

# RBC Heritage

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Corey Conners

### Press Conference



# RBC *Heritage*

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We are joined by RBC ambassador Corey Conners. Corey, you're making your ninth start here at the RBC Heritage. We'll start off with some thoughts on what it's like to be back here in Hilton Head.

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I'm excited to be back here in Hilton Head for the RBC Heritage. It's where I made my pro debut after playing the Masters as an amateur 10 years ago in 2015. Thrilled to be back. It's a great place. Love the golf course. My family is here with me. It's a great place to have the family.

Just love the feel of the island here, and I'm really excited for the golf tournament. The course is in great shape, so it'll be a fun week.

**Q. Any activities you're going to do with the family outside of the golf course this week?**

COREY CONNERS: Some swinging on the swings. Our little girl went to ride on some ponies yesterday, so that was fun. We'll try and venture out either mornings or afternoons for the rest of the week. But lots of things to do, so it's fun.

**Q. T8 last week at the Masters, fifth top 10 of the season. How is it entering the week turning the page after an exhausting week?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, definitely a lot of emotions and adrenaline last week. It was fun to be in the mix the first major of the year, the Masters, and disappointed with the Sunday. Want to kind of get back to playing my game and hopefully can put some good rounds together and get in contention here, as well.

I think this is a great place to come after a week like that, a little more relaxing. It's a fun place to play and fun place to be.

**Q. How does that post-major, particularly Masters, process work? Are your first thoughts positive or**

**negative?**

COREY CONNERS: Probably a little negative coming off the golf course for me, not really having my best stuff on Sunday. Really having a good chance there, I felt like.

But the week as a whole, I did a lot of things really well. After having some time to reflect, I think I feel like I didn't hit it my best some of the days but was able to score the ball really well, which felt good, and then hit some better shots and wasn't quite able to get it in. Didn't quite have everything working which is certainly what it takes to win big events, but definitely lots of positive things I can take from the week.

Felt like I did a good job of just playing my game, sticking to the game plan, despite the atmosphere out there and what was going on around.

**Q. That was my next question. Remove your hat as a player and become more of a fan; when you got off the course and signed and looked at what was going on, if you didn't already hear it and see it, did you stick around? Were you at all curious to see how it would end, and what were your thoughts on that development?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I would say all three the second nine on Sunday, I knew kind of what was going on just because Rory is playing right in the group behind. I had to back off the tee shot on 12 waiting for them to hit into 11. That happened a number of times. When we were on 16, Rory hit the shot on 15. Had to wait a little while for things to settle down.

I saw his bunker shot while signing the card, stepped out and heard the reaction, knowing that he missed the putt.

But I think there, everyone is so into the golf and you could tell what was happening by the crowd/fan reaction.

I packed up my stuff and left the course but was keeping an eye on my phone to see how the playoff was going. I saw their tee shots on a TV in the clubhouse in the playoff and knew Rory hit it to -- they both hit good shots. Rory hit it in close, and I saw that he won.

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**Q. Just as an observer, it was emotionally draining to watch the last two groups on Sunday. How draining was it for you, and do you still feel it Monday or Tuesday? At what point this week do you feel like, I'm back in the groove to play another tournament?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, definitely pretty draining. Just a lot physically and mentally. But I've been able to have a light day. Didn't do much Monday. Just a little bit yesterday. Obviously we had the pro-am this morning.

I feel like this golf course I know quite well, so my preparation, I'll be able to manage the energy a little bit. I've been able to manage the energy a little bit better for that.

I still feel maybe a little fatigue, but I think once tomorrow rolls around and it's the start of the tournament, some more adrenaline will kick in and it's game time and I'll be ready to go.

**Q. Did you get a lot of messages Saturday night or did you even dare look at your phone?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I was kind of aware. I got quite a few messages, some pretty cool ones. Certainly Mike Weir was sending messages, giving me some advice, saying basically trust myself, and yeah, a bunch of other friends and some others. But it was cool to see.

Did a pretty good job of just kind of normalizing things as much as possible and not reacting too much to anything on the outside.

But yeah, it was nice to be supported by so many people and receive the messages. But yeah, just tried to dumb it down and just play golf.

**Q. Can you quantify how much more nervous you were being in contention in the Masters versus being in contention in a Signature Event versus being in contention in a regular TOUR event? I assume there's different levels.**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I'd say it's pretty close. Winning my first event on the PGA TOUR, I was really nervous. I think I've learned how to sort of deal with the nervousness a little bit better. Teeing it up in my first Presidents Cup, the nerves were pretty high, those moments. I was definitely nervous going into the weekend in contention at a major.

But I've kind of learned some coping methods to just stick to my process, stick to my game.

The nerves are good to feel and kind of embrace that a little bit more now. I don't know, anytime you're in contention, every event that we're playing on the PGA TOUR or certainly a major is a big one. I don't know, my nerves are similar in all situations. If I had a putt to win on Sunday or was a little closer to the lead coming up those last few holes, I might have a different answer, but there's definitely nerves there.

But pretty much any event I'd say there are some nerves that are similar.

**Q. Is it like shaky nerves? Is it like pit-of-your-stomach nerves?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, it's just a little bit harder to go through your process, to think clearly, I find. Just harder to be in control of your body or feel everything in your body. But just tried to take a couple deep breaths and just trust the game and sort of embrace the nervousness.

**Q. How would you describe that environment on Saturday when Rory was on that run of threes early in the round?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, it was pretty electric. It was pretty amazing playing with Rory on Saturday and a lot of energy was spent on our group. I did a good job of staying patient. He was 5-under through 5. On the 6th tee I was telling myself I'm going to get my opportunities and try and capitalize on them, and was able to make a few birdies around the turn.

But the atmosphere was crazy. It was a little more comfortable for me playing with Rory on Saturday and kind of having the energy on our group and sort of tried to feed off of that a little bit.

Sunday was a little bit different. All the energy was kind of right behind us and a little more distracting, I would say. Yeah, it was pretty amazing to watch as a golf fan. Rory is an amazing player. Getting off to that start Saturday was pretty cool to be a part of.

**Q. Bryson made it out that Rory didn't really speak to him during the course of the round. What about with you on Saturday?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I think we're all kind of just in -- there's a job we're trying to do. We certainly had a few chats. I've gotten to know Rory a little bit. Been paired together, played with him on Sunday at THE PLAYERS. I wouldn't say I'm super talkative, but we had a few conversations out there.



I don't know if that would have been different on Sunday when everything was on the line. But yeah, again, I'm happy to talk to my playing partners but happy to just kind of stay in my zone, as well.

**Q. Do you have any idea who's leading the TOUR in top-10 finishes this season?**

COREY CONNERS: I do not. I'm probably up there.

**Q. It would be you. What's been clicking?**

COREY CONNERS: I would say just a little more belief and trust in my game. I can't really pinpoint -- I've had some weeks that I've putted really well. That's certainly been a big bonus and helped me turn my mediocre rounds into good ones and kind of stay in some of the bigger events.

But compared to other years, parts of my game feel similarly. I've worked hard to refine things, and I think just not making mistakes and just being pretty steady I think has been a key for me.

Yeah, it's fun to have those top 10s.

**Q. At the Masters you mentioned your dad suggested you change to a certain type of putter. Do you listen to your dad on stuff like that often?**

COREY CONNERS: No, not really. He doesn't really say too much to me. But he's mentioned that for a while.

It wasn't necessarily because of something that he said that I ended up making the switch. But just before making the switch, when I was putting it through some tests at home, he was down there, and I showed him what I had in the bag, and I think he was excited for me.

Yeah, he's an avid golfer, but I wouldn't say he's an expert. But I think we have some of the -- he's always been a really good putter and he's used a center shafted putter and likes how it rolls. So yeah, I'll give him a little credit there.

**Q. Do you care about money?**

COREY CONNERS: About money? No, not really.

**Q. When did you stop? When you came here in '15 for your pro debut, you were probably --**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I would say my first year I was always curious about the check I was going to make. But

the last few years, not really. Regardless of the purse, I'm going to be here. I love this golf course, love this event. It's basically the case everywhere I tee it up. It's just kind of a nice bonus. I feel fortunate, but it doesn't -- yeah, the amount that I make doesn't change who I am or really my day-to-day life much.

**Q. If they took the prize money and shrunk it, would that change your outlook at all --**

COREY CONNERS: No.

**Q. -- as a professional golfer who does this for a living?**

COREY CONNERS: I don't think it really would, no. If the purse here was half of what it is, I would still be just as amped up and just as excited to be here and play. It's still a lot of money. If they started shrinking a lot of the purses, I think my mind would be concerned with the finances of the TOUR as a whole, but I know things are in a good spot. The golf is in a great spot and the TOUR is on a good trajectory. But the purse is not a big thing on my mind or something that I'm worried about.

**Q. Do you know what it is this week?**

COREY CONNERS: Do I know what it is this week? I'm not sure, no.

**Q. Kind of following up on what you were asked about continuing to refine your game and improve it, how important are majors to you? You've had four top 10s in the Masters. You've been top 10 in two of the last three. I think you finished 15th or better in all four majors. Is that a goal, and are you working on things specifically to gear toward inching closer in the majors?**

COREY CONNERS: Yeah, I'm always working hard, and it's certainly a dream to win a major. But I'm working hard to win any week on the PGA TOUR, any event that I play.

I wouldn't say my entire year is focused on trying to be at my absolute best for the majors. I'm trying to be at my best every week and just keep layering good event on good event and hopefully can kind of peak at those right times.

Yeah, I'm just excited every week pretty much. Certainly there's a little more emphasis on the majors. But I'd say how I prepare for most weeks and how I prepare for majors is pretty similar.

**Q. IGF announced recently about the addition of a mixed team format for LA 2028. What are your**

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## thoughts about teeing it up alongside the ladies?

COREY CONNERS: Really exciting. I think it's a huge step forward for golf. I've got to play with Brooke Henderson, Canadian LPGA player, at the Grant Thornton Invitational the last couple years, and it's really been a blast. I've certainly enjoyed my two Olympic experiences immensely.

But having something like that I think will add a little bit more excitement to the Olympics and to golf. The ladies are so impressive. It's fun to team up with them. Coming in a few years, that'll definitely be a goal of mine to be able to represent Canada again and be a part of that mixed team competition. I think it's really exciting and will be a lot of fun.

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