

THE PLAYERS Championship

Monday, March 14, 2022

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Paul Casey

Quick Quotes

Q. Big opportunity ahead; how are you feeling headed into the final round?

PAUL CASEY: I feel good. Yeah, what an opportunity. More of the same, really, and then see what happens. I know you guys would say it's not a star-studded leaderboard, it's not the usual suspects, but every single PGA TOUR event is like -- the level of golf is unbelievable.

I love the fact I've got an opportunity.

Q. Have you had to maybe change how aggressive you are since the first couple of days versus what it was like this morning where it seemed like you could go out and make birdies?

PAUL CASEY: Yes and no. The greens are very receptive so you can certainly be aggressive with those approach shots if you've got a right number, but you'll get bitten if you're not careful. My game plan after making triple on Thursday was actually just play sensible golf and get it in -- honestly if that happens, you can't be overly aggressive because you'll almost dig yourself a deeper hole.

For me it was fairways and greens and try to slowly claw back the shots I gave away so quickly. That's not really changed so much. Just a minute ago I still hit 3-wood off 18, but it only leaves a 7-iron for me. I don't feel the need to force the driver maybe two clubs less, and I don't feel like it's going to change this afternoon.

You pick your battles.

Q. Paul McGinley last night on Golf Channel said you've had this incredible career but said it's missing that signature win. Do you agree with that, and would this be that for you?

PAUL CASEY: Is Paul right? Probably. I don't spend too much time thinking about it. It's his job to talk about it.

I don't disagree with him, though. Guys have been talking



about Tiger a lot this week, obviously, and I reminded -- I think Viktor Hovland sat there, and he goes, what was it like. I said, you've got to remember, Viktor, I was playing 15 events over here and it was four majors, four WGCs, THE PLAYERS, Bay Hill, Memorial. There wasn't a lot of opportunity to win much. And if he didn't win, it was Vijay or Ernie or somebody else. That's the way it was.

I'm very proud of my career has been as long as it has and I've still got opportunities to win against the youngsters. This is my 22nd year as a professional, so maybe I can tick that box today and get over the line and then Paul McGinley can talk about me next week.

Q. Is it correct you added an alignment dot to the top of the putter, and if so, what were you looking for and how has it paid off?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, it's true. It's the same 009 Scotty that I've been using for a long, long time, but its alignment. I put the dot on top purely to get the ball position. I've been lining up with the ball on the toe. Just been videoing it and seeing that the ball position has been off the toe, so just to get the strike better.

Nothing else has changed, but it feels like I'm swinging the putter a little bit better, keeping the head down better. That's it.

Q. You mentioned playing against the youngsters. What do you feel like you're bet at now than you were at that age?

PAUL CASEY: I've got more stories. What am I better at? Probably patience, maturity.

Q. Opening the tournament with a triple and then still being --

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, exactly. I probably would have lost the head very quickly and exited stage left.

But the passion isn't any less, and the work ethic isn't any less. Maybe I hit a few less golf balls than I used to, but I'm still very driven. I've still got great ball-striking skills and the golf is still there.



How it's transitioned now, I like trying to beat those guys. I might play like Cam today, this afternoon, maybe Cam Smith on something like that. I love that. He's just a kid, and I love the fact I can hit as good a shots as Cam can hit, some of them better, some of them worse, but that's a fun position to be in.

Q. Cool thing about our sport.

PAUL CASEY: It's a very cool thing about our sport.

Q. Do you think at all about your legacy and how you'll be remembered in this game, how today could change it?

PAUL CASEY: You tend not to. No, I don't worry about that. It's still 18 holes of golf, and an awful lot can happen around a Pete Dye golf course in 18 holes. A lot can happen in one or two holes. So I don't think about that, don't get ahead. Try to go out there and play a wonderful round of golf, and if you come out on top, great, and I can't control what the other guys are going to do, so there's no point really worrying about it.

Q. You talked about last night how John McLaren used to guide you around here very well? What are some things from past experiences that you draw on for the final round?

PAUL CASEY: Top secret, you know that.

Yeah, I don't tend to give away too many secrets. Johnny and I, we had some stuff -- we had almost secrets, things that we'd work on, the way we would play certain shots that we feel nobody else was aware of, and we wouldn't give that away. So it's our IP. We tend not to talk about it.

Q. How has the transition been between you and your caddie?

PAUL CASEY: I'm still looking for the caddie. It's weird. I miss him.

Q. Have you talked to him this week, and also anything from Peter Kostis this week?

PAUL CASEY: Been texting both of them. I texted Johnny on Thursday was the last time I texted him, and Kostis I was texting last night. I don't know the topic, texting about Tom Brady or something.

Q. Not about the golf swing, though?

PAUL CASEY: No.

Q. How did this caddie partnership come to be?

PAUL CASEY: Oh, Shan is just helping out. Shan was working for Jonas Blixt, and he's worked for me before at various events. I know him, I'm very comfortable with him. He's one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. He's funny. We'll see, but I just have not decided what I'm going to do long-term yet.

Q. Did you try to talk Johnny into coming back?

PAUL CASEY: No, I didn't. Johnny may come back. It was always a sabbatical. It was burnout. More time at home with the family. The stresses of flying back to London every weekend, and if he's going to test positive for COVID and be in a hotel and all that stuff. It was just stressful for him. I'm sure I was stressful for him, too.

Everybody knows that we finished our six years together better friends than when we started, which is saying a lot. In this industry that can't always be said. We've seen a lot of people who are "mutual agreement" or "taking a break," which we all know is code for somebody got fired.

Just nobody ever says that, but Johnny and I can generally look anybody in the eye and say, we're great mates and he just wanted a break, and I fully support that.

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