

Cadillac Championship

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

Trump National Doral

Jhonattan Vegas

Press Conference



CADILLAC
CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Jhonattan Vegas to the interview room here at the 2026 Cadillac Championship. Jhonattan, if you could just open up with what it's like to be back in Miami.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Oh, my God, it's a lot of fun. Obviously as a Latin American player, playing in Miami it means a lot. It means that we're going to have a lot of support this week. Probably more than any other week of the year of the obviously feeling this heat, you know, and just kind of being even in this city, the vibe of this city. Obviously it feels a little bit like home. Different feelings that a regular week on the PGA TOUR, so a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Your younger brother Julio is a teaching professional here at Doral. Can you share some comments on your relationship and what it means to have him here this week.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, my younger brother, he's been working here at Doral for a few years now. I've actually spent a lot of time with him here at Doral. He's loving it. Obviously we got to experience a bunch of really fun things here in Miami. Obviously we're very close, we tend to play a lot, played a World Cup together, all of that type of stuff. So having him around is a big bonus this week because he spent a lot of time around this place so it's good to have that support.

THE MODERATOR: Two top-25 finishes so far this season. Talk a little bit about the state of your game.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It's a little bit up-and-down, to be honest. Obviously the game has been there through some stretches of the year. Obviously battling some of the injuries through the past few years hasn't really been a lot of fun. I did a few kind of shoulder procedures at the end of last year, which I feel like they're taking a little bit longer to get the right shoulder right. But I'm starting to see a lot of really good stuff, especially after a week off last week. Having this heat definitely helps a little bit. Hopefully to get the year started right here.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. We actually talked to your brother earlier before we came in here and he told us about that family tournament that you guys have every year, and that you were dealing with an injury last time. Talk about that tournament and what golf means to you as a family.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Oh, man, yeah. So golf is definitely, you know, a family thing, the thing that kind of connects everything for us. We have a tournament at the end of the year where it's three against three. My mom and my dad, obviously they lead one group. We play, usually play around 27 holes. We'll play nine holes in a three-man scramble, three-man alternate shot and singles. And obviously at the end of the tournament, whatever team wins kind of dictates what Christmas looks like, what everything looks like around the family for the rest of the year. So it's something fun that we do that just kind of keeps the family together.

Q. To follow on something you spoke about earlier, just to play here in Doral, being an area with thousands of Venezuelans living in the area, does it feel a little bit more like a home match for you, just to be in this area and have so much support?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, no, I mean like I said, this feels, you know, as close as it is to being in Venezuela for me. Obviously as we know, Miami has become a little Venezuela, to be honest, and have hundreds of friends that live here. Even weeks leading into this event just getting calls and text messages about, Hey, can we do dinner, do this, we're going to go see this. You know, it's definitely kind of like one of those I would say very exciting weeks of the year for me.

Q. Being Venezuelan and putting that on your shoulders, the golf in that country, it's a huge thing for you. How much more does it mean when you step out here with that in the back of your mind, as well as how hard is it to put that in the back of your mind?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know, I would say obviously



carrying the Venezuelan flag in golf, it means a lot. Obviously especially on the PGA TOUR. Nobody has ever done it before. I've been here for quite awhile now, so I feel old. But it's a massive pride to carry the flag. To be the only one from a country, which is a country not known for golf. All of my major league friends ask me every single time that they see me, why did I play golf, like it just doesn't add up. So in the sense, you know, that actually feels good that I play golf, that I'm the only one that has ever done it from the country. And everyone is kind of, it's good to get the good energy about people.

Q. You're obviously familiar with the current iteration of Doral, as well as when this event used to be played back in the 2010s, the WGC format. For those of us at home or the players in the field that haven't seen this course in 10 years plus, is there something that you think will surprise them this week or is it more or less the same test that you remember?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, no, I mean this course, probably the last time we were here, it has changed a ton. Changed a ton. I think it's a course that obviously is weather dependent. But I got a feeling it's going to play a lot harder than it's played in the past. Obviously they did a bunch of changes to the course and if the weather, the wind picks up and the weather gets right, it's going to be an incredible test. I was talking to one of the guys earlier and this is probably the first week on tour this year that we've played in Bermuda grass. So it's going to take a lot of adjusting around the greens, on the greens. It takes a little bit of extra work, especially being that first week of playing in Bermuda. Obviously this course here is very grainy, so you're going to see golf being played a little bit different this week.

Q. You've brought up Miami us, you've brought up Venezuela a ton. Here, people call it Doralzuela, because there's so much presence here. But when you talk about Latinos in the game of golf, you said there's not many Venezuelans that play, you're one of the only ones on tour from Venezuela. How can we grow the game, how can more Latinos embrace the game and be more accessible to the game of golf?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know what, obviously as Latin Americans we struggle. I think it's very difficult because usually golf in our countries are very privatized. Our countries are, unfortunately, not the most developed countries in the world, so it's harder for people to access some of these golf courses around Latin America. I feel extremely lucky that I got into the game in a very particular way, very unusual way to get into this game. But I got in it through the love of my dad which he learned as a kid by caddieing around a country club in Caracas. Then

somehow managing a clubhouse of a golf course and we had access to that and we got into the game. But most kids don't have that ability. Usually it's easier for them to play baseball or soccer or to play all the other sports which is kind of what you see a lot more Latin American players in that. But we got to push hard and we got to keep embracing some of these kids that are coming up that are really working hard to try to be here like us. We just got to keep fighting hard to promote that.

Q. You talk about the Blue Monster, difficult course, especially when the wind's blowing out here. But something interesting is not a lot of people that are playing this tournament this week have played this course. Do you feel like you maybe have a competitive advantage out here this week, what are your thoughts?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: No, I mean, golf is different nowadays. I don't think that advantage that you used to see of several years ago on tour, you just don't see that anymore. Everyone has data, everyone has all the information on how to, you know, play this course. Obviously there hasn't been a lot of golf played here, so it's hard to have a clear data on how to play. But I would say for me I think the biggest advantage this week is just going to be the crowds, people coming, and following that good energy for me this week is going to be massive, yeah.

Q. You said you have hundreds of friends in this area. I'm just impressed that you have hundreds of friends to begin with.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I do, yeah.

Q. You're 41 years old, so you've seen the PGA TOUR for close to a couple decades now. How would you describe the difference in the level of competition between when you started and where it is now?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Man, it's a massive difference. Massive. I call it massive. I remember my first few years here like on a day like today I would chase some of the older guys, I would chase Ernie, Vijay some of those guys that I would have affinity with, and try to play nine holes with them, and try to understand a little bit roughly on how to go around these courses and how to play and how to be a better professional or whatever you want to talk about. Especially on week-to-week basis, how to be better that week, how to prepare better for that week.

Nowadays it seems that everyone, I don't care if you played it or not, you're a lot more prepared. You know how to attack every single hole, every single pin position. You have so much more information on a daily basis, where before it used to take you even years, even two, three go

arounds to get really good knowledge about the courses. So competition is just so much harder now because of that.

You don't have to play a practice round to know exactly how to play a golf course. Obviously still have to execute, which everyone seems to do that really well here on the PGA TOUR, but usually the difference comes down to preparing. Preparing and preparing right, and it seems that everyone is very well prepared, that's kind of why the margins are so much tighter now days.

Q. Your brother, what does it mean to see that he's been able to forge his own path in the golf world and would you have ever believed two little kids, that two brothers from Venezuela would be able to come back on this stage?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know, I think like I said, I think the fortunate stuff for us, right, is that we have a family, we have a set of parents that love the game, that really taught us the love for the game. And that's our biggest asset. Even me at 41 years old being on the PGA TOUR I still love it here. I mean every single day we come with that same love that I have for the game when I was a kid.

So seeing him develop, it doesn't really surprise me because I know how much he loves this game too. Obviously he couldn't figure out the whole playing part of it as good, but he's loving teaching and now and at an early age for a coach here and he seems to be doing some incredible work. So obviously very proud of him and I'm sure he'll do some great things in this sport.

Q. I was talking to Julio earlier today as well and I was asking about your mentor, Franci and he said that the part that he sees in you that related to Franci is the joy that you bring to the course every day. So I was wondering how did Franci instill that into you?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, no, so obviously I lost my long-term coach earlier this year, and I probably spent about 30 years with him. The same thing, I mean, nobody really enjoyed or had more fun on a golf course like he did. So I would say one of the things that he really taught me and engraved if me was you have to have that same passion, that same love for the game. Obviously it's kind of like anything we do in life, but if you have that there won't be a bad day on a golf course. Even a rough day, you can still get up the next day with a lot of cheer in you and ready to fight for another day. He was a big part of it and I'm who I am because of him.

Q. Seeing Julio now being an instructor as well, do you see anything in him related to Franci?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, I mean he, the same thing.

He worked with him for many, many, many years, and a lot of the things that he knows and the way he teaches has a big influence on how our coach Franci was. So like I said, I think he's going to carry that, his legacy, and I guarantee you he's going to do some great things in golf teaching.

Q. Talk about how difficult the 18th hole is tee to green and kind of what your strategy is for this week for that hole.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, if I'm not mistaken, you know, the 18th here was the hardest tee shot on the PGA TOUR when we were here, so many balls in the water. Obviously they have lengthened that hole even longer. They didn't make it any wider, so I don't think it's going to be any easier. At the end of the day I think it's going to be wind dependent on that hole. Usually you have a lot of wind right-to-left, which leads to the water. So at the end of the day I guarantee that hole's going to play way over par. At least in the, you know, 4.5 or something like that. So it's a hole that you know if you make bogey you're not going to kill yourself. Obviously you can make a massive number on that hole. So you have to attack that hole very conservatively. You just can't let that hole beat you, or be your week. So you have to attack that probably very conservative and try to execute the best four shots that you can on that hole.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you for the time. Good luck this week.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Thank you, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

