

RBC Heritage

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Corey Connors

Press Conference



RBC Heritage

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome RBC ambassador Corey Connors. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes here prior to the start of the RBC Heritage. You're making your fifth start and coming off a tie for 21st last season in 2020. Just some thoughts on being back here at Harbour Town.

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, it's really exciting to be back here playing a few practice holes out there this morning. I feel very comfortable with the course. Like you said, my fifth time here, so I think it's probably the place I've played the most throughout my career.

Solid play last year. Kind of made me like the golf course a little bit more. Got a great feel for things, and really excited to be back and excited to be back again as an RBC ambassador. They do a lot of great things for golf, and yeah, it's an event that I've been looking forward to playing in, and hopefully can have a good week.

DOUG MILNE: You're obviously experiencing some great results right now. Just a few thoughts on your game, six top-10 finishes so far this season, three of which have come recently, including last week down the road at Augusta National with your top-10 finish there. Just some thoughts on what you're feeling good about heading into the week.

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, feeling good about all parts of my game. Been really consistent with the ball-striking, and the putter has been working pretty well the last little while, getting better and better, a little more consistency there.

But really happy with the way I'm striking the ball, hitting it very solid particularly with the irons, driving it well, also. Feel good, have a lot of confidence in my game right now, and yeah, just trying to keep riding that wave of good play.

Q. What do you take more pride in, playing well last week or having a Tim Horton's doughnut named after you? And then can you describe your emotions immediately after the round and perhaps now 48 hours later?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, sure. Obviously was happy with the week last week, but I saw the Tim Horton's doughnut picture of that this morning, and that was pretty sweet. Not something they normally do, so I was definitely pumped up about that. I wish I could access one of those right now, but I'm pretty far away from the closest Tim Horton's. So pretty cool, and thanks to them for doing that. Definitely pretty special moment when I saw what they had done.

As far as how I felt right after the round on Sunday, I was quite disappointed. I had big expectations for the day. I just kind of had a slow start to the round and made some mistakes and compounded some errors and made some bogeys. Definitely looking back now proud of the way I battled back, 2-under par on the second nine, and got myself kind of back into the top 10 with a good finish. Really happy with the way overall. I was definitely disappointed that I didn't perform a little bit better on Sunday, but it was a great learning experience and it was really fun to be in one of the final groups on Sunday at Augusta.

Q. A little more on that fact: What is your biggest takeaway from last week, especially since it's your second top 10 at the Masters? You said it's a learning experience. Could you expand on that? What did you learn and what was your biggest takeaway?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, one of my biggest takeaways is how well the course sets up for me and how much I like the golf course. I think one of my big strengths is my iron play. It was really valuable around that golf course, and makes me avoid the stressful situations or the difficult spots that you can find yourself in on that golf course, striking the ball solidly I think into the greens is really important. I drove it well and ironed it well and took a lot of the stress off my game trying to save pars or whatever.

So simplified the golf course as much as possible, and good ball-striking definitely was the reason for that, and something that I can use in the future, knowing if I strike is like I can, I don't have to be afraid of any of the holes. I can take advantage of some good shots when opportunities present themselves.

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As far as Sunday, didn't quite have the feel on the greens like I had the first few days. Obviously playing for a great jacket, which is a pretty big deal, just wasn't quite as relaxed on Sunday as I was the first few days. It's something to be a little more aware of when I get back in the mix there in the future.

Q. You've been on a pretty good run on some pretty big stages. Are you expecting more of yourself these days going to the first tee on Thursdays?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I would definitely say -- like I said before, I have a lot of confidence in my game. I feel like I've been fine tuning all parts of my game, and everything is rounding nicely into shape. I definitely have high expectations teeing it up week in and week out, and the strong results definitely help that. I'm looking forward to continuing the good play, but definitely a lot of confidence and definitely know that if I play my game, do what I can, play with the confidence I have and trust that I have in my game, I'm going to give myself a good chance.

Q. I'm wondering as you prepare obviously with the Masters in the rear view mirror, how difficult is it -- you've got so much to process from Augusta. How difficult is it to make the transition now to the RBC Heritage, or are you able to put that to a time where you have more time to think about it?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, it's a quick turnaround, like you said. Definitely a lot to process from the week, but nothing new for us pro golfers. You've got to start preparing for the next week as soon as you finish the previous one.

Took yesterday off, just kind of refreshed a little bit here in Hilton Head, and back to work this week and really focused on what's ahead and focusing on building a plan for this golf course.

I think I'm going to be home next week and maybe be able to think about Augusta a little bit more then, but right now we're trying to dial in things here in Hilton Head for the RBC Heritage.

Q. You talked about Sunday, about how you were a little disappointed in the way it went. Obviously that front nine is what you're talking about. Do you fixate on that as a negative, or do you look at it as a way to kind of use it as a learning experience for future --

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, definitely look at it as a learning experience now. It was a big negative when I walked to the 9th tee. I wasn't very pleased with how things were going on Sunday.

Definitely a good learning experience. Just a few things to be aware of. Just to make sure I kind of play with freedom. Got a little tightened up on a couple of the tee shots out there and was trying to err on the safe side instead of getting good shots, which I had been doing for most of the week. Definitely looking back now, a bit of a learning experience, and good things that I will remember for next time and things that I can be aware of.

Q. I think you're becoming more and more familiar with each passing week to the casual American golf fan, and obviously for someone like you, one of the first things people think of when they see your name is, oh, he's Canadian, he's from Canada. I wonder if there's any sense in which you can relate to Hideki as somebody who playing in America predominantly, when people see him, they associate him in a country so it almost becomes you're not just playing for yourself but you're playing for something bigger, which no American golfer on the TOUR really would have that. Hopefully I'm making sense.

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, definitely I saw some things about Hideki, playing for Japan. I definitely feel that same sense of pride really to Canada, and all the support that I have from Canada is awesome. Thinking back to when Mike Weir won the Masters in 2003, he was playing for all of Canada, and all of Canada was behind him.

I think it's a very similar situation, and it's something that I don't know any different, I guess, not being American, to your point, that the American players playing here. It's definitely awesome. I love the support that I get from Canada.

I wouldn't necessarily say it adds pressure. It feels sweeter maybe when you accomplish good things. But yeah, definitely proud to be a Canadian and love all the support that I get, and I love playing for my country.

Q. You were just talking about representing Canada and I just want to say I'm sorry about the RBC Canadian Open being canceled this year. Does it make it any easier knowing the replacement event is going to be here in a place where you like coming that has a close connection to RBC, and are you interested in playing the replacement event in June?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, RBC does great things for golf and great things for golf in Canada especially, and it's really disappointing that the RBC Canadian Open was canceled again, but it'll be really sweet to finally get back there next summer. It's an event that I have a lot of fun playing.

As far as the replacement event, I'm not exactly sure at this point, being the week before the U.S. Open, some travel complications, it might be difficult to get to the U.S. Open in a timely manner. I'm not quite sure yet about the replacement event, but I've heard great things about the golf course and I'm sure it'll be awesome. Hopefully make it, but if not I'll be getting ready for the U.S. Open.

Q. How is it knowing that the RBC people you're used to seeing when you come to the Heritage are not going to be here?

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, it's really sad. I feel for a lot of them. I have a great relationship with a lot of those people, and they're fun people to be around. I know they really look forward to this event, and they do a great job. They work so hard to put on these tournaments, and for them not to be here is pretty tough.

Hopefully this is the last of it and things can carry on in future years, and we'll have a lot more great experiences together.

DOUG MILNE: Corey, we appreciate your time and wish you good luck this week. Thank you for joining us.

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