

Sony Open in Hawaii

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Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Camilo Villegas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Camilo Villegas into the interview room, making his eighth career start at the Sony Open in Hawai'i. If we can get some comments on being here in Hawai'i this week.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, I like it here. Happy to be here. It's a pretty cool place. I always forget how far it is when I get here, but once you get here, it's a good energy. The golf course is in great shape this year. We've played three days with totally different wind than we're going to get the next four days, and I'm looking forward to the challenge.

2025 is an important year for me, and it's time to step it up.

Q. You've been a busy man on and off the course of late, but talk a little bit about the on the course and what your goals are for this season.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, I think last year was a bad year from a performance point of view. I did work a lot on my swing, and the swing is where I want it to be. After winning, I kind of -- how do I say it? I kind of felt like I bought a little bit of time, and with that, I kept working on my swing but I lost a little bit of focus when it came to performing and posting a score.

The goal this year is to perform, plain and simple. Just got to play golf, compete, post scores, and see where I finish at the end of the year.

Q. Is there any sense of urgency, maybe more urgency than before, just because of an eight-month season and only 100 cards?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Well, with the way the schedule is and my status, which is not being into the Signature Events, yeah, there's a sense of kind of urgency when it comes to playing. You've got to play kind of what you get in, and not only that, but you've got to perform.

Obviously it would be unbelievable to get off to a great start. It would be unbelievable to win a golf tournament

and completely change the schedule for the rest of the year, but we're playing for less cards this year, and it's going to be very competitive. I think players are going to be playing quite a bit this year, and it's going to be a dogfight out there, which is cool, too.

Q. You being on the board now, does that change how you manage your time at all? I know you've been part of the PAC for a while.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: The PAC is one thing, I board I heard is a completely different thing. Yes, it's going to be one of my priorities, too, is to manage time better, on and off the golf course. If we go back to last year, I felt like I was putting the time but I was lacking the focus when it came to my game and stuff.

This year, one of my goals is to be more efficient when I get to the golf course, take care of business when I need to take care of business, and then when it comes to the board stuff, obviously I'm representing a large group of players, and I've got to find time to just kind of communicate with people and talk about it.

But I need to find a way to kind of separate a little bit what's my training, my practice schedule, and then doing my other role as a board member.

Q. What did you learn from attending the board meeting in November that you went to just as a kind of spectator?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: A lot of smart people sitting there. Interesting dynamics. It goes faster than you think, even though it was a long day, 8:30 to 4:15 probably. You've got to be on top of your material. You have to be prepared.

It was very interesting when I got there and a lot of the board members had everything printed with notes and everything separated. When we got to that spot, they were ready to discuss and ready to give their input. Obviously some of the people sitting in this board meeting are members of many other boards and business people, and they're very involved with sports and different leagues, and I'm really looking forward to learning from them, and I'm



really looking forward to just kind of giving my honest feedback, opinion, and adding my two cents.

Q. You were a top-50 player for a long time, so you'll understand that part of it. Now you're on the outside. Do you feel like you're representing a certain type of player?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: No, not at all. I mean, I'm representing the PGA TOUR, and we want to have the best product. I need to put myself out of the equation, and I think if every player director can do that and think about the game, we're not here to -- we're here to represent everybody. We're not here to represent a portion of the large group. We're here to represent the game.

You just can't let your personal interests get in the way. There's a lot going in the game of golf, and we need to -- or hopefully we get it right. I've always said the game of golf will win, and there's a lot of moving parts. There's a tangled rope to be untangled. Sometimes we wished things happened quicker, but it's complicated. There's a lot going on. But I think everything will be good.

Q. Do you have an opinion on whether guys at LIV should be allowed to come back? The reason I ask that is what do you do with your opinion as a voice on the board compared with representing the rest of the players? Does that make sense?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yes, I think it does.

I do have opinion and feelings when it comes to LIV guys coming back and playing with us. But I also have understanding on the status of the game of golf and what we need and what we need to do for our fans and our sponsors and everybody.

I think the best players need to play together, sooner rather than later, and we need to kind of bring back certain excitement that we've kind of lost because of all this other chatter that's gone around. Let's bring competition. Let's get the best players together, and let's put our egos aside, who stayed on the PGA TOUR, who went to LIV. Who cares; at the end of the day, let's make the game of golf win and try to make the right decision.

Q. What are your feelings about the TOUR Championship and the direction that it should head?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Well, who knows where that one is going to end up. Everything is on the table, which is listening to the fans, to be honest. This fan-forward research project is giving us a lot of information that we didn't know before, and it's nice to see the fans getting

engaged and giving us information of what they want and why they want it.

It's up to us to kind of listen to them and try to, in a way, give them what they want, to make the game better for them, for the viewer, and obviously everything is to be kind of logical within the scheme of the history of the game. But the door is open to kind of do some changes.

Again, I don't know what those changes are going to be, if they're going to be for '25 or '26, but I know we're working hard on trying to make the right decision.

Q. What's something on the table that you are passionate about?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Something on the table that I'm passionate about? I mean, I'm passionate about the game. This is my 25th year on the PGA TOUR --

Q. What's something that you think could be better that you're kind of going to campaign for?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Something that can be better? It's a tricky question because there's a lot of things that can get better.

But I think bringing excitement to the fans is very important, very important. We've seen it with all this research. That's in a way what keeps the engine going. It keeps the engine going for the corporate world, for sponsors, for TV, for viewership, and it creates the best product. If people want to watch golf, it's because we're doing a good job in terms of putting a good product out there, good entertainment, good competition, good engagement, good kind of media, social media, all this kind of new world, and that will bring profits for our new entity, and it will bring a lot of dollars for charity, and it will bring a lot of good stuff for the game and opportunities for younger players.

The whole pathways committee on the PAC is where I was last year, and I think it's pretty cool to see how guys can get on TOUR. I know with all this kind of going to 100 cards, instead of 30 players from the Korn Ferry TOUR to 20 players, a lot of people are saying it's become a closed shop, and I totally disagree. I was on the pathways committee last year, and there's more pathways to get on TOUR today -- there's definitely a lot more pathways to get on TOUR today than there were when I was playing college golf.

I think for these young kids to have an opportunity with the PGA TOUR U, to play out here or to play on the Korn Ferry TOUR and test their games and kind of have an opportunity to pave their way to play against the best

players in the world, I think the TOUR is doing a great job when it comes to that.

Q. If you were to lose your card, which pathway would you choose to try to get back?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Well, let's hope that doesn't happen. I'll be working hard this year.

But I think I would go Korn Ferry. Yeah, it is Korn Ferry or Q-school, if you think about it.

Q. You could go Europe --

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I could go Europe. That's a good one. I did both tours in 2008 and '9 or '9 and '10, and not being from Europe and having a chance to play Ryder Cup, it doesn't make too much sense for me. Having a family, being from Colombia, spending time in Florida, having to travel all over the world at 43 years old, it just doesn't excite me as much. But if you asked me that question 15 years ago, I could have said easily Europe.

But I had a chance to play the Korn Ferry TOUR last year, and it's a good tour. It's good people, a lot of young guys. I enjoy spending time with the younger players, and that's probably what I would go. But once again, let's hope that's not the case.

Q. There was a feeling many years ago that you don't want the prize money to be that big on the Korn Ferry so that no one gets comfortable. The idea was to stay hungry and to get out here. But with shrinking cards and the importance of Korn Ferry, is it time to elevate those purses?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I think it's been time for a long time and they've done a good job, but I've always said the PGA TOUR Americas and the Korn Ferry TOUR should play for more money. I know there's people out there that disagree with me, but those guys are extremely competitive, and yes, you do want to be out there to get out here. That's the purpose. But that's not the case for everybody.

We don't want guys quitting the game just because they cannot make a living out there. Some guys it takes two years, some guys it takes five years, some guys it takes 10 years before they get out here and have a successful career. It would be nice to see them playing for a little bit more money.

Q. Did you watch the TGL last night?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I watched a little bit of the opening here in the clubhouse, and then I had dinner so I kind of

didn't watch the rest.

Q. What do you think is the appeal of that? Is that going to help grow the game?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I have no clue. I don't know enough about these younger generations and how they want to watch this sport. As a traditionalist myself -- I would have liked to see the guys a little bit more serious when they hit good shots, when they hit bad shots. I felt like the little bit I saw, the competitive aspect was kind of pretty relaxed and chill.

But again, I don't know. I don't know what the viewer wants to see. Is it going to be a success? I don't know. Time will tell.

Q. When you say you'd like to see the purses go up for the Korn Ferry and PGA TOUR, do you envision the PGA TOUR subsidizing that, or do you think there's room to grow revenue on that Tour?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I think we need to grow revenue on the Tour. We need to do a better job in terms of making it more a sustainable product. Can we do it? I don't know. We do subsidize purses out there. I forget the dollar amount. But we can work on all areas.

But I do think they should be playing -- we're playing for so much money on the PGA TOUR, I don't see why those guys on the Korn Ferry -- I don't see why they shouldn't be playing for a little bit more.

Q. At the board meeting, which of the player directors had the thickest stack of notes printed out?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I don't know. Good question. I mean, it was more the other guys to be honest than the players.

Q. The board of directors?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, I see Arthur Blank, and I see those guys and they have this whole thing like this, and I'm like, you know what, that's smart. A lot of those guys are older, more old school, but if you think about it, when you go prepared to a meeting like this, it's hard to -- if you have a digital copy, it's hard to get to it unless you have your notes. When you have a freaking little Post-it there, you just can go like this, and it's like, you know what -- it was quite a bit of content for that board meeting. I think it was over 200 pages.

But yeah, that will be me next time.



Q. Everybody wearing ties?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: No.

Q. Nobody?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: No. You got a little bit of everything. I was coming from Bermuda. I definitely didn't have a tie in Bermuda, so I was not wearing a tie. I was wearing shades and some jeans, so I was nice and casual.

Q. What's the best advice you've been given about being on the board?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Best advice? I think, one, you've got to be thoughtful, analytical and make your own opinions. Be true to yourself, don't let yourself kind of be moved around by other guys' opinions. You just do your thinking, your analysis, and give your honest opinion.

Q. Nobody asked about your putting today, nobody asked about equipment changes --

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I know. But I kind of knew that was going to happen.

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