

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Friday, June 28, 2024  
Newport, Rhode Island, USA  
Newport Country Club

## Terry Francona

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome U.S. Senior Open honorary chair, Terry Francona here to the interview room at Newport Country Club. Terry, you were here last month at media day and now the championship is here. How does it feel to be involved here at Newport?

TERRY FRANCONA: At this point in my life I feel like America's guest. I'm going everywhere I've never gone in my life. But being the avid golfer I am, this is -- and in the area that it is and all the history with the course and Newport -- it's pretty cool.

#### Q. Being a golfer as you said, you played last month --

TERRY FRANCONA: I actually think that back. That might be a wannabe golfer. That might be a little bit disrespectful to the golfers.

#### Q. You played here last month. What were your impressions of the course?

TERRY FRANCONA: I was telling Joe McDonald, I was kind of digging myself. I think birdie, par, par, and then turned into the wind. Whoa, I kind of fell apart. It was awesome though.

#### Q. Have you heard of the buzz here today about the back-to-back...

TERRY FRANCONA: Yeah, first thing I heard. I mean, guy better go buy a lottery ticket. How about that?

#### Q. How do you fare on those holes?

TERRY FRANCONA: I used a driver on one of them because the wind was blowing so hard, so obviously not well.

#### Q. How did it come about that you were made honorary chairman of this event?



TERRY FRANCONA: I had just gotten out of the hospital. That was like my thing. I used to go to the hospital just because I enjoyed it after every year.

Joe McDonald reached out to me and asked if I would be interested. I think it was a ten second text. It's like, are you kidding me, if I'm not doing anything I'm there. It was easy.

#### Q. What are your duties here this week?

TERRY FRANCONA: This is it. (Laughter.) I mean, from here, I'm going to try to how, do you say it, not steal a cart, get a cart and go watch Billy Andrade play some golf. I don't know if I'm supposed to be rooting for people this week, but Billy and I have become really good friends and his caddie Zig and his son Zach led Brian in hitting.

And through those guys, in Tuscon bunch of the guys came out and we had a cookout one night. We had Brett Quigley and some of the guys. Been kind of pretty cool.

#### Q. How do you make the connection with Billy?

TERRY FRANCONA: Ooh, man, about eight, nine years ago there was a tournament in Orlando, I think it was called Diamond Resorts. This is back when the seniors played with guys like me. I got paired with Billy the first day and we were walking down the first fairway and I grabbed Billy, hey, look, this is what you do for a living. I said if I get in your way, I said -- and he looked at me. He goes, stop. We're going to have fun.

It was like just so much fun. Through him, like I said, I got to meet some of the other guys. It's so enjoyable watching what they do because they get it. Like they been through the rigors of the PGA TOUR. I like the way they embrace people and what they're doing.

They play the pro-ams ahead of time and are not afraid to show their personality. It's really, really good.

#### Q. 20th anniversary of the 2014. So many great memories from that season, especially the post season. When you think about that year, that team, is there one thing that jumps to the top of the list?

TERRY FRANCONA: Yeah, and unfortunately it's Wake



and Stacy. There are so many great memories. I mean, you wouldn't have time to listen to them all.

When we got together and almost to a person, one of the things out of everybody's mouth was Wake and Stacy, and for good reason.

I hope that as time passes and it's not as raw, we can celebrate because there is so much to celebrate about what Wake did. Like not just on the field, but so much more off the field. I hope we can celebrate it.

**Q. Just mentioning Wake, Billy was wearing a 49 hat during practice the other day. Typical for him. You talked about conversations you've had with him about golf. We all know his background with Major League Baseball. What kind of conversations do you guys have about Red Sox?**

TERRY FRANCONA: Just like normal friends. Billy would always, like when I was working in Goodyear, spring training, when they play in Tucson a bunch of them would pile in a car and come and hang in the dugout for half a game and then take off and go to the next place.

I mean, Billy, there is a reason people gravitate towards him. They want to have him -- like in Major League Baseball because he treats people like you're supposed to. Makes you feel good. Like to just -- he's easy to root for.

**Q. Billy was in here on Wednesday talking about how much love he has for you and now through almost half the second round he's tied for the lead.**

TERRY FRANCONA: I know.

**Q. What would it mean to see him in contention on the weekend, but possibly win?**

TERRY FRANCONA: Joe and I were standing on 9 green for about 45 minutes watching guys come in. And I said to him, if somehow there is a little justice in this world, Billy will be in the final group on the last day.

I know how much it would mean to Billy, but I am guessing it would be just about as much to the people in this area. That would be really cool.

I want to go see him, but the way he's playing right now I'm a little nervous to go. If I hits the ball in the rough, I want it on him, not me.

**Q. Out of all the playoff runs that you've had in your managerial career, which one is your favorite and why?**

TERRY FRANCONA: You know, it's hard to say something is your favorite because I preach so much about staying in the moment and I believe it. But the four days, the four games against Yankees when we were down in '03, those are probably the four funnest baseball days of my entire life.

The good part was I didn't wait until it was over so say, oh, I loved that. I enjoyed every minute of it. Probably was a little bit naive, the odds that were against us, but that's pretty special.

**Q. Can you talk about the differences and the similarities that you have seen between the sport of golf and baseball?**

TERRY FRANCONA: The one thing, I laugh so hard and I give Billy a lot of -- when they go to hit everybody puts up their hand. I said, Billy, I will do better if somebody is screaming at me. I am so used to that. I give him crap about it.

But I'm amazed, because we all hit one good shot and we're there. These guys go every week to different conditions, rain, sun, wind, different grass, and they maneuver -- I have one shot. It goes this way.

It's going to go that way regardless. They bend it both ways, they just -- their mental toughness on the course. I know how I feel when I get double bogey. I can't imagine, they reel it back in and there they do.

Big, big fan. I watch a lot. I was telling Joe, and I don't think he's here, but Steve Allen from Australia, I played with him in Los Colinas. Just watching him, his swing was so pure and there was just nothing wrong with it.

He was so nice. Like just it's easy to become a fan of some of these guys.

**Q. How proud are you and what type of satisfaction does to bring when you have a former play like Alex Cora have success with the Red Sox?**

TERRY FRANCONA: The one thing -- you try not to have the record you have define you as a person. It kind of makes you crazy.

But I'm proud of Alex, like the leader and he turned into. He's always been like that. People ask me all the time, did you know he was going to be a manager? He had all the qualities, but when guys are playing they're trying to help you win, trying to survive in some cases, make sure they can stay on the team.

So you don't really think about that stuff. But he had a big hand in helping Pedroia. Dustin came up and PD's first six weeks wasn't very good. Alex was hitting about 350 but he understood that PD was the future.

Sometimes you will get a veteran guy that tries to even the playing field, and he went out of his way to make it easy for Dustin. I think if you asked Pedroia, he would say the same thing.

**Q. Since we are asking baseball questions, let's turn to Cleveland. First place and playing well. I think I told you earlier that Brendon hit a game-winning homerun earlier this year and credit you for the culture of the current team.**

TERRY FRANCONA: That's nice of him. Now since they have a much-improved manager they are playing great. I mean, I'm so proud. Sometimes if you get fired or if you leave under not-so-great circumstances and then the team takes off, that can be -- we're all human.

But I have so many close friends there and I left on my own volition and I told them, about the middle of August, my two bosses, Chris and Mike, guys, you've been so good to me. Go find the next manager and enjoy it.

Don't tiptoe around me. You guys have been great to me. They got a good manager. They're playing really, really well. I'm proud. I mean, I'm still a consultant for them. Not quite sure what I'm consulting, but I'm really proud.

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