

# RBC Heritage

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Webb Simpson

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome the defending champion of the RBC Heritage, Webb Simpson. Thank you for joining us for a few minutes. If I could take you back to last year's final round, your bogey-free 64, birdies on five of your last seven holes, I believe. If we could just kind of have you relive that and what really kind of connected for you coming down the stretch.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, well, I made everything in rounds 1 and 2, and then Saturday I hit it great but I didn't make anything, and through eight holes I had had a couple good looks for birdie and still wasn't making putts.

I knew for me to win the tournament, putts had to start going in, but I've played long enough to know you can never force 15-footers to go in. I just told myself from 8 green to 9 tee just to stay patient and keep trying to read greens as good as I can and start them on line.

Hit good putts on 9, 10, 11, and then finally made one on 12, and then that kind of -- I think the lid came off for me mentally on the hole, and the hole started getting bigger and bigger, and it was nice to make a long one at 13, two-putt on 15, good one on 16, long one on 17, and at that point kind of the day and a half of not making putts quit affecting my confidence, and I started feeling very confident.

It was a really fun way to finish the round because there were so many guys in contention to win. I mean, it seemed like there was 10 guys who had a legit chance on the back nine, which that's not normal for a PGA TOUR event.

DOUG MILNE: You're making your 12th start here at the event. Just some characteristics about how you think it best suits your game.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it's very much kind of a plotter's golf course, point A to point B. You've got to really control your ball flight, shot shape, which those things get my excited about. I love thinking through where am I hitting it on this hole and where am I hitting it on this green. That's kind of the language we speak about every week, or the



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language we speak in.

I feel comfortable here even though it's a tight golf course. It really makes me focus in and kind of zero in on where I'm trying to hit the ball, and the course -- I've never seen it look this good. It's firm. It's going to be very different than what we saw in June. We're kind of back to what we normally see this time of year with higher winds, firm greens, and I don't think the scores will be near what we shot in June.

DOUG MILNE: Four top-10 finishes this year and just outside the top 10 last week at the Masters. Kind of assess your game and what you're feeling good about coming into the week.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it's been slightly more consistent than last year, but I feel like my putting has been consistent, my driving has been consistent. It's really my irons that have been a little off. Through two rounds last week, I made a lot of mistakes at Augusta. I worked on something Friday afternoon on the range, and I started hitting it really good again, really solid on the weekend, and have continued that the last couple days.

I'm hopeful that the rest of this season will be more consistent and I can get back to that winner's circle. I need to give myself a little better chance to win tournaments than I have been at least this calendar year.

**Q. Kevin Kisner was in yesterday and he was talking about, basically saying in his opinion the guys who are really young right now and winning are somehow better prepared to do that, to hit the ground running and to win tournaments, guys like Collin Morikawa, Will Zalatoris, than he would have been when he was coming up. As another gentleman rounding into your mid 30s, I thought I would ask for your perspective on whether you think that's true, and if it is, why?**

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I think that's true. I think there's more information for these young guys than we've ever had. You have DECADE golf from Scott Fawcett, you have TrackMan, you have Foresight, all these tools and technology to help these high schoolers and college players get better, hit it further, understand -- we know in

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golf why shots go left and right or left to right and right to left more than we've ever known. Like I said, there's so much information.

I think these young guys take advantage of it, and so when they show up at tournaments they've already been exposed to some of this kind of course strategy stuff that when I was in college I learned from my coach Jerry Haas, which he taught me a lot, but again, there wasn't the information then that we have now where there's actual facts behind theories and people's opinions.

It seems like these young guys to me are -- they're more mature in their kind of golf brain than guys coming out with me 12, 13 years ago. Collin Morikawa, 24 years old, I think, but he plays and acts like he's a veteran. I think it helps having caddies like J.J. Jakovac, these guys who have been around for a while, they're helping a lot. But yeah, they're certainly way ahead of where I was for sure.

**Q. If I could follow up, you said Collin acts like it, too, and that's another element I'm curious about. Even getting off the course where obviously you make great points, but media savvy, with how they carry themselves, there seems to be less of a learning curve maybe. Is that another case of just more resources being available to them earlier?**

WEBB SIMPSON: I think so. And there's more golf for them to watch. You have PGA TOUR app, you have ShotLink, so I think in college they're able to see how we play golf courses. You can look up what guys did on the 15th hole here, the par-5, last year. We know where most of the birdies are being made, and even in that, where guys are laying up. Are there more birdies from 125 or 100 yards?

Yeah, I think they're used to understanding golf courses more. They've paid more attention to how we're playing. I just watched Sunday golf when I was in college and they were just showing the best players making putts and stuff, but I think they're probably doing more work looking at where we're hitting it, what clubs we're hitting.

Yeah, I think they're more prepared in that regard.

**Q. Just curious with Zalatoris, a fellow Wake guy, any interaction with him, or when was the first time maybe you heard talk about him?**

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I didn't know him. I haven't gotten to know him as well as I'd like, but I've always heard about his ball-striking. He's a great player as a whole, but his ball-striking has kind of stood out as ahead of his time, or elite ball striker, and Jerry always told me how good Will

Zalatoris was. I never had a chance to play with him, but I think what he did last week was amazing, to have a chance to win and actually perform well on Sunday.

But I think we've all kind of been seeing it. We've seen he's gotten himself in the top 50 in the world kind of on his own doing. It seems like he plays good every week. I think we'll continue to see that from him.

**Q. Do you remember any good early stories about the ball-striking that you heard?**

WEBB SIMPSON: No, nothing specific. I just heard it from different people, and so when you hear the same thing from different people, it must be true. Whatever he's doing, it seems like he's got a great attitude about it, too. I watched a little bit of him when I got done. He just kind of finds it, hits it, moves on.

**Q. I just was wondering, I'm looking at the schedule and there's four events in the Carolinas coming up because the PGA is in South Carolina and we've got the Congaree event, as well. You've got a couple wins in the Carolinas. I'm sure this hasn't escaped your notice, this little scheduling quirk?**

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I love it. I'm going to be home it looks like for seven of the next nine weeks maybe after this week. It's a nice part of the year for me. I love driving to tournaments. I don't like flying. So getting in my car and driving is nice.

I played the PGA Championship at Kiawah in '12. I love it. I've spent some time down there.

I always look forward to Hilton Head for the obvious reasons with the beaches. My family comes. It's a laid-back feel. But it seems like I'm getting a little more of that coming up here.

I don't know exactly if I'm going to play Congaree, but I've talked to a few players this week, and they all said it's really great, really tough, which I always like. But yeah, it is a nice feeling knowing I don't think I'm getting on an airplane until maybe U.S. Open.

**Q. You mentioned the PGA, if I could follow up real quickly on the PGA last year at TPC Harding Park. The 16th was a drivable par-4 as you recall and Collin Morikawa hit that great drive. You went through there about two hours before he did. Did you go for that green in one and did you like where that pin was and did it set up nicely for you for your driver?**

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I loved it. I loved what they did

Sunday. I wish we saw it more. If courses could give us drivable par-4s I think it's fun.

I think of 15 at Travelers is always fun on Sunday to see what guys are going to do.

I remember I hit driver. It was one of the only good shots I hit that day. I didn't play well Sunday, but I hit driver on the front of the green and two-putted, but I watched Collin's shot. I went back to the hotel, and what a great shot he hit. Could be shot of the decade for PGA Championship.

**Q. Just curious, you said you found something in your swing over the weekend at Augusta. Any details on what that was?**

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, so in my transition I've been trying to get off my right side, kind of move my weight through, but I keep sliding my hips this way instead of turning them this way, and Paul just gave me a drill where I put the ball up in my stance, and from there I'm trying to hit it as low as I can, so it forces me to cover. My divots became a lot shallower, I started hitting the iron shots nice and crisp again, and certainly hit way more shots on the weekend than I've hit in the last probably five rounds combined.

**Q. Just curious, iron play is one of the strengths of your game and we've talked about Morikawa and Zalatoris in this. Is there any common trait that good iron players have?**

WEBB SIMPSON: What I've seen in Collin, I haven't played with Will, but another guy I think about is Sergio, guys I feel like that hit consistently good iron shots is they hit a lot of different shots. They flight it low, they flight it high, they curve it both ways. That seems like a common denominator with guys who year in, year out are really good in that area. I certainly love to do that. I love to throw a ball up in the wind or keep it out of the wind.

I think that's when my creative side gets to come out because I'm not a creative guy at all, but the one chance I get to be creative is approach shots.

DOUG MILNE: Webb, we appreciate your time and wish you all the best this week. Thank you.

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