we wanted to go, right, which we've talked a lot about, and then it's a question of how you get there.

Once we aligned on the vision, which took a lot of discussion, then it was the details, how do they work. The players were extremely active in every aspect of it, from looking at the data to coming up with ideas to debating, and the staff really facilitated a lot of that discussion.

But it was a very in-depth, collaborative process. The rubber stamp would be the farthest thing from what they did.

Listen, we've been very public about this. We had our fits and start. Like we had tension in the process, and I'm convinced any good process is going to have tension.

Sometimes the golf aspect of it leaned up against the commercial aspect of it or the practicality of how you get all this done. So it was a very honest dialogue.



As I said, I don't think it's perfect. But I think it's a huge improvement, and I think we'll continue to innovate as the years go on because we'll be smarter after the '28 season and smarter after the '29 and we'll continue to try to get better.

Q. Speaking to the commercial aspect, you certainly kept us busy today with a number of announcements and appointing C-suite executives over technology, marketing, and investor relations. It would appear that you've handed Andy Weitz the keys to a really big vehicle to drive for the PGA TOUR as he's listed in the news release as the president of enterprises. Can you speak to that role and what made him the right person for that role?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, I think Andy had been doing that job for some time. When I came in and reorganized I made a lot of changes to my direct reports, and I started on the commercial side and brought in Dhruv Prasad from the NFL who has a big chunk of the organization.

Andy at that time was in the chief marketing job. I gave him more to do, both studio operations and technology and other things, and so his title change today is just more descriptive of what he's been doing and what I've asked him to do for the last nine months.

I think he's doing a great job, as is the rest of the team. But I think you look at the hires we had today, we're relaunching the PGA TOUR branding and what it looks like to the world in 2028. You need a real emphasis on marketing to do that.

PGA TOUR Studios, which is a state-of-the-art facility we have here. In order to relaunch the TOUR and to reach fans in a better way, we're going to ramp up production and utilize that in a big way. We need executives to help us do that, and I think you saw that today.

I think you also see that we hired someone in investor relations. And to be clear, that job is not really about as much SSG as it is about the players. The players who have equity in the TOUR now have needs to understand what we're doing. They have practical realities of how to handle this financially. We brought in a world-class executive to make sure that they have all they need to do that.

I think you'll see a continuation as we continue to shape the organization to up-level our performance. You'll see more changes in the future. But that announcement was one of many that we have done and that you'll see.

Q. I didn't think I saw anything in there about the vote. Did anybody abstain this time or anybody oppose these changes, or was it full agreement?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I think I've said this previously: I don't talk publicly about votes from a board meeting. I don't think that would be appropriate. But we clearly had the support we needed.

Q. The requirement to have everybody play in the last-chance event, what was the reasoning behind that, and does it conflict with some of the independent contractor reasons why you don't have all the players required to play in the Championship Series?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Well, I don't think it conflicts with that. I think really what -- it was really an important part of the competitive model, where in order to make a series finale which may be determining essentially the champion for that year that we needed to make sure everybody was there.

But also it was very important competitively because out of that we'll also determine who goes on to the TOUR Championship. We thought it was very important to make sure that we had the required participation in that event in order to hold the competitive model together.

But I don't think it cuts against the independent contractor nature of our relationship at all.

Q. Is it going to be set up in a way where the person -- if, say, somebody won the first one, finished second in the next one, they wouldn't necessarily have clinched after just two events? Say they went one, two, three in the first three events; they still need to play in the fourth just because or would there be a way they wouldn't finish in the top three?

TYLER DENNIS: I think you're asking about the last-chance series; is that correct?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I was answering a question around -- I thought you meant the series finale of the TOUR Championship. You're asking about the last-chance series?

Q. Yeah.

TYLER DENNIS: I can touch on that. Kind of to the question earlier, we had a great opportunity this summer with the PAC. We have subcommittees of the PAC that talk through all these details. Kirsten sort of led that -- Kirdy, do you want to give insight into why we decided on that rule that you cited?



KIRSTEN BURGESS: Absolutely. And to sort of answer your question, it was actually brought forth by the players. Clearly there's commercial value for us, but they are thinking as competitively -- if we're having a series of events to identify outside of the Challenger Series who should go to the Championship Series, they truly want it to be a series of events.

Everyone playing head-to-head in those four, four to six I think we've said as soon as we make the schedule, to determine who gets promoted to the Championship Series. What we have announced this week is the structure for the Championship Series. We have not announced the point structure for the Challenger Series or the Last Chance Series, and we're going to continue to work on that now that we have approval for who's going to be in those events. You will see the points structured in a way that we really want to identify the best players through all of the events as a series.

Q. Playing in that last event, would it be possibly a formality where they've already clinched, or would it still be up for grabs by the last event of the last chance?

KIRSTEN BURGESS: We haven't finalized the point structure yesterday. Obviously any point structure that we would have would want to ensure that it's a great competitive product, but we'll have to -- we haven't finalized the point system to date.

Q. Similarly, if a non-member wins the U.S. Open, he can start in the Championship Series the following week, but he doesn't get points for that victory at the U.S. Open? Am I reading that right?

TYLER DENNIS: Correct. Yeah, that's correct, that you would get -- if they're not already on the Championship Series in your example, they would get access into the Championship Series, but they're not bringing -- they're starting new on the points list.

Q. What's the thinking there?

TYLER DENNIS: Again, it just comes back to the simplicity and the meritocracy of it all. It was something we felt was important. We've done other things in the past, but we wanted to keep it simple and reward that victory with eligibility, and then from that point forward, that player enters the ongoing points race.

Q. I only have two questions. I guess for the group, circling back to DP, Brian I know you said in the not-too-distant future. I'm assuming you will carve out that exemption before 2027 so there will be

exemptions for 2028 for the DP World Tour; is that correct?

BRIAN ROLAPP: That's our intention, correct.

Q. On the Austin event, we're two months out from that now and I know you're in the market for a sponsor. Is there a deadline that you hit where you say, okay, we haven't found a sponsor, this is just going to be called the Austin championship, or can you take it right up to the event from a build perspective, from a branding perspective, that you want to get a sponsor in there?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, I feel confident. There's several potential sponsors interested. I feel confident we'll find a sponsor for there. There's a deadline. I don't know what it is, but I know where we are in the process and I'm confident enough to know that we'll find one.

Q. Brian, with everything going on, last chance and Q-school and all that stuff, do you have kind of a ballpark idea in your head when you want all this to be wrapped up? What kind of breathing room do you want between the end and the start of the next year?

BRIAN ROLAPP: When it comes to eligibility?

Q. Just when it comes to the whole schedule.

BRIAN ROLAPP: Well, I think we've laid out a timeline of roughly -- all the eligibility matters we're talking about will be done by November, so our members know what they're playing for.

From a commercial standpoint and a schedule, I think we have a few milestones which we mentioned. I think we'll have the Championship Series fully announced in February. I think we'll have much more of a view of the schedule by players for the Challenger Series and everything wrapped up by TOUR Championship next year.

Q. I'm at the BMW, and Rory McIlroy just talked about the Challenger Series versus the DP World Tour, and he said he really didn't see any benefit to moving from the DP World Tour to the Challenger Series. The only benefit would be to move from the DP World Tour to the Championship Series. I'm just wondering your thoughts on if that makes sense to you.

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, I haven't seen Rory's comments, but, again, I think it confirms to me what we're trying to do, which is we're trying to make the Championship Series the best and most -- the most competitive and the best professional golf series in the world, which I think we're

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accomplishing that, and also lean into the meritocracy. There's several ways to get there.

If you prove yourself on the golf course to earn it, you're going to earn it. There might be different decisions for different professional golfers. Some may choose a pathway to Europe when we solidify that. Some may choose the Challenger Series. I think there's probably a lot of factors that go into there, but that's my thinking.

Q. You guys keep talking about meritocracy, which is great. What I wonder is that for a long time now, the purses, the way they've been set up, the winner gets 18 percent of the purse. I'm just wondering, because it's so hard to win on the PGA TOUR and because you use the term meritocracy so much, why is it that that is limited to 18 percent? Why wouldn't the move be to be a higher number percentage-wise for a winner?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I think that one thing we're working on, I'd say in general, without commenting on that specifically, because I'm not sure I have a view on the 18 percent or not.

We're looking at -- the purses are set, but there's a lot of compensation issues when it comes to the Championship Series we're going to work through. We have the FedEx bonus system now. We are changing the TOUR Championship format. We are obviously putting a lot of weight on winning the Championship Series regular season.

So I think there's a lot of discussion about how we might deal with all those bonus dollars going forward, so that's very much under discussion.

Q. I was reading a Gallup Poll about seven days ago that talked about your alma mater is still the leader in sports as far as fan popularity, football, basketball, baseball in double digits, golf in single digits, lumped in with wrestling and auto racing and tennis. Does that inspire you to continue to be what I'll call a disruptor, to have people look within, without, all sides, to grow the sport?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Well, I haven't seen the Gallup Poll, but I'm not sure exactly -- whatever that poll said, I'm not sure exactly they shocked the world my saying football is the most popular sport in this country.

I don't know how much money they spent. I could have told you that and they could have saved their money.

But I think there's a bunch of compelling data about the growth of the game of golf, both people who play it but also

people who engage in it in media or professional golf.

I've talked about the participation statistics a lot, about how much it's grown since COVID. CBS just had their best year in the PGA TOUR I think since over 10 years, and that's in a world where linear television is declining every year.

I think things are moving to the right.

Having said that, I think there's a tremendous amount of growth the PGA TOUR can have in bringing professional golf to more sports fans. I think that the decisions we've made here will go a long way.

We have our own polling about how both fans and non-fans have responded to our announcements so far based on what they know, and they've been very positive. I think we're headed in the right direction.

Q. Forgive me if you answered this already, but can you see a -- (audio cut out) where the DP as you work this out will not have any spots that go on to the Championship Series, or it's just you're trying to determine how many?

BRIAN ROLAPP: You cut out a little bit, but I think we have not determined what the DP World Tour cards will be as of yet. That's under discussion.

Q. Is there a scenario, though, where there will be none that go to the Championship Series, or is there going to be an allotment of some sort through the Championship Series?

BRIAN ROLAPP: I don't see any scenarios where there's no Championship Series cards.

Q. Beyond seeding and money, talk about significance of that final event and the Championship Series. Has there been consideration by the TOUR and the approximate commission committee to quantify, to determine your Player of the Year that week? I respect voting bodies; I value it, especially if it's your peer group. Have you considered that?

BRIAN ROLAPP: Yeah, it's a really good question. We have not spent a ton of time talking about it, and we will. But to me, an opinion of one, and that's all it is, when you look at what we've set up with the Championship Series and you look at the standings and everything you've seen, whoever emerges at the top of those standings at the end of the Championship Series, it's hard for me to say that person isn't the Player of the Year.

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tournaments that are competitive. I don't think it leaves much subjectivity in that discussion, is what I would say.

But what we actually do with the Player of the Year and that award, we haven't decided.

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