

Sanderson Farms Championship

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Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

Davis Riley

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Davis Riley into the interview room here at the Sanderson Farms Championship. He's making his fifth career start at this event. Davis, welcome back. I know this one means a lot to you as a Mississippi native.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, it's nice to be back, especially at a place that I'm pretty familiar with, and growing up right just down the road from here, so it makes for a really fun and special week.

Q. Do you put extra pressure on yourself this week? I mentioned it's your fifth start, had your best finish T19 last year. Do you feel like you're getting the hang of playing in a home event?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, for sure. This is a place that I feel comfortable around. I feel like it's a golf course that fits my game. I got my best finish last year. I haven't performed exactly how I'd like to here, but it's a place that I really enjoy and I think fits my game really well, and hoping to improve upon that this year.

Q. Now you'll be playing it for the first time as a PGA TOUR winner. Talk about winning in New Orleans with Nick and what that meant for your career.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, it was really cool. Obviously having a couple close calls my rookie year at a couple different tournaments, but yeah, getting that first one was really cool, and to do it alongside Nick, who's a really good buddy of mine, it was pretty special, and obviously that tournament is pretty close to home for me, as well.

It was a super special week and moment I'll never forget.

Q. You enter the week No. 62 in the FedExCup standings. I know it's a number that's important to you. You're looking at 51 through 60. Talk about the fall and your preparation and how much this means to you.



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DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, for sure. Like you said, this fall is pretty important as far as finishing in that 51 to 60 to get into those first couple Signature Events starting the year. So yeah, a big priority. This will be my first start in the fall, and took a couple weeks after Memphis was the last tournament I played, so took a couple weeks off just to refresh, but hit the ground running the last couple weeks to try to get sharp and try to do some good work and get some nice finishes and had a couple chances hopefully to win this fall.

Q. Do you feel like the state of your game is good even with that break?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, for sure. I didn't have the year that I exactly wanted last year. Had a couple -- it was a little inconsistent. I felt like the really good was good, but just kind of lacked a little bit of consistency.

So yeah, I spent the last couple weeks kind of sharpening things up that I felt like I needed to in preparation for this fall, and I feel like I did a good job of that, and I feel like the state of my game, I feel prepared, and I've just got to get out there and try to get into the flow of it.

Q. You mentioned this wasn't the most consistent year you could have had. What lessons do you learn when you have a breakout rookie year and you're just adjusting to life as a pro and learning how to be more consistent?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, like you said, my rookie year had a couple close calls, chances. I don't know, I got the itch to try to get in contention really quickly after winning in New Orleans, and I feel like I maybe put a lot more expectations and stuff on myself, and I feel like I kind of got in the way a little bit, and it was almost kind of like I put a lot of pressure on myself to win again because once you get that one you just want the next one immediately, and it was hard to get. I feel like I got in my own way a little bit.

Just trying to get back to the basics and just trying to start on Thursday instead of trying to win the golf tournament on Thursday.



Q. You have previously referred to this tournament as your fifth major. I was wondering if you could touch on that a little bit and why this tournament is so special to you.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, for sure. Obviously I was born and raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, pretty close to home here. Yeah, I played numerous high school events here, grew up watching this tournament, and obviously having so many friends and family would be really special. Just being the hometown -- I guess quote-unquote, the hometown kid, Mississippi kid here along with a couple other guys, it's just special. Anytime you're playing close to home and you have close friends and family that are going to be out here supporting you, there's just a little extra to it, and I feel like my job is to get into the flow of the tournament and try to make a little noise out there.

Q. Will a lot of the family and friends be making the trip down, and if so, how many do you think it'll be?

DAVIS RILEY: I don't know if I can put a number on it. I'll definitely have some friends and shenanigans showing up and trying to bring a little noise. Yeah, there will be quite a few for sure I imagine.

Q. Just to follow up, you talk about mentally not trying to win it on Thursday, but what kind of other things as you enter this next phase of your career are you working on right now?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, me and my coach, Mark

Blackburn, we looked pretty closely at our stats and stuff like that, and statistically I didn't drive the ball as well as I did in my rookie year, and I think that played a big role in why I struggled this year. I wasn't in position, because the strength of my game is my approach play, wedges and irons, and when you're not driving the ball in the fairway, it's just hard to do that and take advantage of your strength.

So yeah, spent a lot of time on -- I'm trying to get the ball in the fairway a little bit more this fall and into next year, so spent quite a bit of time on that.

Q. Have you talked to Ludvig much?

DAVIS RILEY: I haven't. I haven't played or seen him much other than just kind of walking by each other, range, clubhouse and stuff like that. I don't know him particularly well.

Q. As somebody who calls this the fifth major, as he's

coming from Rome to here, what's your appreciation for him coming straight from the Ryder Cup to here?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, he's had a pretty cool and crazy journey. Obviously I saw a stat he hadn't played in a major championship yet, but he's already been on a winning Ryder Cup team, which is pretty crazy to think about. Obviously he's really good.

Yeah, have a lot of respect for his game and just to see how he performed at the Ryder Cup and probably one of the most pressure packed situations you can play in and excel in that is pretty impressive, and yeah, I'm sure he'll be a pretty good force out here on TOUR.

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