



GENESIS OPEN

**MEDIA DAY**

January 23, 2017

---

**MIKE ANTOLINI:** Good morning and welcome to Media Day for the 2017 Genesis Open. My name is Mike Antolini and I'm the tournament director and vice president of championships for the Tiger Woods Foundation. Thank you all for joining us today at the iconic Riviera Country Club and a special thanks to the membership here at Riviera as well as Megan Watanabe, Dawn Emory, and the entire team for their hospitality not only today but throughout the year.

As many are aware, we are coming off a banner year with the Tiger Woods Foundation celebrating our 20th anniversary in 2016. One of the many highlights was TGR Live being named as the event manager for this historic tournament and we couldn't be prouder to help usher in the next era of tournament golf here at Riviera along with our new title sponsor, Genesis.

The Genesis Open benefits the Tiger Woods Foundation, which is headquartered in southern California. We are excited to deepen our impact in the local community through this tournament and advance our mission of championing break-through transformations for underserved youth through education.

I'd like to acknowledge a few special guests representing the Tiger Woods Foundation here with us today. President and CEO Rick Singer and three Los Angeles-based Earl Woods Scholars, Kevin Nguyen, Anita Chheang and Alicia Frausto. Thank you for joining us and making us proud.

Also making us proud is our volunteer core of over 1,000 dedicated individuals who devote their time and energy to the success of this tournament, some of whom have been volunteering their time for days. Here with us today representing our volunteer program somewhere out there are media chairman Don Heinbuck and our ambassador chairman Brandon Augustus. We thank you on behalf of all of your fellow chairmen for your support throughout the year. We are still accepting applications to join our volunteer team and you can find more information at [GenesisOpen.com](http://GenesisOpen.com).

We're also grateful for the support of our Legends Club members who serve as ambassadors for the tournament in the business and civic communities here locally. I know some are with us today and we appreciate your attendance and support. Our tournament website and social handles @GenesisOpen have information on tickets, parking, transportation options, and general guest information, and we appreciate the tremendous support we've received from the leadership and residents locally, specifically here in Pacific Palisades and Santa Monica. The tournament planning is taking shape and we feel that we

have a great plan to accompany the guests who will come here to Riviera. Tickets are selling fast and I encourage all to visit our website and join us next month.

One option we're particularly excited for is our clubhouse ticket, which provides access to the beautiful Grand and Crystal Ballrooms here at Riviera. We're looking forward to opening up these doors of this historic venue which will truly be a treat for our guests. We're proud to say that we host a PGA Tour event at Riviera. The world's best players rank it annually amongst the top stops on the PGA Tour. Here to say a few words on behalf of the Riviera Country Club, please welcome corporate officer Michael Yamaki.

**MICHAEL YAMAKI:** First of all, we are very excited to have Genesis here, Erwin, I can't wait to drive the car. It's beautiful. You saw the car out there, it's incredible. It's got everything you would want in it. So thank you for being our title sponsor.

Second, Tiger, it's good to have you back, man. It's been about 25 years, right, 25 years when you first got your first exemption here. For all of you that are local here, you remember Tiger as an amateur. For all of those that aren't, I've got to tell you this: If you were playing poker, Tiger always started off every amateur tournament in those days with pocket aces. I mean, Tiger dominated. When you say dominated here in the amateur ranks, he dominated. It's exciting.

This year we'll also be hosting the U.S. Amateur, which Tiger is one, but what I'm most proud about, and Jim Hill over there, Jim remembers when we sent Tiger and all of them, you were probably 14 then, to France in a Ryder Cup. Jim Hill was part of that group that we did this with.

But what I remember the most is when you look in your media package and you see all the educational programs that the Tiger Woods Foundation is doing, I remember a 14-year-old Tiger Woods whose mom would not let him putt or not let him go to the driving range unless he did that homework. Remember that, Tiger? It was, Tiger, did you get your homework done? Yeah, Mom, I did it. Okay, half an hour.

**TIGER WOODS:** She's still like that.

**MICHAEL YAMAKI:** So I want to thank. I want to thank Tiger for being here, he's our hometown hero, and, Tiger, you've got to win it here.

**MIKE ANTOLINI:** Thank you, Michael. And thanks for sharing those great stories. Helping us usher in the next chapter of tournament golf here at Riviera is our title sponsor, Genesis. We have had the distinct pleasure of working with the Genesis team over the past year and their commitment to bringing a fresh perspective on this historic tournament has been impressive. Here to share some exciting news surrounding this year's tournament, please welcome general manager of Genesis in the United States, Erwin Raphael.

**ERWIN RAPHAEL:** Thank you, Mike. It really is an honor to be here today and to start our

first year as the title sponsor of this amazing event. Genesis is a global luxury brand, one that competes with the world's best. We're taking a unique perspective at luxury. Everything that we do, everything, is designed to honor and respect those who drive our vehicles and the people we interact with. Whether it's our complimentary valet service that allows our drivers to go on with their everyday lives while we take care of their vehicles, or putting the most advanced suite of advanced safety equipment in all of our cars, or frankly our relationships with the members of this amazing country club and the guests at the Genesis Open. Genesis is on a mission, and our mission is to deliver an experience that not only surpasses expectations but also makes a positive difference.

Golf, and indeed this particular tournament here at Riviera Country Club, is built on a foundation of honor and responsibility and it's why we do what we do. There's a strong alignment between our brand and the Genesis Open. It gives us great pleasure to have this opportunity to reach out to our fans and our luxury car buyers in this important LA market. The Genesis Open, as you know, is one of the most prominent events on the PGA Tour. It's played by some of the world's best players. It is ranked annually by the players as one of the best courses right here at the Riviera Country Club, and it features one of the strongest fields of the year. We've teamed up with TGR Live and the Tiger Woods Foundation to deliver on the promise of giving golf fans a premium experience. And we're humbled to have Tiger Woods, the greatest golfer of all time, serve as the tournament host today.

One of the things that we like most about association with the PGA Tour is a commitment to giving back. The Genesis Open is committed to supporting the arts and education, in particular of underserved youth. On site during the tournament week we'll be showcasing our G90 and G80 luxury sedans -- the G90 is outside today --and providing ways for the players and guests to interact with our product as well as with our brands. We have a lot of first -- we have a first-class fan lounge on the 14th hole providing seating and captivating moments for spectators. There will also be a Genesis putting experience giving fans the opportunity to have their putting stroke analyzed by PGA professionals. We'll also have unique hole-in-one opportunities on both the 14th and 16th hole where the winner of the hole-in-one will receive a new G90. But this year we're doing something special, and this year not only will the winner get a new car, but so will the caddie.

So we're very much looking forward to this tournament and we're very much looking forward to the interaction with you and with all of the attendees at the tournament. Thank you very much.

**MIKE ANTOLINI:** Thank you, Erwin. Your commitment to this tournament means a lot. We look forward to a fun ride with you.

About a month ago we got the exciting news that our tournament host was committed to this year's Genesis Open. Before we hear from Tiger, I'm happy to share that 15 of the top 30 players in the world have also committed, including defending champion Bubba Watson, World No. 3 in reigning PGA Tour Player of the Year Dustin Johnson; two-time major winner and fifth ranked Jordan Spieth, who helped the University of Texas win a NCAA team

championship here in 2012; No. 6 ranked Hideki Matsuyama, who has won four of his last eight starts worldwide; last year's runner-up and seventh ranked Adam Scott; arguably the hottest player in the world right now, Justin Thomas, who started the year with back-to-back wins in Hawaii to climb atop the Fed Ex Cup standings; 2016 Rio Olympics gold medalist and former U.S. Open champ Justin Rose; No. 16th ranked Paul Casey; Olympic bronze medalist Matt Kuchar; World Golf Hall of Famer and two-time champ here, Phil Mickelson; 2016 PGA Championship winner Jimmy Walker, former Masters champ Charl Schwartzel; U.S. Ryder Cup teammates Brooks Koepka, Brandt Snedeker, and J.B. Holmes, along with the next team U.S. Ryder Cup captain Jim Furyk, and Hall of Famers Ernie Els and Vijay Singh. These are just a few of the players who would make up this star-studded field in a few weeks.

Also playing the sponsors exemptions will be Belgium's Thomas Pieters, who will be making his first PGA Tour start since leading the European Ryder Cup team with a record of 4 & 1 while setting the rookie points record for the European team as well. Pieters, of course, knows Riviera well, having won the 2012 individual NCAA Championship here. The remaining exemptions will be announced at a later date.

However, today I am proud to share that we will be continuing a tradition that this tournament started nearly a decade ago by providing an opportunity for a golfer who represents the advancement in diversity in the game to compete. We will be formally issuing what will be called the Charlie Sifford Memorial Exemption to a deserving player in the coming weeks.

Now, the stars of the golfing world are coming to Riviera and there's a ton of excitement around the return of our next speaker. Here to say a few words, please welcome the 79-time PGA Tour winner, 14-time major champion, founder of the Tiger Woods Foundation, and tournament host of the Genesis Open, Tiger Woods.

**TIGER WOODS:** Thanks, Mike. Michael, Erwin, Genesis, Riviera, it is truly an honor to be back here and to come back to southern California again and to basically where I started playing professional golf, and to come back full circle and now to have an opportunity to give back and have an ability to run this event, my foundation is truly honored. Truly a special moment for us to come back to southern California to have three Earl Woods Scholars here -- Kevin, Anita and Alicia, to have them be here as an example of what we're trying to do for all our youth. But on top of that, so important to us is that we are now coming back here to southern California again where it all started.

For me personally, I'll never forget that tee shot I hit when I was 16 years old because I've never felt a golf club that heavy in my life. And now to come back here some 25 years later, to come full circle and actually run this event is truly a very important and special moment in my life. So thank you very much for coming and we'll open it up.

**MIKE ANTOLINI:** Thank you, Tiger. We will now open the floor to questions from the media. I know we have a lot of guests here today but media members, please if you would

raise your hand, we have a few microphones.

Jim, if you could start with your name and your media outlet so the group can hear, that would be great.

**Q. Tiger, welcome back home, buddy, it's good to see you. A lot of people wondered what took you so long before you came back here to play as well as what is the state of your game right now that you're on the comeback?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I've always loved playing Riv. I've just never played it well, so that's the only reason. I love playing here, I've played here as a junior, as an amateur, even as a professional and I only had that one opportunity to tie Ernie Els and on the last hole and I hit it in a beverage tent out there on 18. But this is a very special place, and to come back here, I'm really looking forward to it.

As far as the state of my game, I'm excited about playing this week. I feel like I'm playing well. I just needed to get some tournament rounds under my belt. I haven't -- played one tournament in the last what, 18 months, 16 months. So just need some tournament golf and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Q. Tiger, you touched on a little bit in your opening, but 25 years later, which memories from that week still resonate with you now?**

**TIGER WOODS:** You know, looking back on it, as I said, I've never been -- I felt fine on that first tee. I'm nervous, I'm always nervous before a round before I tee it up. But as I took the club back, I teed it up fine, but as I took the club back I've never felt a club weigh so much. I've never felt nerves like that. I smoked it right down the middle of the fairway with my 3-wood, knocked it on the green, made a birdie. This is great, this is how you want to start off your PGA Tour career. Next hole I snap hooked it right against the fence. Okay, that's not how you want to continue on the PGA Tour.

One of the things I look back on that week, you know, I believe I shot a 72 or 75. I thought I played fairly well and I probably could have gotten maybe two or three shots better out of my round per day, but I was 17 back of Davis. I mean, I still would have gotten smoked. So I realized I have so far to go and I'm not that good. I'm good in high school golf and good in junior golf, but to compete against these guys out here, there's no chance. I've got to get a lot better. And 25 years later, here we are.

**Q. Tiger, can you tell us how much have you played since the Hero practice wise and rounds wise?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Steve, I've played a lot. I've been playing probably four or five times a week at home, played over the holidays and down the Bahamas. I've had a really nice time preparing for this event and really looking forward to it.

**Q. And your level of concern playing four tournaments in five weeks with all that travel to the Middle East and cross country?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, that is a concern, there's no doubt about it. But I am always looking forward to it. I've sat out long enough here. I've got my body in a pretty good state where I feel like I can handle that workload. But I still got to go out there and do it and still got to experience it. That's obviously a lot of golf for being on the sideline for so long.

**Q. Happy New Year. Since we spoke to you in the Bahamas, how many clubs in your bag have you changed or have you still got that same set of clubs?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Let's see, I've changed one club.

**Q. Which one is that?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Just my 3-wood.

**Q. Have you still got that club in the bag that you found in the shed at the Bahamas?**

**TIGER WOODS:** That's the one I replaced.

**Q. Can I ask you one other question. You spoke about your nerves here when you first played as a pro. What's your nerves going to be like when you get to Torrey Pines?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Trust me, I'm always nervous when I play because that means I care. I'm looking forward to it though, looking forward to getting out and competing with those guys. I hope the weather holds out so we can get some holes in, but overall I'm just very excited about getting started on the season. I've missed playing. I've missed competing and I'm coming back to one of my favorite venues and looking forward to it. Then on top of that, to have an opportunity to play at Riviera again and host this event, it's turning out to be a pretty good start to the year.

**Q. Tiger, what's your level of confidence I suppose in your health that you're willing to tee it up four times in five weeks right out of the box here after such a long layoff?**

**TIGER WOODS:** You know, I feel good about it. I just need to get out there and do it and see what happens. I feel like I'm strong enough to be able to handle the workload, but as I said to Steve, I've still got to go out there and do it. So feeling good about it and doing it are two totally different things.

**Q. Tiger, 20 years ago was when you kind of took over, won The Masters, had that great tournament at La Costa and many other things. When you look back at an eclipse of those days, that Tiger Woods, what comes to mind?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I was skinny. Yeah, I look like a 1-iron. So I didn't weigh very much back in those days, but I had a lot of speed. I mean, yeah, looking back on those days, to be able to at the time -- when I first played here I was transitioning out of persimmon. Even when I played here in the LA Open I was maybe only a few months out of hitting a persimmon, just put this new metal wood in in the bag. So that kind of shows you kind of where the state of the game is then versus now.

**Q. Tiger, question about the tournament operation, things like the Sifford exemption. How much do you get involved in that? Would you get involved in helping pick the person who gets exempt, or in this first year do you kind of step back and see how things unfold and then give your thoughts?**

**TIGER WOODS:** No, I'm part of all of it. I've been involved with running golf tournaments and my foundation for a very long time, since '99. So we've been doing it a very long time. So part of the operations and my staff, I'm very close with them, I trust them implicitly. But obviously I have my finger on some of the things that I want to have happen and how we can make this experience here at Riviera and with Genesis, how we can make it better for not only the players but for all the people that come out and are part of this event.

**Q. Can I ask you your thoughts on the current World No. 1 Jason Day's game and what it's going to take to catch up with him in your 2017 comeback?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, Jason is playing obviously very well and consistently. He's just now getting back to playing again, he took a little time off. And what he did last year was awesome. I mean, he played all the big events well. And he's been looking forward to and planning and trying to get to this level and state of his game and he has. And now he's just got to make fine improvements and continue it. I believe he's 29 right now and he's in good shape going into his 30s and has an understanding of what he needs to do not only to win golf tournaments but to win major championships and to be consistent.

**Q. Tiger, can you describe what it feels like to have the putter back in the bag that you have had so much success with over the years?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, well, it felt good there at the Hero in the Bahamas. I made a few putts there, made a few birdies and, yeah, you can hit the ball close but you've still got to hole the putts. I made quite a few putts that week. Over the years, I mean, Scotty has probably built me over a hundred putters trying to replicate this one. It just doesn't. For some reason this one just stands out. I think it's -- I mean, Bob Charles putted with his putter for 50 years, that Bulls Eye. Mark McNulty putted the same thing with his Bulls Eye forever, Jack with his George Low. I mean, for some reason you can find other putters, you may put it on the side or penalty box for a little bit, but for some reason it just keeps coming back.

**Q. Tiger, you won at Torrey seven or eight times. How much of a factor was your comfort level there in the decision to return to tournament golf this week?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Eight times. And one as a junior, so it's technically nine, so I like that place. I've enjoyed playing Torrey. I've played -- that was the first golf tournament, PGA tournament I went to was the old Andy Williams, so got exposed to professional golf there. And for me to have the success there in Southern Cal down at Torrey and then win a U.S. Open there, for some reason it just fits my eye.

**Q. I know you've played at least one time with President Trump. Could you assess his golf game? What are his strengths? He is a low handicapper apparently, but would he have any areas to work on?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I tell you what, for a person who is 70 years old, he hits it hard. People don't realize he's that old and he can rip it and hit it as far as he does. Keeps himself in pretty good shape and pretty good health and has an inordinate amount amount of energy. When we played we walked all 18, had a great time. At the time I think we only had 10 security carts; I think it might be increased now. But we had a great time and we had a good time playing and it was a perfect day weather wise, too, on top of that.

**Q. Could he break 80 on Riviera?**

**TIGER WOODS:** He'd have to hole a few putts. I tell you what, today's conditions, no. It's a little wet out there.

**Q. Tiger, I know you've announced a few of your schedule. At what point are you thinking about Augusta?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Now.

**Q. When will you make that decision?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Now. I've been thinking about it. You know, once the season ends typically in the fall I start thinking about what I need to do to get ready for Augusta. Been that way for 20 years. So whether it's equipment or it's swing or whatever it is, in the back of my head I'm getting ready for Augusta.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**TIGER WOODS:** I would love to play. I would love to win. I've won it four times and hopefully I can add a fifth. As I said, I'm hoping to get everything right, so yes. I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. After your surgeries and during your rehabilitation, did you go through much of an emotional roller coaster and wonder at any point whether your body was going to be able to withstand the pressures of regular playing?**



**TIGER WOODS:** Absolutely. I've gone through some pretty tough lows going through my procedures on my back, and there were points in time when I didn't know if I could ever swing a golf club again, play with my kids, do all the activities. You know, there were some pretty tough times and worked through it, and to have also the good days and now to where I can compete again, you know, I still have to go through a lot to -- for the rest of my life because of the procedures, but I'm able to get back out here and play.

**Q. Tiger, when you come to a tournament like this, are you pretty much bound to the house or the hotel that you stay in or do you get a chance to get out?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I'm usually pretty focused on winning a golf tournament. Yeah, we'll go out to dinner with my buddies and stuff like that, whether it's fellow Tour pros or whether it's here in my hometown, yeah.

**Q. Tiger, how does it feel to be back here in LA? What do you miss about Southern California?**

**TIGER WOODS:** You know, I miss just the SoCal attitude, you know. I don't know what it is, but whether it's I miss being out here surfing, miss the whole skateboarding thing, just the whole beach thing. It's different being on the East Coast now. I've lived there for a very long time, but my roots are here in Southern Cal. I tell you one thing, that Pacific Ocean is colder. I'm used to that warm water over there in the Gulf, the gulfstream coming up there, so I don't know if I could get out in the water like I used to.

**Q. Obviously the tournament has amazing benefits for your foundation, for the youth in your foundation, but you're also opening it up to youth in LA and LA residents. Can you talk a little bit about the importance of that?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, I think coming back here and obviously we have a learning center here, we have our STEM programs, they originate from here. So to have our golf tournament come back to Southern California, we used to have one at Sherwood, but now to have Genesis and Riviera, this is, as I said, where it all started for me. And to come back here and play it, run it, but also all the programs that benefit from this event are huge for us because we're trying to help not just thousands of kids, hundreds of thousands of kids, which we already have, but also millions, reach millions. We can't do that unless we have events like this and sponsors like Genesis and tournament courses like Riviera and the players coming that are committed. We wouldn't have the ability to affect millions of kids' lives if we don't have the commitment.

**Q. Tiger, in the Bahamas after all you've been through you seemed to manage your expectations a good bit there. Do you still do that now with this stretch coming up or are they ratcheted up a little bit? How do you approach this even when it's only been one tournament in all that time?**

**TIGER WOODS:** It's to keep building and keep progressing and keep getting used to

playing tournament golf again. I think that's the thing, you play with your buddies at home, which I have done a lot, but it's different. It's different being out here at a tour level and playing against these guys and getting used to that again. Again, the flow of playing tournament golf, I've been away from it for a very long time and getting back into the rhythm and flow of competing. I was pretty excited, as I said to you guys down there at the Hero, how fast I found the flow of the round, you know, by the second hole I kind of already had it. That's what I need to keep feeling is the flow and the rhythm of the rounds.

**Q. Tiger, what do you think about the state of golf right now when you see all the articles about fewer people are playing, millennials don't have time for it, the numbers peaked earlier in your career. Do you think Tiger Woods can do anything to help raise the profile? Do you think the younger guys are doing enough to build the momentum with just the casual golfer?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Right, I think that just the nature of the game is that it's going to take some time. And now with mobile devices and people feel like they're starving without having their phone, looking at their phone every five minutes, it's one of the challenges. And it's one of the challenges that I've tried to adapt to as well with my golf course design business is how can we make the golf courses fun and enjoyable, but also play faster and not have people lose golf balls and enjoy it. Riviera is a perfect example. It's hard to lose a golf ball here, so hence you'll play a little faster. Some of the golf courses I've designed are a little more -- you're going to lose a few, and hence it's going to take a little bit longer. We're trying to make it faster and more enjoyable and that's one of the tougher things to deal with. And then pricing, you know, it's a very expensive sport and that's -- to try to have someone being introduced to the game of golf and have them stay with it and stay with the game, it's even more difficult.

**Q. Tiger, you've got four tournaments in five weeks. You talked about measuring the flow of your game and that, but what will be the number one determining factor for you going forward? Will it be how your back feels, your health, or will it be the scores you post?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, if my back feels good, I know that I can prepare, I can prep, and I know I can play and I know how to shoot scores. But I need to have my health at a state where I can prepare and getting my game ready to play at an elite level. When I feel that way and then health wise I'm able to do that, I know I can shoot scores and I know I can win golf tournaments.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you so much to all who have joined us today.