

# Sentry Tournament of Champions

Sunday, January 9, 2022  
Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA  
Plantation Course at Kapalua

## Cameron Smith

### Press Conference

RACHEL NOBLE: We would like to welcome Cameron Smith, the 2022 Sentry Tournament of Champions winner, to the interview room here. Cameron, what a couple of past days breaking the TOUR record of most strokes under par since 1950. Just talk us through how it was out there.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, it was pretty crazy. I felt like, with Jon obviously playing with him over the weekend, I felt like I needed to make a birdie to kind of keep up with him or stay in front.

But, yeah, just lots of good golf. The putts kept going in. That was the key over the weekend, I think, just to see the putts go in. And, yeah, that was it.

RACHEL NOBLE: Fourth win on TOUR for you. First international winner since 2010 at this event. What does winning this tournament mean to you?

CAMERON SMITH: I mean, it's such a good event. I've been fortunate enough to be here two times before. I love Maui. It's such a cool place and obviously you're competing against the best guys the year prior and all guys that know how to win a golf tournament. So yeah, it's pretty cool to be the winner.

RACHEL NOBLE: We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. We talked about Ernie the other day. I've learned since then that you were on his Presidents Cup team in 2019. How cool is it for you, after that experience, to break his mark that was set right here, an unbelievable TOUR mark, how cool is that for you?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, it's pretty cool. Obviously Ernie was one of my idols growing up. I mean, I don't really have many things to brag about to Ernie, to be honest. He's got a lot of stuff over me. But, yeah, to take this one off him is pretty cool.

**Q. Can you talk about just what's the pressure like**



**knowing you have to go low to win this tournament every day and how difficult it was to go wire-to-wire?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I just played really solid the whole week. Obviously being a leader is not easy. Restless sleeps. I feel like I spent a lot of time looking at the ceiling in bed this week.

But, no, it was really cool. I haven't done that before. It was nice to kind of see where my game's at against some of the best players in the world. I've been working hard and it's paid off early in the season.

**Q. Speaking of that, you're into the world top 10 for the first time, clearly a goal of yours, and I assume you have further to go.**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, you know, it took me awhile to get into the top 20, and I actually didn't know that, so that's really cool. That was one of my goals this year was to get into the top 10.

Yeah, I don't really know what to say. That's, it's nice that that's done and dusted. Hopefully, I can keep cruising up those world rankings.

**Q. What's more impressive to you, the fact that you were able to hold fire and keep pace and obviously win this or you were able to do it with playing with Jon Rahm, the world No. 1, over the weekend?**

CAMERON SMITH: I think just stringing four really good days together. I think that's always kind of something I've, not struggled with, but I've always kind of wanted to do that, and I've always had kind of a scratchy day in there. So four really, really solid days of golf.

Obviously playing with Jon over the weekend was tough. He kept firing at pins and kept making birdies and I felt like I had to stay on top of him and it was nice to do that.

**Q. Was that a key to it, though, given that we know that you love the fight? Look, you said yesterday you missed the competitive side of golf more than just playing. So having him there and knowing that that's**



**the best at the moment in the world, did that keep you on task?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, he's the best golfer in the world and there's many reasons why he is. He flushes it and he, it seems like he drains every putt he looks at.

So, yeah, it was nice to kind of overcome that and kind of give some punches back, I guess, to him and give him something to think about.

**Q. And you get to go to a venue next week that you've also won at. What's it like to have the double and are you looking forward to keep being the roll going?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, this is as close as we get basically on the PGA TOUR to home, so it's nice to have a couple of wins here.

I'm really looking forward to next week. Obviously I've got a really good history there. I've won there before. I love the golf course. It reminds me so much of where I grew up playing golf. I feel really comfortable around there and I can't wait for Thursday. I know that's, I feel like I'm drained at the moment, but I'm excited for next week already.

**Q. A number of times when you had a one-shot lead and Jon put some pressure on your tee shot at 14, second into 15, and you answered every time, I just wondered if there was a particular shot you were particularly proud of?**

CAMERON SMITH: Trying to play off the tee or? What was that? Sorry?

**Q. When you're protecting a one-shot lead, and Jon is hitting first, either off the tee at 14 or into 15 first, etcetera, you have good shots in, put pressure on you, and you answered every time, was there any of those shots that you were particularly pleased with?**

CAMERON SMITH: I mean, all of them, to be honest. I was really pleased with my driver all week. I felt like last year it let me down a lot, so to be able to hit so many fairways, especially under pressure was really good and, I mean, a couple of those wedge shots off some grainy stuff I think could have gone pretty sour pretty quickly, so, yeah, I mean, it was just all solid stuff. I mean, I felt like I couldn't miss a shot, otherwise Jon was going to offer take me.

**Q. Secondly, I mean look, statistically the odds aren't in Jon's favor of holing that putt on the 18th, like you would expect, like you as a competitor would expect to but I wonder just what kind of, how difficult that 90-foot putt was to get the speed right to take as much stress**

**off of you as possible or did you just make it look easier than it really was?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, it was a hard putt. I had been struggling with my pace actually the whole back nine and then to have like a, yeah, a 90-footer there on the 18th and I knew I had to get it basically in in two. I mean, I was expecting Jon to hole his. I feel like he does that every week and I feel like he's done it to so many people before and he came so close.

But, yeah, I was just focused in on what I had to do.

**Q. What are your other goals for this year because we know Sony is one of your favorites, but what are the other ones that you haven't accomplished yet that you're still shooting for?**

CAMERON SMITH: I think one of the big goals for most of the guys out here is just to make it to Atlanta to the TOUR Championship. If you make it to Atlanta you've done something really good for a long period of time. So, yeah, that one's still a goal.

Like I said before, being in the top 10 was another one. It's good to tick that off so early in the year. But I guess I'll have to reassess on a few other ones.

**Q. We have Presidents Cup too which you'll be there I'm sure, right?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah. Yeah, I definitely want to be on that team. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the tournament so much last time that I would be devastated if I missed out and it's been one of my goals since I've turned pro to be on the team and, yeah, I'll try and be there again.

**Q. Can you just talk to the importance of you, I guess, keeping the personality you've always had being the every man, if you will, for the Americans or just the solid true-blue bloke that you've been able to maintain and, amongst obviously this elite sport.**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I feel like there's no real reason to change my personality. I think my dad would whip me, to be honest, if I did (laughing).

I don't know. It's just how I've been brought up. I've been brought up to be the, kind of the modest guy that respects everyone. And like even today out there, Jon was great as well. Every time we made a putt or a birdie it was, Good shot, mate, or there was never any I guess hatred towards each other just because we were competing. It was, we wanted to win because we wanted to compete against the best.

Yeah, so I think that's just kind of how I've been brought up and I respect other guys' good play as well.

**Q. Your look is a throwback. We know everyone loves it. But how awesome is it to have your golf continually be the story ahead of that as well?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I want people to talk about the golf. It's great people get behind it, but I would rather them talk about my golf game for sure.

**Q. Even people who realize that the wind didn't blow at all this week and it was soft and it was still and it was the best conditions this course has ever seen, should they be alarmed by the fact that three guys finished at 32-under or better? Is there something wrong with the game when they see that, and not just this week, but if you look back to Caves Valley and what Bryson and Patrick did and I could possibly list a couple of others, should anybody be concerned?**

CAMERON SMITH: No, I don't think so. That's just how golf is. I feel like I have to improve every year to just keep up. The TOUR standard is so good now. Obviously the course this week was a little bit soft. The greens were nice, probably the nicest they have ever been for me here.

But different conditions, wind, firm and fast fairways and greens always seems to sort out the score. So I just think that's how golf is and if the course is soft and receptive that's just a part of it.

**Q. And then move on to next week.**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah. Yeah, I think next week, yeah, it's going to be soft. I think they have had a lot of rain this last week, so probably another low scoring week, I'm sure.

**Q. Which is okay, as long as you got the lowest one.**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, that's right. (Laughing).

**Q. Also, you mentioned your driving, which was excellent this week, but it was a struggle and I'm just curious how much of an emphasis of improving that was in the off-season or had you started working on it long before that?**

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I don't typically like working on stuff through the season. I like to make subtle changes here and there. But I think just actually hitting golf balls, I spoke to my coach a lot over the off-season, sent him a lot of swings and, yeah, it's just something that we kind of grinded on.

My irons I've always felt kind of comfortable with, and my wedges, and we knew that if I could finally sort out the driver that I could really have one of my best seasons yet.

**Q. What exactly did you sort out beyond wanting to hit it in the middle of the club face all the time?**

CAMERON SMITH: I mean, that's hard to explain, to be honest. It really wasn't much. Probably just hitting more balls with driver, to be honest. I'm one of the -- I'm not lazy. I guess I'm lazy on the range. I get through the wedges and the irons and then I'm like, oh, I'm ready to go home and I barely hit driver. So I made sure I stayed there for an extra 10 or 15 minutes and actually hit some balls.

RACHEL NOBLE: Congratulations, Cameron.

CAMERON SMITH: Thank you.

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