

**RYDER CUP MEDIA CONFERENCE**  
**Thursday, March 13, 2014**



**JULIUS MASON:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the 2014 Toshiba Classic with the Ryder Cup captain, Tom Watson. Tom, welcome to Newport Beach. What do you think so far of your week here in Newport Beach?

**TOM WATSON:** Well, so far it's perfect. The weather's great, the golf course is in great shape. I love this golf course. I've played it a number of times. I've never won here, but I have ambitions of still winning here. It's a great test of golf and they do a great job here in the community here. Jeff Purser and various people, they do a great job for the hospitals and the local charities here in this area. This is the 20th year for the Toshiba and we thank Toshiba for being the sponsor. They've just re-upped for another three years as I understand it and we'll carry on.

**JULIUS MASON:** Thank you, Tom. Questions, ladies and gentlemen?

**Q. You won your first golf tournament when you were 24 years old. What's some of the advice you can give to some of these guys on TOUR who are 24 years old, even younger, 20 years old like Jordan Spieth, about the challenges they'll face trying to get better and improve upon their career so far?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, it took me a while, first of all, to win my first tournament in 1974 at the Western Open. I started in October of '71, I had a few opportunities to win where I had the lead or close to the lead and I failed, I choked, I didn't finish. It took me a while to get that first victory at the Western Open in Chicago.

My advice is at that time I was trying to simply just try to feel like I could belong out here. Was I good enough to be a professional golfer out here. I felt like I had some of the tools, not all the tools but some of the tools, but I also knew that I was going to work as hard or harder than anybody out here as far as practicing, trying to refine my game to get better. I think I lived up to that goal of mine and '74 was the first win. It certainly put me in a good frame of mind. I remember coming back and talking to some people in Kansas City. My father was there and a good friend of his, and he talked about my victory there. I said, I'd like to be the best golfer in the world. I didn't say I was; that was my goal to just try to become the best golfer in the world. If you don't reach for it, you're not going to get there and that was the whole point. I remember my dad's friend taking me aside and said, Hey, you shouldn't say things like that. That was my goal. It took me a while until I really felt that I belonged and that was the middle 1977 after The Open Championship at Turnberry, I finally believed in myself at that time that I could play with the best in the world.

**Q. Tom, that's kind of a little bit reminiscent of what we just heard from Patrick Reed in Doral this week where he's talking about how he believes he's a top**

**five player. What do you think of his comments?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, when you win, you have that aura that you're at the top of your game and it's hard for anybody to beat you. That's a good place to be. As we all know, the game can turn on you and it will turn on you and you'll go through the low spells. What Patrick said, I can understand him saying that, but after 14 events and winning three of them, I guess maybe he has a little bit of street cred. After my first event winning, I said I hope my goal was to be the best golfer in the world. After winning three out of the first 14, you've got to give the guy a little bit of credit.

**Q. Well, he's not guaranteed obviously, the double points this year, the majors and everything else, but he's in the fourth spot right now for the Ryder Cup.**

**TOM WATSON:** That's right. We have a very young looking team right now as you look down on it. We do have some experience on the team. You have Jimmy Walker who's won three times, Patrick Reed right in there, of course Dustin Johnson has been lighting it up and playing well. You've got a lot of players right there. Then you have the fact that Tiger has not played well and is injured. There's a story in itself. I want Tiger to be on the team in the worst way, I just hope he's healthy enough to be able to play. It's really early yet, way too early to tell. Ted Bishop, the president of the PGA, is our statistician and he's calculated it's going to take 4,637 points to be in the top nine to get on the team. Who knows what the points are going to be but nobody's really gotten up to that level. I trust that Ted's pretty accurate as far as what that point level's going to be to make the team.

**Q. How much interest did you have in watching the Accenture, the match play because it's match play obviously, and what are your thoughts on this 23-year old Frenchman, Dubuisson?**

**TOM WATSON:** I watched it and was just amazed. In fact, I don't Tweet very much but I did Tweet it out that those are the two greatest recovery shots I've ever seen in my life, coming out of the desert, making the putts. It's one thing to get it halfway close to the hole in the desert with the rocks and sticks, judge the distance you have to do it. There's a lot of luck involved but there's a lot of feel involved, too. The next thing is to hole a putt and to stay in it. He showed me a lot there. Of course right now he's at the top of the European Ryder Cup points list right now and he's third in the Ryder Cup world points list. Looks like he's going to be on the team. I'm sure that the people in France that are going to hold the Ryder Cup in four years, they're expecting a great deal out of Victor.

**Q. You were talking about a younger looking team, Captain Watson, and Dubuisson being a younger player, are you surprised at all how younger players have really stepped up and gotten into the mix here?**

**TOM WATSON:** No. It seems like over the last four, five years we've seen the

younger players start to come out and blossom very early. Up until that time for a stretch of time there it took a while for the younger players to get there. Right now it looks like they're blossoming very early. We go through cycles in the game. You look at Jack when he came out on the TOUR, I forget how many months it took him to win his first tournament. And oh, by the way, it was a playoff with Arnold Palmer to win the U.S. Open. You have Rory McIlroy coming out and he's a very young guy, and of course Victor. You look at Patrick Reed, a 23-year old kid. These kids are coming out, they're polished, they're polished. They've played a lot of competitive golf and they're polished. Just like Tiger when he came out competitively, there was no more polished amateur in the history of the game than Tiger. He had played and won everything more than once, three times the National Junior Championship, three times the National Amateur Champion. When he came out he was polished, he was ready to go and understood competition. That was a winner. These kids are coming out that way. Doesn't surprise me, put it that way.

**Q. Point of reference on the Ryder Cup points, you have a European Ryder Cup points list and a Ryder Cup world list. On the European Ryder Cup points list, the first four on the list make the team and then the next five on the world list that haven't been --**

**TOM WATSON:** The world points list.

**Q. -- make the team?**

**TOM WATSON:** But they take the first four first on the European Ryder Cup points list and then they go down to the world points list, take the next five. Paul has three picks just like I do.

**Q. At this press conference last year you mentioned some ingredients you're looking for in a player is be a good putter, a good closer, and you mentioned that also recently. When you look at the younger core of 20-something players that are in the mix right now for the U.S. team, have you had a chance to see and assess their putting at all?**

**TOM WATSON:** I'm establishing a track record with them as far as my observations are concerned, and so is Raymond and Andy, my vice captains. We're in contact with each other and we talk about the players, we talk about their performances. It's a constant conversation and an assessment of the players. Right now is way too early to tell. It's way too early to tell who's going to be on the team but there's certainly trends. Like trending on Twitter or something like that, there are trends in the Ryder Cup right now. You're seeing people like Jimmy Walker, three-time champion, he had a good couple rounds last week in tough conditions. There are trends and there are firm trends and there are some trends that are kind of out there, but that's what we're looking at. We're looking at the whole picture.

**Q. Your vice captains are older, McGinley's vice captains are older. What are the pluses and minuses of that?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, I don't think there's any minuses. I think the pluses far outweigh any sort of minuses you might have. People say if I use the minus angle first, you're not in tune, you don't know these guys. Well, the one thing I hope everyone on the Ryder Cup team understands, all the players understand is that we are there to help provide them the environment which they can win the Ryder Cup. We can be there as confidants, they can come to us as confidants. We know what the Ryder Cup is all about, we've been there, we played on it, especially Raymond. Raymond's been both a captain and a player many times and who better to have as a confidant as somebody like Raymond Floyd for a young player who's never been on a Ryder Cup team. You don't need a friend up there, you need somebody who's been there to tell you what it's all about, to help direct you, to say these are the things to expect. That's the most important thing, that's what they bring to it, those are the positives. There's so many positives that they bring to it. Except the fact that we probably don't Tweet as much as the younger guys do. I reluctantly Tweet.

**Q. You mentioned there's a long way to go until the Ryder Cup. Have some of the guys on the bubble started reaching out to you, started planting the seed that, Hey, I'd really like to be on the team?**

**TOM WATSON:** I've been planting seeds in their head, not them in mine. I've been looking at the kids and saying, Get playing better, get playing better, get on my Ryder Cup team. Give them something to think about.

**Q. How much difference do you notice that the Ryder Cup means to the younger players, the newer players than to guys like in your age? Does it mean anything different to them or does it still have the same value?**

**TOM WATSON:** I think it has great value. I think it's very, very important to all the players. I can only speak for myself honestly. To me, it was tremendous. I wanted to make it in the worst way, I wanted to be on the Ryder Cup team. I don't see any reluctance from players to play on the Ryder Cup team, that's for sure.

**Q. For you the meaning to be a captain, what does it mean to you personally?**

**TOM WATSON:** It's an honor, it's an honor to be the captain, but it was something that I wanted to do again. As I told Ted and the committee, Ted asked me by phone, we went back and forth and finally got to the committee, they were in the process of interviewing me and I said, You don't know how long I've been waiting for this phone call, I've been waiting almost 20 years for this phone call to be asked to be the Ryder Cup captain again. It means a tremendous amount to me. I want the team to win the Ryder Cup back, I want to do it in style and grace. This last Ryder Cup, if you look at it, it was a great Ryder Cup but the ending was not the way I wanted it. It was a

tremendous comeback by the European team, and yeah, we have something to prove. If that's the only thing I have to say to the team, I'll say, Remember 2012, remember 2012, what are you going to do about it?

**Q. Are you coaching this as a significance to your legacy, is that on your mind at all?**

**TOM WATSON:** No.

**Q. Or is it more you want to win?**

**TOM WATSON:** No, I don't look at my legacy. You guys write about my legacy. I don't do anything about my legacy except do what I do, play golf. Again, I wanted to be Ryder Cup captain to have the opportunity to inspire, if you will, help the Ryder Cup team win the Ryder Cup back. I'm sick and tired of us losing.

**Q. Montgomerie said on Tuesday morning you're the ideal fit to be the captain.**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, I'm glad to have his confidence.

**Q. Obviously you have confidence yourself.**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, I have confidence. Again, you get back to the age question about why are Paul and I both picking experienced people. Well, the experience means a heck of a lot. You don't have to be a player with experience but to have the experience around the players who haven't had experience is a great thing to have, a great thing to have. It gives them solace, it gives them a sense of calmness in the middle of that tempest, there's that calmness. Just a word or two from somebody who has experience that you trust, there's a lot to be said for that.

**Q. How do you think you're playing right now and does being Ryder Cup captain (inaudible)?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, I wish I could say I'm really playing well. I hit some pretty good shots yesterday. On the practice range yesterday I was awful, I was just terrible on the practice range. I made an adjustment as we all do and the adjustment seemed to work a little bit, so I can't wait to get back out there and see if that adjustment is still working today. At my age you never know what will work from one day to another. My putting's good, that's the one thing that I'm happy with. That's the first time I can say that in a long time. That's good news.

**Q. How hard is it to keep up with the demands of being captain while also playing on both Tours fairly regularly?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, Julius is a pain in a butt, he's always emailing me or texting

me about something, all right, captain, this request came through, this has come through. I'm just kidding. Julius, he's been wonderful to work with, he protects my interests, but he's all in for what he's doing for the Ryder Cup. I knew when I got into this that my time is going to be consumed more by this 2014 Ryder Cup than it was in 1993. I knew that. That was one of the things that I had to address before I made a decision to accept it. Although I always knew I was going to accept it, I just wanted to make sure I was comfortable with the time requirements of this. Of course we went back and forth with what those time requirements were just to get it clear what I had to do. I have to do more than '93, there's not a question.

**Q. (Question regarding playing golf in California.)**

**TOM WATSON:** I have, this has been a good state for me.

**Q. You've never finished higher than 5th. Is there anything in particular about this course that doesn't suit your eye or something?**

**TOM WATSON:** I love this course. I don't know why, I just haven't been able to play a good 54 holes here. I don't know what it is. The front nine's always been an issue with me. You should start out with some birdies on 1, 2 and 3 and 4, and then 5 and 6, 7's a tricky hole and 8's a really good par 3, 9's a really good par 4. That's a stretch of golf you've got to play well and I haven't really played that well in that stretch of golf.

**Q. My Scottish friends and relatives talk about how excited they are about the Ryder Cup finally coming back to Scotland after so long and they talk about you as like being an adopted son having won five British Opens and everything else. It's got to be a pretty highly emotional thing for you going to Scotland and captaining this team, and what kind of reception do you anticipate?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, first of all, I love playing golf in Scotland and I've had good success over there obviously. Also, I had a chance to go and play various courses over there in the non-Open rotation and just would do what most golfers do when they go over there, just go over and have some fun playing the great links courses over there. I've done that and I guess I've created a good relationship with the people because I love the game of golf like they love it. They love the game. It's part of the fabric of their life and of course it's very much a part of the fabric of my life, so we have a lot of common ground to share. The only problem I have is I can't understand them, I still can't after 1975 going through immigration there right at Prestwick; no, Edinburgh, I couldn't understand a word the person said to me and it just continued. You keep trying to listen for it, but sometimes I need a translator.

**Q. When it comes to the U.S. Open, being a former U.S. Open champion, Mr. Watson, how does that tournament do in terms of finding the well-rounded golfer of that particular week in all aspects of the game; putting, iron play and**

**driving? How does the U.S. Open identify that player?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, my good friend Sandy Tatum when the players were complaining about the mower height in 1976 at Atlanta Athletic Club, he said, We're not trying to embarrass the golfers, we're just trying to identify them. The point being that they try to make it as tough as possible within reason. Sometimes they've gone overboard, they've made it too tough, weather conditions have made it too tough in the setup of the golf course. They want to identify the best players, and to identify the best players you have to have all the facets of the game plus deal with the U.S. Open major championship pressure. You've got to drive it straight, you've got to deal with hard, firm greens, tough pin positions. You've got to deal with that. To me, it was the tournament I always wanted to win the most of any tournament because I grew up with my dad saying, Son, that's the toughest tournament to win. I wanted to win the toughest tournament there was to win.

**JULIUS MASON:** Thank you very much, everybody.