

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW: JAMES HAHN
May 8, 2016



AMANDA HERRINGTON: Let's go ahead and get start. We would like to welcome our 2016 Wells Fargo Championship winner James Hahn to the media center. James, you obviously have a flare for going overtime; this is your second win on the PGA Tour via playoff. You also have a win on Web.com Tour, playoff. So tell us a little about how you get to be sitting up here?

JAMES HAHN: Also, Canadian Tour first victory, playoff. It's special. Anytime you have an opportunity to win, you know, it doesn't matter if it's in a playoff or the 72nd hole. Honestly, I didn't look at the scoreboard at all today. Didn't know that I had to two-putt the last hole to possibly win outright. 18's playing tough, I doubt anybody's going to birdie that hole today. But, you know, after I had missed the putt for par, looked up and saw that I was solo first and then I was going to move back to tied for first. Anytime you're given a second opportunity you really have to take advantage of it and did well to do that today. Can you guys hear me all right?

Q. How do you explain eight cuts missed in a row and then winning?

JAMES HAHN: I can't. I was telling my wife, I've never missed more than four cuts in a row, maybe not even that, maybe three cuts in a row. So you just kind of start taking things for granted. After the first missed cut you're like, oh, no big deal. The second missed cut, you're still not freaking out. Third missed cut, you start telling yourself, well, I've never missed more than four, or three in a row. So fourth missed cut you're like, okay, I'm guaranteed to make the cut next week because I've never missed more than four. Then once you start going five, six and seven, you start thinking about doing other things. It's tough, it really is.

The mind is a powerful thing and it was going bad for a while. Just didn't have the confidence, didn't believe in my myself. I felt like I was putting in the work but wasn't getting any reward for it, so it made me not want to put in as much work because it's not gratifying. You're playing bad and you're missing cuts and there's nothing funny about that.

So I think the turning point was in New Orleans at the Zurich Championship that my caddie and I, we just kind of had a talk that, hey, look, you just have to keep believing in yourself, keep grinding because it's not always going to be like this. Was that last week?

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Yeah.

JAMES HAHN: I try not to remember all that stuff but that was a week ago and now I'm here. So I constantly remind myself that I'm good enough that I belong out here. Was kind of chanting to myself that I can do this, I will do this and I must do this. I mean, this is something that I look in my daughter's eyes and say, hey, I can't give up on you, I have to do

this. So having family like that, my wife supporting me, it really gives me that extra fire to keep going.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: On that, you mentioned your wife and baby flew in last night, is that correct?

JAMES HAHN: Yes, they did. Yeah, they weren't there for my first win at the Northern Trust Open but they were fortunate enough to come here last night to watch me win. You know, that just gives me extra motivation on the golf course that they're here. We're driving down to Jacksonville tomorrow. That I have to give a 110 percent today and just didn't give up and played a solid round.

Q. How big a relief was Friday night?

JAMES HAHN: That I made the cut? Yeah, so similar to the talk that I had with my caddie, you know, it was a relief to make the cut. But to be 100 percent honest with you guys, we dream bigger than that. Making cuts on this tour is not something that I get happy about. Competing and having a chance to win on the back nine on Sunday is something that gets me up at night, or in the morning.

So we had made the cut and I had finished I think bogey-bogey, bogey on 17, bogey on 18, and we were relieved that we had made the cut. But there was just something about it, it just didn't taste right. So we went out there and practiced a little bit more after the round and just said, hey look, we're here to win golf tournaments. We did a good job of keeping ourselves in the present and just focusing on what we need to do to pull off a good shot on the golf course.

Q. Knowing you've had success in playoffs before, how did that help your mindset after what happened on 18 the first time?

JAMES HAHN: Yeah, I love playoffs. You guys don't mind?

AMANDA HERRINGTON: You just won, you're good.

JAMES HAHN: Sorry, guys. I love playoffs. Playoffs is, you know, to be given another opportunity to win the golf tournament, that really excites me. I take a lot from other sports and going overtime in basketball, there's just nothing else like it to have the game-winning shot or the last putt to win a golf tournament, knowing that it's to win a golf tournament.

Like I said on the 72nd hole, I had no idea that was to win a golf tournament. I just kind of went through my routine, didn't hit a good putt, made bogey. But to know that on the last hole or on the first playoff hole that I had that putt to win a golf tournament, it's pretty exciting. It's kind of -- it's the things that you dream of as a kid.

Q. Was it tough to gather yourself after the three-putt on 18 before the playoff?

JAMES HAHN: It took me about 20 seconds. Went over the stairs, walked down, my wife was there and our daughter was there as well. So it grounds me, it keeps me humble, it keeps me wanting to improve and be successful. But knowing that failure is not an option and that they're supporting me 100 percent whether I win, lose or draw. The fact that we're all healthy, I have a healthy daughter, healthy wife and I'm healthy enough to play golf for a living, those are the things I'm very grateful for.

Q. James, when you guys finished up in regulation, I overheard Justin -- is that good? Well deserved.

JAMES HAHN: Yeah.

Q. After you guys finished regulation I overheard Justin Rose's caddie talking to your caddie. He said he really admired the way you and your caddie work. Just talk a little bit about your guys' relationship with the struggles you fight through and walk out champion today?

JAMES HAHN: Yeah, we've had some highs and we've also had our lows. To win the Northern Trust Open together in a playoff and then finish out the rest of the season and have a great year really and then to start off the year well, made six consecutive cuts and then to go from there to eight consecutive missed cuts, there's a lot of conversation involved. He's a guy that carries my bag but he's also the guy that keeps encouraging me, constantly telling me that I'm good enough. And he's the guy, the voice that you hear when I tell myself that I'm not good enough, he's the voice that tells me that I am.

So having people like that in my life, you know, it builds character and it's really helped me become a two-time PGA champion.

Q. Going through that string of missed cuts, how difficult do things get. Did you ever consider something else?

JAMES HAHN: Well, I have a two -- year exemption, so I was thinking a lot of things. Honestly, it's tough. You try not to compare yourself to others and some people whose name that I will not mention but have won on this tour and are now playing on the Web.com Tour. I just told my wife, I can't play there, I can't. It's not an option for me. I feel like I'm good enough and I need to put in more work to stay on this level, and it's worth every minute of it. Not saying the Web.com Tour is a bad place to play, but I have a lot of people counting on me and a lot of people that are supporting me and I can't let them down.

Q. James, going back to the end of regulation, they had you inserted on TV, I don't know if you knew that, as you were watching Roberto. He had a difficult putt on 18. Did you think you were going to win the tournament maybe in regulation right there or what did you think?

JAMES HAHN: Roberto's a good friend of mine. You never want to root against your buddies. He's a great player and I just -- I knew he was going to make that putt and I had to get myself mentally tuned for the playoff. I didn't want to be, and you hear it all the time in sports, that in basketball -- I don't know why, must be basketball season -- but you hear teams having the momentum going into overtime and I just felt like he was going to make that putt.

But I needed to have the momentum. Even though I bogeyed the last hole and missed the putt, I needed to pick myself up and say, hey, look, you have a chance to win the tournament and just think good thoughts. I ended up hitting one of the best drives of my life followed up with a great 7-iron to almost the same exact spot that I had three-putted from and I just told myself I'm not going to do it again.

Q. James, I think a lot of people probably agree that you have one of the better golf swings out here, now a two-time champion. What do you think you can accomplish in this game going forward?

JAMES HAHN: That's a big question. You know, I try not to think about that. I'm sure other athletes don't think about how many Super Bowl rings they're going to win or how many NBA Championships they're going to win. They just go into every day and put in 110 percent. Whether I win three events, five events or 20 events, I can't let my family down and I just have to put in 110 percent every single day. If this is my last win, you know, so be it. But I'm going to go into every single day as what it is and just get everything I can in those 24 hours.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: For the room, can you go over the names of your caddie, wife and cute little daughter?

JAMES HAHN: Caddie is Mark Urbanek.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Can you spell that?

JAMES HAHN: I write his checks. U-R-B-A-N-E-K. Nailed it. Wife is Stephanie, S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E.

Q. And your daughter?

JAMES HAHN: Daughter is 14 months, her name is Kailee, K-A-I-L-E-E.

Q. Considering your background, are you struck by the irony that on the playoff hole Roberto's third shot went into a guy's shoes?

JAMES HAHN: A guy's shoes? I thought it hit him in the head. Hit the head first.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Then went to the shoes.

JAMES HAHN: That's cool. Honestly, I walked over there just to see, you know, if the guy was all right. He had this big welt on his head. I can't be a doctor; every time I see blood I just start cringing. Yeah, it's a little unfortunate.

Q. Two quick things. Was your wife scheduled to come all along or did she just come because you were in contention?

JAMES HAHN: She really wanted to be together for Mother's Day, so she took the flight last night and flew from Phoenix to Charlotte. I told her she could meet me in Jacksonville for THE PLAYERS Championship next week, but girls are funny, they want to be together on days like today. She flew out and she was here for probably not even 24 hours and we're going to start driving to Jacksonville with a screaming baby in the back. Any of you guys need a ride?

Q. The other thing, you've talked about the shoe salesman gig many times, I know. When you went and did that, did you actually think you were not going to get back into golf at that point? Or was it just like aside, just to get away from golf for a little while?

JAMES HAHN: It was both. Before I had gone back to Nordstrom because I had worked for them in college, I was working for an advertising agency and I had done that for a year. I really just kind of looked at myself and said, Is this worth it, is this what you want to do for a living?

Talked to my now-wife about it and we just talked for weeks and weeks and weeks, and the thing that was holding me back was money. It's very expensive to travel, hotel fees, caddie fees and all that. And there was something, I was always worried about being one of those guys that lived out of my car, traveling from mini tour to mini tour event.

So my wife just asked me, hey, would you rather be that guy or make \$200,000 working for an advertising agency? And didn't even think about it. I said I would rather go chase my dream. At that point I knew that she was the one for me because she was 100 percent on board and she said, let's do it. So I quit my job. Worked for Nordstrom because one of my best friends had worked -- was, is still currently working for them and had given me a job that I could kind of do part time to play golf early in the mornings. It turned out to be six months later after winter season, summer came along and I said, hey, I need to put all 24 hours and dedicate that just to golf. So I had quit selling shoes and just done just golf and I think I made a good choice.

Q. You made that eagle on the 50-foot putt on 7 and that vaulted you right into the lead. Was there a moment of enlightenment there and did that change the way you looked at the rest of your round?

JAMES HAHN: Yes, I had just bogeyed the hole before and Justin, I'm not sure if you've

ever seen him play golf, he's amazing. He hit this like little cut 5-wood on hole 6 to about 15 feet. He was playing very well and you don't really need to look at a scoreboard if you're not the low score in your group, right? So when I had bogeyed that hole, he was beating me by two and it was pretty much match play from there. I just said, hey, look, in order for me to have a chance, I have to be low score in my group. When I had eagled that hole, Justin still had a birdie putt that he could have made to still have a 1-up lead on me. He unfortunately missed it and then it sparked some energy, to be honest. I never root against players but when he had missed it, it was like, okay, now we're tied. And then I birdie No. 8 and I have all this momentum going my way. He had missed the birdie putt on 9 so his momentum was just stalled. I had missed the birdie put on three consecutive holes that were makeable. It's a crazy game. I try to keep myself in the moment and just talk to my caddie. We were talking about everything except golf just to be more relaxed out there and I think it worked.

Q. Just to follow up then on 7, you saw how it derailed Rickie's round. Did it sort of feel like it really jump started your round today?

JAMES HAHN: Yeah, we waited on hole 8. We didn't know exactly what the ruling was, but anytime you're not talking about your own game I think it's a good thing because it kind of gets you focusing on the present instead of the past shots and all that.

But we were talking about how Rickie's ball hit in the hazard and went into the guy's backyard. We didn't know if that was a hazard ball or out of bounds. So the fact that he had done that, you know. And once again I wasn't looking at any scoreboards but I know that he wasn't going to birdie that hole. So just knowing that I was somewhere close and had Rickie had gone -- gotten up and down or maybe not. Par is a really good score for him after doing that. If he had made bogey, then so be it. But I'm not sure, what did he make, anyone know?

Q. Double.

JAMES HAHN: Out of bounds or hazard?

Q. Out of bounds.

JAMES HAHN: That's what we thought the ruling was. We were kind of counting strokes. Well, if he drops here, so bogey is probably the best score that he could make. Knowing that the people, that the players behind you are not on their game, it kind of gives you more confidence to keep going and fire at flags.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Well, thank you so much and congratulations.