

# WGC Dell Technologies Match Play

Friday, March 25, 2022

Austin, Texas, USA

Austin Country Club

## Richard Bland

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. What day were you supposed to play Augusta?

RICHARD BLAND: We were playing, we're actually playing Sawgrass I think 20th, 21st, and Augusta on the 22nd, 23rd. So, yeah.

#### Q. When did you find out you were in here?

RICHARD BLAND: Well, I knew I would probably have a pretty good shot after Dubai. But I think -- it's kind of strange, you know, in all my career I really never had to worry about my World Ranking and then suddenly when you get to a kind of, I went to I think 53 after Dubai, it's been really weird. I've had a guy sort of helping me with sort of permutations, and he's going like, It's probably best you don't play this week -- or not this week, you know, on another week.

And I'm like, How does that work? I want to play.

And I didn't play for three weeks and I think I went up seven spots. So I was kind of thinking, well, if I don't play for the rest of the year I might be world No. 1. (Laughing).

But, so, yeah, I think probably about a month ago I was pretty, I think I was pretty secure that I was going to play.

#### Q. How many times did you have the opportunity to play Augusta before this and kind of walk us through that?

RICHARD BLAND: Well never -- not even close to the tournament, but I have played there. I do have a friend who is a member and I've been there. So I've played the course twice.

So, yeah, if I could play the tournament, it would be a dream come true. I don't really watch a huge amount of golf at home, but the Masters I'm there from the first shot to the last putt. I don't move. It's just the best tournament to watch on TV and I can only assume it's a million times



better to play in it.

So if I get there, I think that would, I think with the 12 months that I've had, that would be a pretty nice sort of cherry on the top.

#### Q. Your brother's name again?

RICHARD BLAND: Heath.

#### Q. And him and Tim were the only two that you had in your gallery?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, pretty much. Yeah, if you hear them, if you hear sort of loud noises, that's them. So, yeah, we were supposed to be playing Augusta this past week with my friend, Pat, but getting in here we've had to sort of postpone.

So, yeah, we will do it. But it's nice that they're here and supporting me this week. So it's good to have a few sort of friendly cheers out there.

#### Q. The putt on 16, it struck me that golf has a way of continuing to give you the shot that you just missed again and again and again and you had missed a similar length on 13 and 15 and it was almost like a microcosm of your whole career, just kind of keep at it, keep at it, keep at it.

RICHARD BLAND: In all fairness, I actually, I thought I had holed -- the one at 13 and then the one at 15 I thought I holed. I hit really good putts. And actually the one on 16 I thought I missed. I kind of felt like I pushed it maybe an inch and obviously it just grabbed enough of the right edge.

But the ones at 13 and 15, as soon as I hit it, I've had exactly the putt I wanted to hit. They just broke a little bit more than I thought and that's golf, isn't it? It's crazy sometimes. You can hit a putt you think you've holed. It misses and the one you think you've missed goes in.

So I've been playing this game for 30-odd years. I still haven't figured it out.



**Q. What do you think of your story, a guy who is doing what you're doing at 49? It's inspiring.**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, obviously the messages that I get from people that, all over the globe, over the last 12 months has been incredible. People that you never will ever meet and they tell me their kind of story that what I've done has inspired them to carry on their journey. They were losing a little bit of hope, and am I going down right path, and it's given them that extra sort of belief that they are on the right path.

And that's, reading them is quite emotional. I will always keep them. Whenever this phone gets sort of upgraded or whatever, all those messages will stay forever. That's something that I will cherish very deeply.

**Q. Do you ever get tired of answering questions about your age? You seem to handle it with really good humor or is it something you're enjoying?**

RICHARD BLAND: I guess probably someone at 49 shouldn't be doing this for the first time. But I guess there's always the exception to the rule, isn't there? Not necessarily just in golf. You see it in other sports as well.

You look at Bernhard Langer, 63, 64 years old, still winning on Champions Tour. What an inspiration that is for someone like myself who is maybe looking to a career in the next couple years on Champions Tour.

If you stay fit and healthy, maybe I've got another 10 or 12 years in me yet, who knows. So, yeah, you've only got to kind of look at it, in tennis you still got, okay, Rafa Nadal's still beating all the young ones, and Roger Federer, I'm sure when he comes back will be exactly the same.

So there's always the exception to the rule. So it's quite nice to be that exception.

**Q. It's a little different with you too because you're at a level that you've never been before. Rafa's been winning grand slams since he was 17 years old. I'm sure you've been asked this before, but is there an explanation?**

RICHARD BLAND: I've been asked that question a million times and I'm not doing anything different. I'm not working on anything different with Tim than we've worked -- we haven't worked on anything new probably for 12 years, I would say, maybe even 15.

Whenever we do work most of the time we are chatting, I'll hit a shot here and there and have a talk and look at the swing, yeah, looks fine, yeah, right, okay.

So I don't know. It's just my time. That's all I can put it down to. I don't know why. But I'm going to enjoy it while it lasts. I know it's not going to last forever. That's golf. But while it's here, I've had enough of the, it kicked me when I'm down, so while I'm up I'm going to enjoy it.

**Q. In 2018 were you supposed to play Augusta with your brother then and is that when he got sick?**

RICHARD BLAND: No. It was only after he got sick that Pat knew about it and kindly invited him that when he was healthy because at that point we still didn't know whether he was going to pull through.

Pat kindly said, Look, if he does recover and he's able to walk around a golf course again, then bring him out. So it's unfortunate that we've had to now cancel it a couple of times, but we'll get there.

**Q. You cancelled it in 2020 because of the pandemic?**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, because of the pandemic, and then this week because of, yeah, that's my bad, that one. (Laughing).

**Q. What was your snack as you walked off 10 tee? It was something with a blue wrapper.**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, it's just like an energy, chocolate energy bar sort of thing. Got to keep the waistline up, you know. Yeah, that's all it is.

**Q. You just pack those?**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah. I just, I've got a load in the room, so yeah, one a day. One a day. That's all.

**Q. When was the last time you hit a 400 yard-plus drive? You're playing D.J. tomorrow, I believe.**

RICHARD BLAND: Not for awhile (laughing). And even when it was awhile that was probably back with persimmon-headed driver and balata balls. Probably never, but it's going to be fun.

**Q. How does your game stack up with D.J.?**

RICHARD BLAND: Of course he's favorite. Yeah, I'm not, that's not being negative or anything like that. That's just realistic. Everybody knows that.

But if I play how I know I can play, I would like to think he's got a game on his hands. So yeah, we'll see. But I've got nothing to lose. I'm clearly the underdog, so the

underdog's never got anything to lose.

So by the looks of it he's playing pretty good, so I'm going to have to play my best golf just to have a chance at beating him. But it's 18 holes. It's match play. Who knows. We'll see.

**Q. Do you have a celebrity look-alike that people tell you you look like?**

RICHARD BLAND: No. No, I wouldn't wish that one on anyone.

**Q. Do you know the comedian John Oliver?**

RICHARD BLAND: No, I don't him, no. If he looks like me, I feel sorry for him.

**Q. For the last three holes or so, which you didn't really chat that much, for obvious reasons, you and Westie talked quite a bit, it seemed, and I just was wondering sort of what the topic of the conversation was, talk about old times or just sort of laughing?**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, just this and that and everything and nothing, really, whatever. We talked a little bit about what happened at Beaver Brook a couple of weeks ago. It obviously burned down. That's just right around the corner where I live, where Lee practices.

Yeah, just general just chit chat, nothing too serious or anything like that. But, yeah, I think, as you -- it's getting a little tight. You kind of do your own thing. But, yeah, Lee's, I've known Lee for 30-odd years. He's a class act, always has been, always will be. So I'm sure he's got plenty more good days in him in the future as hopefully I have.

**Q. You said your wife is flying in tomorrow; is that right?**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, she flies in tomorrow. We were kind of, we were supposed to be in New York next week for her 40th, but with getting an invite into the Valero next week I had to put it kind of nicely that we're not going to New York. She said she's coming here. So that will probably cost me a bit more with a birthday present.

**Q. Will she get here in time?**

RICHARD BLAND: No, she arrives tomorrow night.

**Q. What's her name?**

RICHARD BLAND: Catrin. She's Swedish.

**Q. You said that the messages you got some of them said, thank you for getting me through a hard time or thank you for letting me know I've been on the right road, I've been doubting myself. At any point in your career did you doubt yourself?**

RICHARD BLAND: Never. Never. Even when I lost my card in 2018, I always kind of thought one year doesn't make you a bad player, you don't become a bad player overnight. Not when you've played, certainly on the European Tour for 15 plus years. So yeah, I knew what was in front of me going back to the Challenge Tour at 46 years old, but I knew that I wasn't done. So I still have plenty of golf left in me. So, no, I never for one second thought that's it, I'm done.

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