

Ascension Charity Classic

Thursday, September 7, 2023

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Norwood Hills Country Club

David Toms

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us for the third Ascension Charity Classic. You are a former champion. Being back in St. Louis, what does it mean to be back here and hopefully get another one?

DAVID TOMS: Obviously it's a special spot for me, winning the first one. I don't know if I snuck up on them that year or not. Nobody had seen the golf course, didn't know what expect. I just went out and played. I kind of made a run there on the back nine to be able to win.

I haven't been out on the golf course yet this year. I look forward to this afternoon, seeing what it's all about. It's great. I saw Nick Ragone a little while ago. First time I've seen him this week. We talked a little bit about the tournament. Obviously we got blessed with some good weather this week, which is nice. It should be a fun event.

Q. What does this tournament mean to the TOUR just from a charitable aspect, just the fan engagement overall?

DAVID TOMS: Well, first of all, I think it's a big event for this community. I know it's a big sports town, and the crowds have really supported this event since we started it.

All the players really enjoy this event. Old-style golf course, beautiful old clubhouse. People are very nice. Here we are in the middle of the country. Good time for sports this time of year with baseball getting close to playoffs, and college football, NFL starting. So a lot of people are paying attention to sports. Just to be a part of that mix...

I think this tournament is very popular obviously in the community. But everybody's positioning themselves for the playoffs, trying to move up to give themselves a chance in the Schwab Cup.

I look forward to this week.

Q. It's no secret your relationship with Sam Burns. How proud are you of him making the team?



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DAVID TOMS: Yeah, very excited for Sam. We texted right after. I kind of had a preview. I played with Strick for three days in Flint. We talked about it. He said, It looks good for Sam to get a pick. We went through all the scenarios and everything. Maybe I knew more than he did, so...

But no, I'm very happy for him. I'm excited for him to have his first experience at the Ryder Cup. Kind of jealous I'm not over there, a part of it myself.

I talked to my son yesterday. He was trying to figure out a way to get over there for it.

I'm like, Maybe you should just wait till Bethpage.

But no, it's an exciting time for Sam, for sure.

Q. What did you make of the picks?

DAVID TOMS: You know, I haven't really paid that much attention to it. I think there was one that was maybe a little controversial, the kid that's played really well. Obviously won on that golf course is the one that sticks out.

Really, I mean, it's just about how everybody performs anyway that week. Obviously he felt good about having a little bit more experience in there, guys that had been there before, it looks like.

I'm sure it will be a great competition.

Q. You played three Ryder Cups. What is your standout memory?

DAVID TOMS: I just remember the first one, trying to tee off at The Belfry on the 1st hole. I looked at my caddy, Scott. I'm like, I'm not sure I can tee the ball up, I was so nervous.

He said, I'll do it for you, but I'm pretty nervous myself.

I birdied the 1st hole at the Ryder Cup, my first Ryder Cup. That kind of settled the nerves. Went on to play pretty well that week.

Q. Winning here and playing a couple times, what



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have you learned about this golf course? What do you need to do well here?

DAVID TOMS: Well, I mean, it helps to get it in the fairway. The rough has been fairly penal. Not so much that you can't hit shots out of it, but it's hard to judge your distance. And it's a good old golf course where you need to stay below the hole. A lot of slope, back-to-front, on the greens. Above the hole is not a good spot.

It's just a good test. It's a lot like the golf courses that we all played our careers on, cut our teeth on growing up and everything.

I'm hoping that it will firm up a little bit. I heard the golf course is a little soft in the Pro-Am yesterday, which is surprising with the weather they've had. Hopefully it will firm up a little bit, play a little bit shorter, a lot like it did the first year.

Q. You had some steady finishes in your last three outings, three top 10s. What are you liking about your game right now?

DAVID TOMS: Overall consistency has been pretty good. The putter has been very consistent lately. Need to hit the driver a little bit better certainly to have a chance to win golf tournaments. I've been working on that. I'm hoping that pays off.

Q. A lot of changes in golf in general. We don't have to talk about the entire picture, but strictly for the Champions Tour, how do you see that impacting, whether it be positive or the growth...

DAVID TOMS: Well, I mean, I don't see why it's not a positive that golf has been in the media and been talked about, whether it's LIV stuff, whether it's the Ryder Cup pick controversy, whether it's Tiger coming out in a few years. A lot of different things.

As long as people are talking about it, I think it's good for golf and it's good for exposure for golf. I think we have a great product out here, a lot of good players. Seems like we have good finishes every week, especially with three rounds. It's really hard to distance yourself no matter how well you play. I think our product's in a pretty good shape right now.

Q. When you think about St. Louis in general, the BMW is coming here, The Presidents Cup, it's a golf hub. You mentioned it's a great sports town, but golf in particular seems to be growing drastically in St. Louis. What is the allure of this area?

DAVID TOMS: I mean, I think first of all you got to think about Bellerive. It's a great venue. I was just over that way last night for dinner. When I drove past it, it just looks like it's an important place, right? It looks like it has a place in golf.

Then you take a club here in Norwood Hills where we play this tournament, I think it's done a lot for this local community right here. Certainly the fans turn out and support it.

It shows that St. Louis is a good sports town, whether it's professional sports. You're positioned right in the middle of the country. There's a lot of highs on this area this time of year with the Cardinals, things like that.

For us, it's all about golf and it's all about this tournament. I think we do a really good job in this community supporting it, giving back to charity.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks.

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