

# Honda Classic

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

## Adam Scott

### Press Conference



MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome Adam Scott into the interview room here at the 2021 Honda Classic. Adam, you won this event in 2016. It must be nice to return to a golf course where you've had a victory, but this season you've had nine starts, you made every cut but just the one top 10. How would you assess your game coming into this week?

ADAM SCOTT: It's not really where I want it, to be honest, but it's always nice returning to places you've had success. This is a very demanding golf course, so it's going to certainly test every aspect of my game, certainly. I'm not quite on top of my long game at the moment, and it's a bit of a work in progress, but playing today it was a little bit better than it was Sunday at TPC, so hopefully it's moving in the right direction.

MARK WILLIAMS: You've had some pretty good consistency here at this event. You've had nine starts, five top-15s, including the win that we just mentioned. You mentioned it's a very difficult golf course. Do you enjoy the challenge of a really difficult golf course compared to one that's maybe less difficult?

ADAM SCOTT: Generally, yes, I do. I like that. I think the challenge from tee to green certainly here separates the ball-striking for the week, which at times for my career has been a strength for me. I think it gives me a little edge on the field. But I certainly can't say that coming into this week. Anyone could look at my stats and see that's not really my strong suit right now. But it's one of those kind of courses where it can go two ways out here. It can -- you can get in a rhythm and play the course well and you survive, or you can capitulate out there. It's really demanding and usually windy and with water, especially around the Bear's Trap. We all know about those holes. It's got me several times.

You kind of have to take it for what it is and do the best you can and try and get on that survival mode for a couple days at least.

#### Q. You've had three different victories at different

places with hitting the ball in the water. You did it at PLAYERS, did you do it there of course with the quad in the third round, and then did you do it at Doral, as well. Is it one of those things where you're not -- do you think you're not as fazed by it as other players or have you just sort of learned that it's not the end, it's just a little bump in the road?

ADAM SCOTT: You can survive hitting it in the water once or maybe twice for a tournament, but I think I hit it in about seven or eight times last week at TPC and I didn't win. I think it's one of those things, when you're playing good, you can bounce back from one trip to the water. Obviously the quad is not ideal and I try not to think about it too much, but I was playing exceptionally well that week and just kind of figured, you know, if I keep playing like this I'll be able to claw my way back into it, and fortunately I did.

I think after the experience of playing these Florida golf courses for 20 years, it's inevitable you're going to hit one in the water, especially around here when it's windy. You're going to have to accept it and do the best you can to get past that hole and rebuild.

#### Q. Are there holes out there where the bail-out is almost worse than hitting it in the water or equally bad?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, like 17 I think, especially when we used to play the back tee, they've kind of moved us up now at least, but going left on 17 here this week as a bail-out might seem like a good idea up on the tee, but then when you've got the chip downwind across the green and you end up in the water for two instead of one, you're in very much worse shape.

#### Q. When I asked Sungjae about what made it difficult, the first I think he mentioned was the wind and you mentioned it. Is the wind an additional player of what makes this course difficult? And also the wind shifts, and we could have a wind shift here Friday to Saturday, what does that do to the course when you have a front come through and the wind shifts?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I mean, it's a difficult course



anyway. As soon as you put water in front of greens or the side of greens and there's nowhere else to go but the green, it's a difficult course. But then you throw wind in there, that's a variable that's -- that even for the best players is very hard to control sometimes your golf ball. You're hitting it out there 160, 200 yards away from you and hoping the wind does what you think it's going to do. That's hard when the penalty is water and you're reaching into the bag to drop another one.

The wind makes this course extremely difficult. If there's a change in wind and you haven't experienced that wind before on the golf course or even that week, it makes it -- it can change how the course plays drastically. You can go from hitting a driver off a tee to the next day hitting a 3-iron, and those kind of adjustments, if you can make them comfortably in your head, are a huge advantage when that happens.

The guy who is comfortable with the change is going to do well, and the guy who isn't is going to really struggle, especially at a difficult track like this.

**Q. With a tournament like this that is already tough as you've already stated, does it help at all that you will have even a limited amount of fans there to where if you overcome one of those holes on the Bear Trap, getting that boost of energy or does the fan interaction or anything like that even affect your play at this point?**

ADAM SCOTT: It does for sure. I think it was noticeable as we didn't have fans for so long how much of an influence they have on your game out there. Even from getting to the Bear Trap and just having that little more focus, knowing you're playing in front of an audience, make you focus in a little bit more to then hitting the good shot and getting the positive feedback and the good vibes off of people watching a knocking a putt in and being able to celebrate a little with them and releasing all that good energy inside your body and positive reinforcement for yourself is a huge thing, and we've all been missing that. It's nice that we're going to have some fans back out there, and hopefully help me celebrate the good shots and not have to help me overcome too many bad ones.

**Q. You've touched on it a little bit, and I don't know if "fun" is the right word, but can you have fun playing a golf course like this course this week and the Stadium Course last week or is it a different type of fun?**

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, it's a different type of fun. You have to be very -- I think you have to be very prepared mentally to have fun. That might be the answer for anyone doing well this week. As much as you need to physically play

well out here, you need to be really mentally prepared because it's going to beat you up even playing well. You're going to have to be able to withstand a few blows out there, and if you can do that, you can still have fun. If you can't, it's going to become a very tough week.

It is a different kind of fun, but it's that fun challenge, so I might try and think about that the next 24, 48 hours and have some fun come Thursday.

**Q. There was a story on Sungjae that in practice at Royal Melbourne he was basically hitting things like a robot. That's when you guys were calling him "Iron Byron" and even was hitting shots on demand. Can you recount something like that from those practice rounds?**

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, he was -- well, what I do recall was maybe it was the Monday, but it was incredibly windy out there. I mean, so windy that I certainly didn't even think about touching any of the holes because I didn't want to destroy my confidence.

Sungjae I think was the only guy who went out there to play, so we ended up walking out and watching him play a few holes, and that's where this whole thing came along because even in a 25 miles an hour wind at Royal Melbourne he was just fairway, green, fairway, green, and it was, it was a bit like Iron Byron, like a machine.

**Q. Just give a bit more on his game, what you saw that week and also just in general, his ability to sort of hit them on demand, his skill factor.**

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, well, it's incredibly repetitive. He has a very distinct rhythm of his swing, and I think like everyone, but certainly more for him, when he is feeling his rhythm, it's incredibly repetitive, and it doesn't matter the conditions. He knows he can just point and shoot and get the result.

I know speaking to his caddie, it's hard for his caddie to talk him into hitting it away from a pin ever because he's just -- he thinks he can just pin-see it all day. He's obviously got a lot of confidence, and we've seen that in his consistent play the last couple of years now.

**Q. Did he show you his impression of your swing or others that he can replicate?**

ADAM SCOTT: No, I haven't seen that.

**Q. Apparently he can do you all on demand.**

ADAM SCOTT: I'll hit him up next time on the range.



**Q. You talked about your driving is not the best. I noticed last week you were the second longest off the tee. I'm wondering with Augusta coming up in the next couple of weeks, what part of your game is really sharp?**

ADAM SCOTT: What is really sharp at the moment? My short game is fantastic at the moment. I mean, for sure the best consistently it's ever been, which is fortunate, otherwise I'd be selling hot dogs, not playing golf if I didn't have one.

But I'm not really where I want to be with my long game. I can sit here and bore you with details why, but it's just the fact is it's just not good enough. In the big picture of things with Augusta in mind, I think if I can make some progress this week, I've got two weeks of practice which I really, really need to be ready for Augusta, and I still believe I can be.

With the golf swing and ball-striking being kind of the strength of my game for my entire career, I believe it can come back fairly quickly with a little bit of work on the range the next few weeks.

**Q. You just came off THE PLAYERS Championship where there's that notorious stretch of 16, 17, 18, three-hole stretches that kind of have these common names like the Snake Pit, the Horrible Horseshoe, the Green Mile, et cetera, and of course we have the Bear Trap this week. How do you think the Bear Trap stacks up to those other notable stretches on the TOUR?**

ADAM SCOTT: Well, I think it gets the name for a reason. You know, none of it's easy out here. 15 and 17 for sure require commitment and precision to the shot. That's it. You've got the green to hit, and that's all you've got. There's no real bail-out. And 16 becomes very demanding if you miss the fairway. That's all about the tee shot. There's plenty of green up there, but once you get in the rough or you get in a fairway bunker, the variables change and a long shot across water, we haven't seen any horror shows, but a quick trip to the water and a double is very possible.

It's really a matter of survival, and I think it's probably more so than even last week at TPC. This can unravel you even more. 16 at TPC of course there's the water, but rare to see more than a bogey, even with a trip to the water there.

You know, here I can put my hand up and say I've made a quad on 15 and I reckon if you went back and had a look, I might have made a quad on 17 in the past, as well. It can get away from you pretty quick, and this is a tough stretch

here, and it is a matter of survival.

**Q. I was trying to think of the other combinations I mentioned, I don't think either of them have two par-3s so that makes it a little different from others perhaps.**

ADAM SCOTT: It does, and the tough thing here is you get through 15, but you've got 17 still to come. It doesn't get any easier. Certainly 18 is no easy birdie par-5. There's plenty of water surrounding that green, as well.

It is very tough getting it in the clubhouse here, and really the tournament is never over with a few holes to go, whether you're in front or behind. It's good to remember that.

MARK WILLIAMS: We appreciate your time. Make sure you have some fun this week, as you've talked about, and have some success this week. All the best.

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