

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Davis Love III

Quick Quotes

Q. I asked yesterday about the strategic alliance. Now, if there were any fracture in it between the PGA TOUR and the DP World Tour, would you be saddened by that?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm behind the curve on what's going on between the TOUR and DP World Tour. Like I just said in an outing I did, Rory figures out a way to play both and Billy Horschel figures out a way to play both, so hopefully they can continue to do that.

Q. I was going to say, you've known both sides of the Atlantic. You've been around a long time. You're an experienced person. But there is concern; we are led to believe that there's concern on the PGA TOUR about the amount of money that it is sending over to the DP World Tour each year.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I think when I was on the board, we wanted the best players in the world to all get together more, and I think you have to support -- we can't try to run the DP World Tour off. You need places for the top players to play.

I know we always have, at least the last 10 years, tried to support the DP World Tour, so hopefully it continues.

Look at the guys that have come off of there. Not only the Rory McIlroys that lived there, but the Brooks Koepkas and guys that go over there and play and work their way back.

That's the thing about another tour that isn't a DP or a PGA TOUR or a Korn Ferry; you have to have a way for players to come up to the majors and the PGA TOUR. If you don't have the Australian Tour, ways for a guy to come out of Australia or Asia or wherever, you've got to -- everybody has to work together. So hopefully they'll continue to do that.

Q. The way you've seen this tournament grow since your first time winning here, obviously now a two-time champ here, what's it been like these last few years watching Scottie Scheffler, Rory McIlroy join you in



that two-time champion category here?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's nice to be a champion. Well, when I was a kid, my dad hosted the first PLAYERS Championship at Atlanta Country Club. Not only did I just want to get in it and play in it, it was a dream to win a big tournament now that's considered a major championship. It was always the toughest field, one, you know, as a rookie on TOUR it was hard to get in. I had to play great early season just to get in the tournament.

Then I got to play with Ben Crenshaw on Sunday my first PLAYERS Championship here.

I came here as a kid from St. Simons Island, Georgia to watch, even across the street and play.

The way it's grown is unbelievable, from Atlanta Country Club and Jack Nicklaus winning, whenever that was, '76 or '78, somewhere around there --

Q. '74 was the first.

DAVIS LOVE III: Wow, I was 10. I sold lemonade on the second hole.

To see where it's come and the players that win it, there's a few tournaments, like Harbour Town and Doral, where the guys that win majors win those tournaments, and this is certainly one of them.

Q. You may have been asked this, but your thoughts on what Mr. Rolapp said yesterday and the vision and how it's unfolding?

DAVIS LOVE III: I was at a Golf Course Architects Society boot camp yesterday, walking in the dirt with Bill Coore. And then I played The Cradle until 6:00 last night. Somebody has already asked me about it, and I said, Well, luckily, when I was on with Taylor Zanzour yesterday I said nice things about Brian Rolapp, and then I saw him in the clubhouse, so he wasn't mad at me.

Working with Lucas Andrews, the greens superintendent; Jeff Plotts, the greens superintendent for years before him on this course, and parking at the maintenance barn and not in this parking lot, and working behind the scenes, I am



impressed with how the direction has changed from the staff. Like they feel enthusiastic and emboldened, and they feel like they're part of a movement that's getting better and more -- it might be more streamlined and less people, but it's more organized and more responsibility.

I'm impressed with what I've seen behind the scenes and working with them. Not only with these guys that I see all the time, but with the guys that are really working, getting dirty. I'm a part of a team getting ready for this championship and getting ready for a renovation.

I really like the direction they're going and what leadership is doing.

Q. What do you want to do next to this place?

DAVIS LOVE III: What I want to do is what Jay Monahan told me two or three years ago. I'm supposed to be inside the ropes, but when you think about this tournament or the Masters, there's so much more that goes into, All right, well, we're going to do this to this hole. Well, what about the cart path. What about -- like Johnny Harris has done at Quail Hollow. Fazio has redone the golf course a bunch, but he's also created freeways in between holes. The course -- how did it get so big from that little dogleggy golf course? He built a major championship venue -- inside the ropes is fabulous, but outside the ropes is fabulous, too.

So we have to consider -- so we're moving cart paths and doing -- what I want to see is Pete Dye back in the golf course. It's turned beautiful green, the greens have gotten flat, some features have gonna way. We've tweaked a few, put them back, like the tree at 6 or some mounding at 14, or we backed up some par-5 tees and rearranged some bunkers this summer.

We're doing very boring stuff, like making the driving range longer. Which means you dig a lake over here and put the dirt over there. But you have to be -- while we do that, we're going to rebuild the bunker on 4 while we dig the lake on 4 and put the dirt on the other side of the hole to fill in the back of the driving range. Well, what's the long-term goal for that bunker? What's that bunker -- is it going to go back to waste area? Is it going to be like the 1982 picture or is it going to be like the 1989 picture.

So Pete changed the course over the years, and then the TOUR over the years has changed the course. Like 13 there -- Brooks Koepka -- 13 had a tunnel through a mound behind the green, a million palm trees back there back in the day. We're not going back to that. But we need to get some of the slope back in the green like back in the day.

I just want to see the old look and the intimidating look

back in the golf course. I think Harbour Town did a better job of keeping the Pete Dye in the Pete Dye. This place -- but they both had the same thing happen, which is green speeds speed up, flatten the greens out a little bit because the greens got faster. The water doesn't get off the greens. If you go out there and ask Lucas Andrews and the grounds crew, what's your biggest issue? The water won't go off the greens. It's going to rain a little bit today and maybe a little bit on Sunday, and they can't get them dry like they want.

Q. When is the last time you think this course was like what you're envisioning? When was the last time do you think it was really --

DAVIS LOVE III: Here's the question that we've been --

Q. -- first victory, second victory?

DAVIS LOVE III: We've been down here 100 times in the last four years, and we always ask the same question. What year do we go back to? I brought pictures into Jay Monahan's office, and I went, What hole is this? And Jay Monahan and another guy that's not here anymore, I said, What holes are these? And they go, We have no idea. I go, That's the problem. That's 2 and that's 8, and you don't know what hole it is.

We tried to figure out -- so we have settled -- there's a trove of pictures from '89, and we think Pete took input from the players early on. We have greens' drawings from the first -- they played the first year, the four player directors, and I think Andy Bean was one of them and Tom Kite, there's notes that they complained about the greens. So between opening and '89, things changed.

But I think '89, if it was my -- 100 percent my choice, which it's not, '89 is kind of the year. So Allan MacCurrah up the road here, his office over the bridge, has a million pictures. And we've been digging through them and picking out -- I can show you on my phone -- as Bill Coore said yesterday, the weird ones. We like the weird stuff.

But Pete told me one time about Whistling Straits. I said, What are all these bunkers everywhere that nobody can even get to? He goes, Oh, they're just to intimidate you. But if you look at the fairway, it's actually pretty wide. If you look at some of those holes and you don't get distracted by the outside and you say, Well, if I just hit a 3-iron down the left side of the fairway and I have an angle into the green, it really -- the best players in the world can figure it out.

I think it's an '80s, late '80s, early '90s look. When I did play, I started playing in '86, so I caught some of the early



quirky stuff. I think the quirky stuff is kind of gone.

Now, for good reason. That tee box needs to look like that because it's a major championship. You need room for that TV camera. You need room for gallery and all that. But once you get out in the fairway, you can have the quirky stuff, and especially by the greens, have the quirky stuff.

Q. Question about Scottie Scheffler. We've seen him do Tiger-like stuff on the course over the past few years. What do you think his superstardom off the course is bringing and can bring to the game of golf?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, he quietly always does the right thing and is a superstar off the golf course with his family, his faith, his contributions to charity. Back when he won some money at RSM, birdies thing one year, and gave it all to College Golf Fellowship that people never even heard about. He's just a great guy and a great kid and a great husband, father, friend to a lot of guys and a leader off the golf course as well as on the golf course.

I said that in this thing I just did, too. I'm so impressed with guys like he or Rory are doing to grow the game and to honor the traditions of the game. He's very impressive in that regard.

Q. Did anybody ask you about RSM yet? Given Brian's press conference yesterday, have you gotten any kind of assurances from him --

DAVIS LOVE III: I need to read the transcript.

Q. Is RSM still going to be a part of the schedule?

DAVIS LOVE III: All I know is we were nervous last year, and then he announced a tournament in Asheville. So if the fall is not going away, if he's announcing a new tournament, so maybe we can hang in there. Our sponsor --

Q. You said Asheville? Asheville has a fall tournament?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, the Biltmore --

Q. The Biltmore Championship at Asheville or something like that.

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, which is up against the Pure Championship on the Champions Tour, which could be a dilemma for me if I'm healthy.

Q. Pebble Beach?

DAVIS LOVE III: That's two pretty good tournaments in the same week.

Q. Do you have a level of confidence that --

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, you know --

Q. -- there's going to be a fall?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's been an unknown. We started our tournament 16 plus years ago. We were first in the fall. Then the TOUR asked us to go in the middle and we said no, and we'll go either first or last, and now we're last, and our sponsor loves it.

We are, in our peer group, we do really well with our eight or nine tournaments group we're in. We do really well charity, we do really well purse. We actually could go higher in our purse if they wanted us to. We're doing very well.

So we wanted to stay -- our sponsor wants to stay. So I think there will always be a place. That's what I said earlier today is we're raising money for charity. That's our number one goal. As long as the TOUR doesn't lose focus that a little tournament in St. Simons island, Georgia, is giving \$50 million to charity in 16 years, let's don't lose focus on that, that will always continue, whether it's the No. 1 tournament on the TOUR or the No. 40 tournament on the TOUR. That will always continue.

Q. He wasn't really specifying the fall, but going to bigger markets. He wants a Boston, New York, Chicago. Is it strange to you that St. Simons, Georgia has a PGA TOUR event and those cities don't?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. Well, there's a lot of great courses in Boston that probably don't want a PGA TOUR event. So finding the venue -- it's more about you find a sponsor and then you find the tournament organization, and then you find a place to play. Well, RSM wasn't looking in New York or Chicago to host a tournament. They were looking for an opportunity in golf, and the TOUR and Zach Johnson and I presented in Sea Island, Georgia, and they took that opportunity.

There's only a few companies -- they whittled it down one time for us on the board. There's only so many companies that can sponsor a PGA TOUR event. Well, that limits you. Then there's only so many venues that can handle a PGA TOUR event.

It's a good goal. You don't want an NFL team in St. Simons Island, Georgia. But we can pull off a PGA TOUR



event, and Jim Furyk can pull off a Champions Tour event, and the Korn Ferry can pull off an event all in the same area.

I think we've just got to -- and I understand, it's always been, back when Doral was the biggest tournament in Florida, it was as big as THE PLAYERS Championship at one point because everybody played. Top 125, everybody played Doral. Some players said, Well, the TOUR doesn't even start until we get to Doral.

We always want to play in big cities and make the tournament feel bigger. Riviera was always big because a great golf course in a great city and great market. I know where he's going. That doesn't mean John Deere can't be raising -- they raise tons of money for charity. I think they're No. 1 in our peer group. They raise tons of money for charity, and they're a great sponsor.

Q. Is there a target date for when any work is going to get done on this course?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's a moving target. It was '28, it was '26, back to '28. So what we do know is that the last three summers and this summer and next summer there's a scope of work, when they close for maintenance, that we're going to do to get ready whenever the big renovation happens. We're doing the boring stuff under the ground, and we're doing the boring stuff like filling in the back of -- now, we're not going to build any new tee space on the back of the driving range, the pro end, this year, but we're going to fill in the water and be ready to do something at the back of the range.

Irrigation changes, drainage changes, cart path changes, which nobody really notices, but if we don't do them in the summers now, then we -- you've got to remember, if we were going to renovate this golf course, we want to start in January and open in October-November, in a perfect world.

Well, they're not going to let us start until after this week. So same thing at Harbour Town. You had to play the tournament and then go.

Grass likes to grow in June and July, so when we go here, it's going to have to be -- we're going to have to have a lot of it done. So we're getting the boring stuff -- like the mound left of 15 and the cart path left of 15 is going to be a change this summer --

Q. New tee at 16?

DAVIS LOVE III: Out of play. Some day, not this summer. I have some, to quote Bill Coore, weird ideas about 10 and

16. Remember, Pete Dye always liked railroad cars and tunnels. I was arguing about a tunnel here, and they go, Well, that's a dumb idea. How about there was a tunnel on 13 through a mound. Somebody at the TOUR goes, No, there wasn't. Oh, yeah, there was. We dug through the pictures, and there was a tunnel.

Even my architect Scott Sherman said, I don't remember there ever being a tunnel. Yeah, I walked through it. Played 13, walked through the tunnel to 14.

Q. Speaking of weird stuff, were you at Pinehurst yesterday?

DAVIS LOVE III: We got a tour for three hours with Bill Coore yesterday. The ASCG, they have a boot camp going on right now, and I skipped to come down here. I skipped the end of the class. I won't graduate. But Drew is going to graduate. But we got to walk with Bill yesterday.

That is an unbelievably weird site.

Q. I just did a long thing -- how do you see it? You're just walking out here and finding all those things, it's fascinating --

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I didn't know that that sand was mined like in the '20s.

Q. They would move the railroad down 50 yards at a time.

DAVIS LOVE III: So they dug through, there's these ridges of spoils from them mining sand. And there's one ridge, and they punched through it and they found the old railroad track -- you're going to hit over it -- we were just talking about the tunnel through the mound on 13 in the old days, through the spectator mound.

Q. Between next year's tournament, you won't see a whole lot above ground that's different?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, so they put a paved cart path through the fairway on 15 years ago. It used to be a sandy, wastey drive through the path. So we're going to get the sand back across the fairway, and take the cart path in the woods where you won't see it anymore.

We, they, we got to be a resort course that hosted a major championship. Now they're trying to go back to a major championship golf course. Augusta National is not going to have a cart path cutting across the fairway.

Getting back to what Dean and Pete -- I've got pictures of Dean and Pete and Alice out there in the dirt that we found

at Allan MacCurrach's office, and their vision was incredible.

Now, at Pebble Beach, do you want to go back to sandy, wastey, junky looking stuff like when it opened? No. It would be nice to get rid of some of the green. Same thing here, we can't go back to '82, but we can go back to some of the quirky stuff that Pete had.

Q. 15 is about the only thing people are going to see next year?

DAVIS LOVE III: The average -- on TV, 15 will look better, yeah. But the spectator mounds were built by Deane to have a place to sit and watch. Now what they want to do is they want to build three-story buildings and take them back down, so they need a flat spot for that. So a lot of the mounds need to go away.

When we first came down here, they were hauling dirt off the right of 18. So now it's a flatter, gentler spot. We moved stuff back so there's more room for gallery to walk between the tent and the green. So stuff like that, if you went out and walked the tournament this year, all 18 holes, and you came back next year and walked, you might notice it's easier to walk down the left of 15 on this big new cart path and up to the green to 16.

Q. But next year won't have anything as far as that will affect the players, holes that will look different from a strategic standpoint?

DAVIS LOVE III: 4, when you get out in the fairway, will look different because there will be a water to the right, like way over there. So that right of the little canal that's over there now will be a big lake.

Like, the difference on 6 and 7, when they took the mound out in the middle, it won't be that dramatic, but when you get in 4 fairway and you look towards the Valley Course, you'll see a lot of water, a peninsula out -- the old Pete peninsula with a tree on it out in the water, but you'll see more water. It won't be in play.

The fairway kind of got lost out to the left behind that mound. It was an irrigation change. The fairway is straighter now, so it'll bow out a little bit this way, and we might kick it a little bit this way, but that's more mowing patterns. Like tweaks like that.

The tree on 6 was a big deal. But down the fairway, like Jason Gore was very involved in the analytics, and the rules guys of what's happening down the fairway. So Jeff Plotts pushed for replacing a bunker down the right. We've tweaked the fairway. It went from one of the easier holes,

it got a lot harder last year, and it wasn't just because of the tree.

So little tweaks like that that the TOUR pros -- we notice at Augusta, Oh, there's a new hole location right over there to the right on 7 green, things like that, little changes the players would notice, but the average guy probably won't.

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