

Palmetto Championship at Congaree

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Ridgeland, South Carolina, USA

Congaree Golf Club

John Pak

Press Conference

JACK RYAN: We'll get started. We would like to welcome John Pak to the interview room here at the Palmetto Championship at Congaree. John's making his second start on the PGA TOUR with the first coming at the U.S. Open in the fall. John, if we could just get an opening comment from you making your professional debut on the PGA TOUR.

JOHN PAK: Yeah, I'm just a really excited to be here. Obviously I was fortunate to play in the U.S. Open last year, but I'm making my pro debut this week and I'm just really excited.

JACK RYAN: In your amateur career you've won a lot of collegiate awards as well as finishing at the top of the inaugural PGA TOUR University rankings. What have you learned over those last couple of years, stellar years for you at Florida State that's going to help ease the transition into your professional career.

JOHN PAK: Yeah, well, first off, I think staying at Florida State for four years was the best move I could have made. I learned so much. I think my game's really improved. I think Coach Jones really got me to a point where I think I'm ready to compete at the next level on the PGA TOUR.

JACK RYAN: Last question for me before we open it up. Just, low amateur at the U.S. Open. What was that experience like for you, your first test, I guess, against the best players in the world.

JOHN PAK: Yeah, that was an awesome experience. I went out with them because I was just trying to learn as much as I could and I feel like I really did. I was able to play with Thomas Pieters who was leading after nine holes, so it was nice to see some really awesome golf and it just shows what it takes to win at that level and you just, you got to play some really, really good golf.

JACK RYAN: We'll take questions, please.



Q. When you turned pro and coming out on TOUR, one of the sort of the big sticking points, if you will, is not knowing the golf courses, but do you feel like this week it's kind of leveling the playing field for you as well as Davis Thompson and Cole Hammer, just because really nobody knows this place?

JOHN PAK: Yeah, I actually talked to my coach about that. And I guess it levels the playing field a little bit, but these guys are all so good, they're going to adjust to the golf course so quickly, so I just got to go out there and play really well.

Q. Secondly, what did it mean to you to have Brooks Koepka kind of reach out and help you. You had to do a lot of flying around and stuff and he kind of helped you out there. What was that like?

JOHN PAK: That was awesome. It just shows that like Florida State, you really have a family when you go there, and for Brooks to do that is so awesome. And I've had the chance to meet him once and he's been awesome guy, really nice, and, yeah, it was just, it was a really cool experience to be able to fly private and get there Sunday morning and leave Sunday afternoon.

Q. Have you flown privately before or no?

JOHN PAK: Brooks actually flew us out to another tournament my freshman and sophomore year, so it's really cool.

Q. And then lastly, I'm assuming you've played a little bit of golf with Brooks and/or Daniel Berger or some of the other FSU alums who are out on TOUR. How has your game stacked up with theirs?

JOHN PAK: I actually haven't been able to play with any of them, so, yeah, hopefully in the near future I can get paired up with them.

JACK RYAN: Another question that I feel is asked a lot of the young guys making their professional debut is how much the success of some other of the young players quickly turning pro and whether they won or have success

quickly on the PGA TOUR, how much does that help you in your confidence as you embark on your professional career.

JOHN PAK: Yeah, it was a pretty cool experience because I was able to play with Colin Morikawa my sophomore year at regionals and two months later he won the one at Barracuda, I think, and I was competing against this guy not too long ago and he's out here winning. And, yeah, it definitely gives me confidence. It definitely shows that young guys, that we can do it too if we play our best.

Q. Going back to the idea of playing against players who are already professional players, who did you play with -- you played at Winged Foot, right, last year?

JOHN PAK: Yes.

Q. Who did you get to play with there and then who have you gotten to play with so far this week at Congaree?

JOHN PAK: So I played with Thomas Pieters and Jim Herman the first two rounds and I think Thomas Pieters was 4-under after nine, was leading the tournament. So that was a really cool experience. Yeah, I got here Sunday night and played Monday and I think because of the U.S. Open week and Monday qualifiers there was maybe like five people out here yesterday afternoon with me. So I wasn't actually able to play with anyone. I just played by myself and just saw the front nine.

Q. Do you have a caddie picked out?

JOHN PAK: Yeah, I do. He's just, he's a good friend of mine. He caddied for me at the U.S. Open. He wasn't a big fan of his job, so I was like, hey, how about you come work for me and loop it around the PGA TOUR with me, and he was, like, Done. And just quit his job. Now he's going to be looping it for me.

Q. What's his name and what was his job?

JOHN PAK: Billy Narut. He worked at Charles Schwab and not entirely sure what he did, but I think he would rather be watching me play golf than picking up phone calls.

Q. And you know him from FSU?

JOHN PAK: A little bit, yeah. I met him my freshman year at college and he dated a girl at Florida State and we just became -- like he's one of my best friends.

Q. And your parents are going to come down

watching or do you have any family down there watching?

JOHN PAK: My parents are coming tomorrow night and then my aunt and uncle as well. So my aunt and uncle have never seen me play golf, so I think they're really excited for it.

Q. Tell me your dad's name again?

JOHN PAK: Kenny Pak.

Q. And your mom?

JOHN PAK: Michelle.

Q. And he ran that grocery store, right, your dad?

JOHN PAK: He did. Yeah, he had two back when I was like maybe 10 years ago.

Q. He's retired now?

JOHN PAK: Yeah, he is.

Q. Well it will be a fun week for them.

JOHN PAK: Yeah, I think they're more excited about it than I am.

JACK RYAN: All right, John, those are all the questions we have. We appreciate your time and best of luck this week and throughout the rest of your professional career.

JOHN PAK: Thank you guys, appreciate it.

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