

THE PLAYERS Championship

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Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference

MICHAEL BALIKER: We'd like to welcome Patrick Cantlay to the interview room here at the 2022 PLAYERS Championship. Fifth career start here at TPC Sawgrass. Just talk about your thoughts on the golf course and the challenge that it's represented for you and kind of how you've maybe learned more and more about this golf course each time you've come back.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Sure. Yeah, I think the golf course has changed a lot since the tournament has moved back to March, and if they don't cut the rough, this is the longest the rough has been since I've been coming here.

The golf course is good, and should be in really good shape this year. Hopefully the rain will stay away and we'll get a really good test.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Making your first start since the Genesis Invitational. You had a couple of good finishes on the West Coast. Talk about how your game has been trending ahead of the tournament here this week.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, game has been good this year. I feel like I've been doing a lot of really good things, and so I'm just going to keep sticking to the process and continue to do the things that have been working.

Q. You had a couple of decent tournaments in your first two starts when it was in May. Has there been a little bit of an adjustment period for you personally playing this course in March?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I would have liked to have seen what I would have shot the COVID year. I think I was 6- or 7-under the first day, so that's just lost to the ether.

Yeah, the golf course is definitely different this way. I think there's -- granted, the rough is up this week, has been less of a premium on hitting fairways because the golf course has been softer, and more of a point-and-shoot test than it is a strategic test, it moving back to March.

Q. Do you feel like your game matches up to this



course?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I do, yeah. I like the golf course. I think it's very good, and it definitely requires you to have full control of your nerves, especially coming down the stretch.

Q. How would you describe this course in one word, if you could?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Precise.

Q. Way off topic, when some players would say that the TOUR needs to be more transparent, do you agree with that, and if you do, what exactly does that mean in your eyes?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, I would say almost any time you really get into trouble, I would say it's when things aren't transparent and when people don't know where everything is.

I would say one of the tough things about the way it's set up out here is the onus tends to be on the player to go and figure those things out for himself. There's not like a big debrief or there's no one that is a professional that's really looking into it, so it seems as though if a player is interested, he can try and go down that rabbit hole and figure it out, but he's kind of on his own.

I think that is maybe the biggest challenge in that regard is trying to get everyone to agree on things when everyone kind of has to go their own way to try and figure it out.

Q. Do you think it's hard to get a consensus out here?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it's hard to get a consensus with 150 people in any area. I'd say it's hard to even get people to sit down and agree on certain factors or certain facts, and I think we see that more and more in the world even if you go into like politics being so polarized lately. You can't even get people to agree on the same set of facts to begin with, so having a productive conversation becomes increasingly difficult.

Q. Tiger goes in the Hall of Fame tomorrow night; how old were you when you first became aware of him, and



how has he influenced you and impacted golf since then?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I couldn't tell you exactly when I could think of like knowing who Tiger was. I had to be very young, 4, 5, 6, 7 years old. First time I remember watching him on TV was the 2000 British. I was probably 8. His impact on the game is probably the most profound of anybody ever. I mean, especially the pro game.

I wouldn't say I know enough about Palmer or Bobby Jones to say -- or Nicklaus to say how they impacted that at the time, but I think every pro out here owes a debt of gratitude to Tiger because this sport wouldn't be where it is today without his impact.

Q. Spinning off the transparency element, in any other sport when a player is suspended it announces that and the TOUR doesn't, and Jay announced today that the players have spoken to him -- the PAC group has spoken to him about that. What's your stance on that? Is that part of the transparency that you'd like to see change?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it could be. I'd say -- I mean, yeah, I think there's pros and cons of both. It would so depend on -- I would say some people have been suspended and they do list a reason. It's almost like I don't even know what I don't know to know if there's a situation where they held something back and they shouldn't have or they didn't hold it back and they should have held it back.

That's a tricky scenario because I could potentially draw up a situation where it would be beneficial or the right thing to do to hold some information back, but like I said, I don't know what I don't know, so if there's a situation where I would have thought that they should have announced it and they didn't, I wouldn't be in a position to know that sitting here today. It's a tricky one.

Q. If a fellow player was suspended right now, would you know it unless you had spoken to him? Do the fellow players even know? Obviously Phil is somebody we're talking about because that's kind of a lot of speculation right now --

PATRICK CANTLAY: Oh, like asking if he is suspended or if he's taking some time off?

Q. Yeah, would you guys even know unless you had spoken to him?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I wouldn't know. Yeah, I mean, that's something that I wouldn't even feel comfortable

commenting on because I don't even know anything about it.

Q. Do you feel like the players feel like they have an ownership in the TOUR, because there seems to be -- Jay seems to feel very much so, that the players do feel that way, and I think there's a lot of players that maybe don't feel that way. I'm curious where you stand on that.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, even using that term "ownership," no one owns the TOUR. The TOUR is a 501(c)(6). So no one owns any part of it. I would have to say no in that question. No one owns the TOUR, so I don't think anybody could feel like they have ownership of the TOUR.

Q. Do you feel like you're a shareholder?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'd probably have to look at the definition of shareholder, but not in the sense that I think of it, like if I buy a share of Coke, then I own a small percentage of Coke.

There's no way to do that on TOUR.

Q. But you profit share.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yes. That's different than being a shareholder, yes.

Q. My other question was going to be in regards to injuries. Since gambling is becoming a larger and larger part of this sport, it seems like players should have to disclose an injury like they do in any other sport so that people that gamble can actually know what's going on. Are you in favor of that or not?

PATRICK CANTLAY: One of the things I like looking at after a hockey season is the playoff injury report, and I know those guys don't disclose, so it's not every sport that's doing it all the time. Not to mention that I could foresee an instance where how do you report something that's a minor injury. Do you want everyone to know? I mean, I don't know, where do you draw the line on disclosing?

That seems like a tough thing to implement a wide, sweeping rule to implement, whenever you have an injury you need to report it for the sake of gambling.

Q. Would you feel at a disadvantage if you had to disclose it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'm not sure. I mean, depends on



who you are. I imagine if you were particularly high profile you may not want to answer questions about it all week or for a couple weeks or months or six months. Hey, I know you reported a minor X, wrist injury, like six months ago; how is that feeling? I could see a scenario where you wouldn't want to disclose that.

Q. You talked about learning how to ask the right questions as far as it goes to the TOUR. Since you've been on the PAC this year, have you learned anything in those meetings that opened your eyes or surprised you that maybe you didn't know before?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I've only had one meeting, so I wouldn't say I've had enough of an experience yet to really be able to answer that in full.

I do know more about the structure of how tournaments are ran and all the entities involved for running a tournament, so I know the business model better than I did before, and I think that's good for me or any TOUR player to know more and more about how the TOUR business model works.

Q. Over the years the game has evolved into more of a technical experience rather than a game of feel. What I mean by that is that with the advent of the greens books and the drivers looking like something from outer space and the ball going so far, do you feel that all this technical things that have been added have taken away from the romance and the feel for the game, and how would you address that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, the greens books are gone, so that's less of a factor. I'd say feel is still paramount in this game. I feel like different players maybe put an emphasis on it more or less, but whenever I've talked to Tiger, he always talks about how he feels it in his hands and he feels it in the club, and he's trying to feel the weight of shots. I've picked Fred Couples' brain a lot. He has a tendency to always hit it pin high, even if it's 20 miles an hour blowing any which way. He'll take sometimes two clubs less than what I think, and he might only hit a 4-iron 170 yards, but he tends to always be pin high.

He talks about just feeling it, feeling the wind, feeling and imagining what kind of flight he wants to hit with the 4-iron, and imagining how the ball is going to land. I still think feel is a huge part of the game.

But to your point, I do think it's possible for people to take feel out of the game, especially with the TrackMan and Foresight machines. There's definitely a more quantifiable nature to what's going on out here now more than ever.

Q. When the TOUR shifts from the West Coast to

Florida and the golf courses just by the scores obviously are much harder, how do you guys treat that, and does that have anything to do with taking the two weeks off, kind of resetting to get ready for these more difficult golf courses?

PATRICK CANTLAY: After seeing the last two weeks, setup seems to be the latest determining factor as far as scores. I don't even know if it's necessarily the golf courses.

But that was just -- I played three weeks in the California Swing, or the West Coast Swing to end it, and so I just needed a couple weeks off before we kind of start the major championship season and obviously kicking off here with a big event. It didn't have much to do with the golf courses being harder or easier.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Patrick, we appreciate the time and wish you all the best this week.

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