

# RBC Heritage

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Brian Harman

### Press Conference



# RBC *Heritage*

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Brian Harman into the interview room here at the RBC Heritage. Just a couple weeks ago he picked up his fourth PGA TOUR victory at the Valero Texas Open. Welcome back to Harbour Town. If we can get some comments on being here this week.

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, this was my first PGA TOUR event back in 2005. This is one of my favorite ones all year. I love coming here, love Hilton Head. Being so close to home, a lot of friends and family out.

Played nine holes yesterday. Golf course looks like it's in really, really good shape. Weather looks nice. I'm expecting a really nice golf tournament.

I am so happy that this is an elevated event and it's gotten some of the best players in the world to come. It was always well-supported, but even more so now. It's nice that South Carolina is getting big-name players and everyone seems to really enjoy it. That pleases me a lot.

**Q. Obviously the state of your game is good, having won in San Antonio, but you're coming off the Masters where you had three consistent rounds of 71 but Saturday got you. Just a comment on your play at Augusta.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, if I could have had six foot of string and moved my golf ball around on Saturday, I would have had another good day. That's kind of the rub of that golf course. It's very difficult. It forces you to take some shots on, which I tried and failed on Saturday, unfortunately.

But feel like I'm getting a little better sense of what it takes to play around that place, and it's just a really difficult, demanding golf course. I look forward to giving her another go next year.

**Q. Brian, with your play, did you feel like a week like Valero was coming? Did it catch you by surprise or could you sense something was coming together?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I mentioned in some of my pressers there that I've been more surprised that I hadn't had a good week so far this year because I'd been -- all the signs were kind of there. I was starting to hit it really, really well, had some streaky putting kind of coming, going. So I wasn't surprised by the result. But if you looked at it on paper, it looks like a surprise. But with my prep and I've been working pretty hard and really trying to get back in the winner's circle.

I was obviously excited, and you're always a little -- not taken aback, but good play doesn't surprise me, but if you looked at it on paper, you would have certainly been surprised.

**Q. When you won The Open a couple years back in your mid-30s, obviously had a lot of chances at majors prior to that, was there a mental buildup stress of wanting to get one of these that kind of was able to be released from you when you won?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I think anytime that you work really hard and you achieve something, there's always a little bit of a relief. But for me after The Open, it just helped reinforce all the things that I know that I like about golf. I love to compete. I love playing on hard golf courses with the best players.

It's a tough deal to get yourself into those positions to win big golf tournaments, and that's what reinforced that that's what I love to do.

**Q. Throughout your career when you've gotten hot you've been able to sustain it for a good length of time. Do you feel you're entering one of those periods now?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I sure hope so. The signs are all there. I'm striking it great, been putting it better. Short game has been good.

It's just a matter of getting focused and getting in a place where you're really comfortable playing well. A lot of times when you're kind of coming out of a little bit of a slump, it's hard to trust -- it's kind of like debits and credits. You've seen yourself struggle for a while and you're almost

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skeptical of when it starts going your way.

I'm going to try to lean into it and take some chances and try to shoot some low numbers this week.

**Q. I'm not sure how many years you played with that old gamer putter but it's a lot of them. Now you've got a new piece of technology in the bag. I'm curious what feel or performance benefits you're seeing with some of that zero torque technology.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, so for me, especially at Valero, and I don't know how -- anytime you get a new putter, you putt good. There's a honeymoon period there.

But currently with that putter, it's sort of -- when you're putting you've got a lot of variables, right; have I picked the right speed, have I picked the right line, am I going to hit a good putt. With that putter for me currently it sort of removes the am-I-going-to-hit-a-good-putt variable out of it. It seems like I hit more good putts with it, so I'm focused more on line and speed and not worried as much about making a good strike on the ball.

**Q. Are you in favor of the use of the distance measuring devices on TOUR?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I think it's a great idea. I don't think it's going to overcome -- I think it would help if all things are equal, but it's not going to overcome a difficult golf course or numbers of players or bottlenecking with tee times. If we're playing in threesomes on a hard golf course, because guys have yardage -- we're not going to play any faster. But this week it'll look like it's working because we're in twosomes on a place that's flat and all the tee boxes are next to each other.

**Q. How do you feel like you're doing with your pace of play and the issues you had with pumping the grip so much?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, so on our TOUR links, part of our performance is they measure your average stroke time against the field, and so for me, I monitor it, and I've been right at average or a little above average for time to play your shot, which it starts right when the other player hits their shot. That's when they start the timing process.

I've certainly improved over the last couple years. But it's one of those things where we've got to figure out -- the pace of play is a very nuances conversation. There's a lot of factors to it.

I felt like my friend Harris got picked on when he was winning in San Diego, but I talked to him about it, and they

waited on every shot. If there's nowhere to go in front of you -- like I would imagine that every golfer plays slower in a threesome than they do in a twosome. So there's just a lot of that. It's a hot topic right now, but it's not something that is really fixable in our current game, I don't think.

**Q. I talked to Mark Russell about the pace of play, and he said that it came down to a couple different things. One was fields of 156 players, and as long as there were 156 players, everybody is going to have a good time their first nine and then when they got to the 10th tee because you're flipping sides of the golf course that there's going to be a delay from then on. He also said that what people do on the greens slows stuff down. He called it the Kabuki dance everybody does on the green. But what do you do if a guy needs another 10 seconds to be sure about a putt? Are TOUR players going to vote to not give themselves time to make a shot? I don't think that's going to happen.**

BRIAN HARMAN: They won't. No, we're playing in the most competitive time, I would argue ever, in our game. Our game is as popular as it's ever been. The stakes are higher. The money is higher. All of the drama and all of the -- everything about golf is heightened to the max right now.

Yeah, it's going to fall on a lot of deaf ears, and at the same time, we wait on Thursday and Friday. If you're in a threesome on Thursday and Friday, you are waiting almost all day on the group in front of you, and they're waiting on the group in front of them. There's nowhere -- there's no space to operate. So there's no incentive to play any faster. It's like you pick up five seconds on how long it takes you to play and then you wait five more seconds for your next turn.

**Q. How much do you pay attention to money?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Very little.

**Q. When did that start?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, it gets talked about way too much. I feel that the vast majority of guys that are doing really well on TOUR and are winning and are -- they don't do it for the money.

**Q. Was there a time recently for you, and I'm not saying you've been obsessed with it from the get-go, but you knew what purses were and this, that and the other, that you just completely stopped thinking about it?**



BRIAN HARMAN: It was never a point -- look, I think everyone -- I don't play for the money, but I still consider it. It's a nice thing, right?

**Q. You're a pro.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I'm a pro. It's what I do for a living. But I remember a few years back at TPC Sawgrass coming down the stretch, I'm loosely in contention. I'm in one of the last few groups, probably three or four shots back and the pin is back right on 17 and I aimed right at it, hit it in there eight feet, made the putt, and I remember doing an interview on Monday, and they were asked me, oh, gosh -- it was a couple ex-players, like when I was playing, I think I would have been trying to lock up fifth place or sixth place or something, and it was like -- for me, I was like, I didn't even consider that. Like I didn't consider what I would have gotten paid for third place or eighth place or 12th place. I was trying to win a -- for me, the rush is not the check at the end, it is can I execute this shot and try and win this golf tournament.

**Q. For years, this has always been a great tournament, a great exhale after quite a hectic week last week. Does it matter that -- does the fact that it's a Sig Event with a \$20 million purse even register or is it still the old Hilton Head?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Well, these Signature Events, they've gotten the fields more so because of the FedExCup points being elevated, more so than the money being elevated. You can't afford to miss one of these because of the point opportunities and how that translates into your chances into the end-of-the-year tournaments and ultimately trying to win the FedExCup at the end of the year.

Guys won't skip this because of -- if the money was lower.

**Q. You have the family with you this week?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I do, yes, sir.

**Q. How does that change the experience from 20 years ago when you were the only focus and you were the kid, everybody was coming to see you, how you've got a lot more responsibilities when you come to the golf course?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Of course, and that's not something that you can ever really prepare for or practice for, but for me I just try to compartmentalize it as best as I can. When I go to the course, I clock in, I go to work, I get everything I need to get done, and when I leave the course, I'm Brian the dad. I'm not Brian the golfer.

**Q. Do you appreciate what everybody has been saying forever about this event, that it's a family atmosphere and players love to bring their families here?**

BRIAN HARMAN: It is, man. The TOUR does a -- overall the TOUR does an incredible job being so accommodating to our families. The traveling around as a TOUR player, it's not for everyone. It can be really tough. But having those little glimmers here and there, having your family out certainly helps bridge the gap because you do miss stuff. That's part of being a TOUR player. You miss baseball games, you miss dance recitals, you miss stuff you want to be at. But at the end of the day, this is what I do, and this is how I provide. It's my job, but at the same time, I do enjoy it, but you do have to separate it all.

**Q. What is your warmup routine and how do you stay focused during it?**

BRIAN HARMAN: My warmup routine -- you're talking about like in the gym or hitting balls or --

**Q. Hitting balls.**

BRIAN HARMAN: So a lot of guys, they'll do -- I'll chip and then I'll putt and then I hit balls and then go to the first tee. For me it's all about proximity. I don't want to backtrack when I'm getting ready. If the putting green is closest to the first tee, I'll putt last. If the putting green is the furthest from the first tee I'll putt first. So I just kind of make it to where I'm not going back and forth.

The only thing I'm really consistent about is that I step outside, and after I'm done with the gym, breakfast, whatever it is, I step outside on to the practice tee 15 minutes before I'm supposed to tee off. So that's the only real routine that I have.

**Q. Did the boots fit at Valero?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, they did not. They were 12 and a half. I'm a size 9. They're beautiful boots, though. Luccheses.

**Q. Between your two wins, between Valero -- The Open was the one before that, right?**

**Q. Amongst others, but go ahead.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Between those two, when you won both of them, how do you believe you could have done -- if you would have done better at Valero compared to The Open and the conditions between them, how do you believe -- do you think you could have done better on one of them compared to the other?



BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I didn't have my best stuff the last day at Valero.

**Q. The conditions were very bad.**

BRIAN HARMAN: But all that is relative. You're still playing relatively against the field, against the course. I didn't execute as well on Saturday and Sunday as I did -- Thursday and Friday were really clean, executed a bunch of shots, made a lot of putts, and then Saturday and Sunday I had to get a little more creative. I didn't have the command over the tee shot like I wanted to. Even though the wind is blowing and that throws you off, there's still a level of execution that I expect when I'm in contention.

I didn't have it, so I had to go to a backup plan, like hey, I didn't trust that I'm on -- I'm not at 100 percent with everything, so I'm having to play more conservative, and it ended up working to my advantage because with the wind you kind ever have to do that anyway. I didn't have my best stuff Saturday or Sunday at Valero but played well enough to where I could get up-and-down and trust my short game, and it wasn't quite as flashy as it should have been.

And then The Open, yeah, I could pick one or two here or there, but pretty solid week all week.

**Q. Was Valero a fit for lefties or was The Open a fit for lefties?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I've never played in a tournament right-handed --

**Q. Paired to when you're playing with someone else, do you believe that somebody that's a righty --**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, I would never discount any performance because of which side someone hits the golf ball. If I beat you, I just beat you.

**Q. Did you buy a replica of the Claret Jug?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I'm looking for one.

**Q. Where did you keep the jug when you had it at home?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I kept it -- well, it went a bunch of different places. I had it sitting on the island in the kitchen for a while, but mostly it stayed out in I call it my barn, but it's kind of like my building out behind my house.

**Q. Outside of yourself, who enjoyed it the most?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I would think that Scott Tway probably enjoyed it the most, my caddie.

**Q. Going back to the very beginning, you said that like that this is a Signature Event. Why?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Because I don't think this tournament would get the field otherwise. I don't think that after the Masters that you would have near the players that we have this week. I think it's really special to have what feels like an intimate setting of a golf course and to have world-class players that are definitely going to be here.

I think that this tournament has been around long enough and Steve Wilmot has done such a great job over the years. He's seen it go from being in trouble and having trouble with sponsors to now it's a Signature Event. So for me, it's great to see an event grow and to reach the status that I felt like it should have been all along.

**Q. What do you mean you're looking for a replica? You make it sound like you're shopping on eBay. How hard is this?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I want another one. I want another one. They send you a replica for -- and they used to send you several more, but now you get one.

**Q. Have you contacted them?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I have. We're working through it.

**Q. It seems complicated.**

BRIAN HARMAN: I'd like another one. I think some guys have sold extra replicas that they've gotten, so I think that there's some resistance there.

THE MODERATOR: Brian, as always, we appreciate your time. Thank you, sir.

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