

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

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Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Brandt Snedeker

Keith Mitchell

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Brandt Snedeker and Keith Mitchell to the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. If you could start us off by sharing your excitement being back here in New Orleans.

KEITH MITCHELL: Best food city, so we got to start there. Second is playing with Brandt a couple of years back, we had a great start, and hopefully we can build on that. I think we finished top 5.

Brandt putted great. He's putting great again. I really like that. Hopefully he doesn't putt like me, and hopefully I don't drive it like him, and we'll be in good shape.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: This is such a cool city to be part of. Zurich does such a great job. This is such a fun event. We don't get to do stuff like this very often. So getting to play with a buddy here, Keith, and obviously we've known each other for a long time. A couple of guys from Tennessee.

I love watching him play. I had a great time here a couple of years ago with him when we played so good. Watching him hit the golf ball is so much fun to do. Watching somebody do what you can't do is really fun.

I love hitting it from where he drives it from. We're close enough to where we're not going to offend each other this week. We can't hurt each other's feelings, so we end up having a lot of fun.

Hopefully can go out there and play some good golf and have a chance on Sunday. That would be a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: You've had a couple of different partners over the past couple of years, but you guys did play together back in 2021. What kind of went into the decision to reunite this year?

KEITH MITCHELL: I was a substitute.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, he was my backup.

KEITH MITCHELL: I was his backup plan.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I mentioned it earlier in the year, and Keith was like, well, I don't think I'm going to play.

KEITH MITCHELL: No, he mentioned it earlier in the year. I said, I'm not playing with you because you're not playing any good.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, exactly. So I went and got Gary Woodland, and then Gary went and wins. I had some fun with him, because I knew when he won in Houston, his new schedule was going to be really compressed, especially with all his health stuff.

I'm, like, hey, man, you can't play a bunch in a row. I don't want you to do that. So I called Keith back. I'm like, hey, man, you're my B pick. Would you please come back and play with me? He happily said, yes.

KEITH MITCHELL: Yeah, because he played great at Valspar. He should have won the tournament. It was perfect timing.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: When you win -- this was about a month ago. I said, when you win, you can ditch me like Gary did, and I'll find somebody else. Unfortunately, neither one of us won since then, so we're stuck with each other this week.

THE MODERATOR: For your B pick, Keith already has three top-25 finishes this season. How would you describe the state of your game heading into this week?

KEITH MITCHELL: You know, it's definitely been a ball-striking year for me. I made a little putter change halfway through the season, and I am starting to putt a lot better. If I could somehow just take something from Brandt this week, it will be that. He's probably going to read all my putts and just tell me where to hit them, and I'm perfectly fine with that.

If that's the case, I think we're going to have a good week.



I wish he could putt for me every week. I think most tour players would say that. But for my individual game, as long as I can keep doing what I'm doing, lean on Brandt when I need him, because he's got more experience than anybody out here, especially around the greens, you know, and just kind of leaning on that and using that to my advantage the rest of the season, the rest of the career is big for me.

THE MODERATOR: Brandt, talk about your season so far. It was a little slow start, but started to pick up momentum at Valspar.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I've been playing really good for the last year. I just had some one-offs here and there. Some certain parts of my game weren't sharp.

Even this year I've been playing really well, but my wedge game has been terrible from my historical standards. Tampa was a good week for me when I made a putter change and really felt good with the flat stick. Been playing good since then. My wedge game has been subpar, so if I can get my wedge game back to where it is, with the way I'm putting and chipping it and swinging the best I have been in probably in ten years, eight years out here.

So I'm excited about it, and I'm really looking forward to the week. It's kind of nice going into a tournament knowing you're playing pretty well and your game is in pretty good form. A lot of the stress kind of leaves you, and you go out there and have fun.

THE MODERATOR: Brandt, it's a Presidents Cup year. Can you talk about some of the prep that's been going in five or six months out?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: A lot more than I thought. It's been eye-opening to say the least, but that's part of the process.

You want to make sure you do your legwork early on so you're not kind of scrambling last minute. Really excited about how the way the team is shaping up. Really excited about what Medina is looking like for the tournament. I've been kind of really instrumental, spent time with the guys on the build-out, how we want everything to look, how we want everything to go. Trying to dive in heavy into details now so that a month, two months out we're not scrambling and doing stuff.

Really excited about the makeup of the team. Really excited about what we have in front of us. I'm making a trip to Chicago next week to kind of do some more legwork and see what's going on.

So excited about the process in front of us. I think we've

got the right people in the right places for our team and excited about what that can look like here in the next two, three months.

Q. It seems that every team that comes in here and talks to media starts out laughing and joking. The air about the whole place is a lot lighter, at least in the beginning of the week. Is that the format? Is that the event being here in New Orleans? What brings everybody in here with a smile on their face?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think it's a combination. I think having a partner, which is something we don't normally do. Typically you're playing with a buddy of yours, so somebody you want to play golf with.

We're not shy about giving each other a needle out here, so I think having a partner where you have somebody you're comfortable with, can kind of give you a needle and have some fun with it and joke about how bad a shot they hit that day.

We played a practice round with J.T. Poston last week, who was his partner last year, and he told me how Keith missed a 1-foot putt on Sunday. So those kind of stories you love having and the history. This week gives you that opportunity, and we don't get that very often, so it's a lot of fun.

Q. Same thing for you?

KEITH MITCHELL: It's mainly -- you know, we play a lot of partner games on the practice rounds and giving each other a hard time. It's nice to be able to do that while you're competing together and with each other.

We know stories about each other, like Brandt said, but we also know the good side. So you can celebrate together, and then give each other a hard time together. I think that's probably -- outside of Presidents Cup, like Brandt is the Captain, this is the only time that we really get that camaraderie out here.

Q. Everybody who comes in here obviously talks about the team format and the uniqueness of the city. We don't hear players talk a lot about the golf course itself. Can you comment on how this course sets up for the format that you're going to be facing?

KEITH MITCHELL: I was going through last week actually, going through each club hitting into the par-4s on my own ball and then if Brandt was -- if I was hitting his drive. I had every club from lob wedge through 3-wood. That does not happen really any week on the PGA TOUR.

Usually I find, like, an outlier that I need to practice, maybe 120 to 160 this week, because there's a big emphasis on that. This week it's seriously every club evenly spread out throughout the day.

Some of that has to do with Brandt's drive versus my drive, but the point is it tests every single club in your bag, and that's really rare on the PGA TOUR.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think we're seeing kind of a Renaissance period for Pete Dye stuff out here. I think you saw it at THE PLAYERS this year. I think you see it at Hilton Head. I think you see these golf courses that Pete Dye had his hand in have aged really well.

Maybe they didn't get the fanfare they deserved when they first opened up, but as they get older, people realize kind of the genius behind his designs. I think this place is one of those plays. It does a great job of making you feel uncomfortable, but there's plenty of room to play. If you play it the right way, there's plenty of birdies to be had. But if you are a little bit off or something doesn't feel quite right, you can put yourself in some bad spots and make some big numbers.

That's what makes this course so great for this event is there are some tough tee shots out here where you can really sink your team real quick. You hit a ball in the water on par-3 or do something like that. There's a lot of pressure-packed shots out here, and as Keith said, it tests every part of your game.

It does a great job of making you feel uncomfortable, Pete Dye does, and a great job of making you hit the proper shots when he need to. I think that's why this golf course has aged really well and guys like coming here and playing. Now they understand the madness behind his design.

When you first get on them, you are, like, what is he doing here, I don't get this, this seems kind of quirky. After a few years, you start realizing what he was trying to accomplish, and now you appreciate the genius behind it.

Q. Putting has always been one of the strengths of your game. When you come on the greens that have this much grain to them, do you have to consciously think about that, and what's sort of the process? How would you, if it's something as a team, that you would either remind or just subtly coach into Keith as we go through this week?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think grain is a really difficult thing to kind of quantify. You see it. Keith and I grew up in Tennessee. We grew up on a lot of grain and

Bermuda grass, but it's one of those things it's more of a feel than, hey, if I see the green going left, it's going to affect the ball this much. You kind of have to have more of a feel. Like, hey, straighten up.

That takes practice and getting out on the greens and getting comfortable with them. It's one of those things, like, hey, if you see a putt is pretty straight and the green is going to the right, hey, man, let's play this thing inside left just because the grains might pull it a little bit.

So it's something we definitely talk about. It's something when you are reading them, you have to take into account. The biggest account is more into grain, down grain. Into the grain is going to be really slow. Down grain is going to be really fast. Those are the things you really pay attention to.

When you have cross-grain putts, relatively straight putts is something -- you know, you'll see guys scratch their heads a lot this week because if you get the ball in the right quadrants, there's lots of relatively flat putts that can do a little bit of both. So, you know, it's one of those weeks where if you are having a great feel and you are reading it right, you make a lot of putts, but if you're off a little bit, you are going to be hitting a lot of right-edge or left-edge putts and driving yourself crazy.

Q. Have you already talked about that he's going to come in and help you? I don't know if you were joking around --

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I am, yeah.

KEITH MITCHELL: Like Brandt said, I grew up on Bermuda, so this is definitely the most comfortable green surface for me. I think the hardest putts out here are the ones that look straight on the slope, but might have a couple of different grain changes here or there. That's definitely when he's going to be coming in.

Q. I asked this to Geoff yesterday. How do you balance out personally what you are trying to accomplish here, which is compete, play well with your teammate, and I imagine also taking a look around and seeing how guys are potentially competing in a team format. You mentioned there's been a lot going into Presidents Cup, maybe more than you were aware of. What is your week like this week, and how are you trying to balance those things together?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think it's been a great distraction from me. Normally I'm kind of living and dying by my golf game. I really care about if a lot obviously. It's been a great distraction to watch golf from a different point

of view, not just from how I compare to who is playing, but hey, this person is playing really good right now and really pay attention to that.

I've watched a ton of golf. I've texted a bunch of the guys, trying to figure out what's going on, how they're feeling, that kind of thing.

It's definitely taken my mind off of my game a little bit, but that's good. You know, I'd much rather win the Presidents Cup and not play great personally this year than --

KEITH MITCHELL: Except this week. Except this week.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Except this week, the other way around. I realize what I'm trying to get into. It's definitely been a distraction. It's definitely something you've got to deal with, but it's a good distraction for me in some senses because it's making me kind of really stay involved with how they're doing, how they're playing, and focus a little bit -- be a little bit less selfish for once in my career.

Q. Over the last seven or eight years analytics has become a much bigger part of professional golf. Team golf is no different. Geoff also mentioned the fact that this is an event where you can see chemistry start to develop just as a team, amongst players themselves. You've also got the analytics part. How do you intend to balance maybe what the numbers and the analytics people might tell you is something that should work or should be ideal but maybe what your eyes have seen from a chemistry standpoint, which is kind of hard to quantify?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think you can use stats and data as much as you want to, but at the end of the day, those things are all done in 10,000 round models. If you are doing stats over a course -- or doing 10,000 round miles for every stat they're using.

Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup, it's a three-day event. You're going to get a lot of outliers in a three-day event compared to the data shows it should be, so you have to use your common sense a little bit. These two guys might pair up great together on paper, but their personalities don't match. It's not going to be a good fit. I don't care what the paper says. This is not going to work.

You have to be able to use your common sense. So I think the hardest thing using stats and data these days is having that good blend of, hey, we want to make sure we're paying attention to what the data tells us and try to use it to our advantage, but we can't get lost in it. Like anything else, you get lost in anything, and so trying to have that -- marrying that common sense element with also how data

can help you.

Q. The folks at Zurich love having this tournament here. They take clients out. There's jazz fest, the golf, obviously all that kind of thing. The tournament date this year makes it a real challenge for a lot of the elite players, and that's why we're seeing, to some degree, the field that we're seeing here this year. From your perspective, in the ideal world, would you love to see an event like this later in the year or somewhere scheduled so that you could get more players at the top end who are likely going to be part of Presidents Cup or contending in Presidents Cup to get them here, or is it just one of those things where having it here is fine, it sort of works for what it needs to do?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Oh, man, if I had my perfect world being a Captain, yeah, absolutely, I would love to have it somewhere later in the summer where you can start pairing guys up together and seeing how they go. That's a perfect world that does not exist. I don't see that happening.

Ideally you'd love to have some kind of team event within the last two months leading up to the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup so you can kind of get a sense of, hey, let's put these two guys together and see how they go and see if it works or not.

Q. If Griffin and Novak are able to successfully defend, do they become that much more of a couples duo or a pairing that --

BRANDT SNEDEKER: There's been great pairings that you find in these things. You find out guys that play -- I can remember when Xander and Pat as an example or Patrick Reed and Jordan Spieth as an example. There's some reason, take the stats and everything else out, some guys just play great together.

When you start stacking up a record like they have here, it's hard to ignore. You realize these guys play great together. Obviously both great players that are playing great golf right now, which obviously helps, but you are always paying attention to those kind of things.

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