

**FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW: HIDEKI MATSUYAMA**  
**December 4, 2016**

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**JOHN BUSH:** We would like to welcome the 2016 Hero World Challenge champion, Hideki Matsuyama, into the interview room. He wins for the fourth time in his last five starts.

Hideki, congratulations on another victory. If we can get some thoughts, please.

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I can't say that I played well today, but I did win Tiger's tournament and what a great honor that is.

**Q. And comment a little bit about how exciting it got, probably too exciting for you on that back nine today.**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** At the turn I was just hoping to make some more birdies, and then I doubled 10 and then it got difficult, especially when I bogeyed 14. After that, it was a real struggle.

**Q. When did you feel most nervous on the back nine and did you ever think starting the day that a pitch behind the 18th green would be so meaningful?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I probably felt the most pressure, Doug, at 16 after Henrik hit it in there about six feet. But I was able to answer, and when he hit it that close, I was thinking, wow, if I don't make par here, it's a two-shot swing. But thankfully I was able to hit the green and make par there.

18, the approach was, it was difficult, it was against the grain. Thankfully it was against the wind, it made it a little bit easier.

**Q. Hideki, do you remember when you first heard about a golfer named Tiger Woods?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I first heard the name of Tiger Woods at the '97 Masters. I videotaped it and --

**INTERPRETER:** Did I say '97? '97 Masters. He was young, he was only five years old.

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** -- and I watched that video over and over and over again.

**Q. What were you doing as an eight-year-old in 2000 when Tiger was your age and won nine events, including two majors?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Unfortunately, I wasn't able to see all those wins because they didn't have the broadcast in Japan, but I knew Tiger was winning and I knew he was very good and I almost expected him to win every tournament.

**Q. First of all, congratulations, but also, Hideki, you are on sort of a Tiger-esque run here, too. Can you tell us why, what's changed? You've got four wins in your last five events, that's very Woodsy-like.**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I'm not even close to being mentioned in the same sentence as Tiger, but I am working hard and hopefully little by little I'll get better and better.

**Q. What has just clicked in the last four or five weeks? Is there something in particular?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I don't know.

**Q. Hideki, does part of you wish Augusta was next week, and is that the next part for your evolution?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I'm kind of glad it's not next week because I don't think I could win next week. Starting next week all my focus and preparation will be for the Masters. Hopefully, along the way I can play well on the PGA Tour, but the Masters is my next goal.

**Q. As a follow, obviously we all know when you putt well, you play well and you contend. You mentioned early in the week that your friend helped you with putting. Can you be more specific on what he helped you with?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** You're right, when I putt well, I can contend. But these last five weeks I've been able to make some putts, and the more putts you make, the bigger the hole gets and the confidence grows and that's played a big part in it.

As far as Hiroshi Iwata's advice, it wasn't anything technical about my stroke, but it was a practice method, a way of practicing and I do that now every morning when I get to the course and then after every round. That's what the advice that he gave me on how to practice. But other than that, nothing special, nothing technical.

**Q. Hideki, can you kind of describe the feelings of this run, the past five starts? Secondly, did any of it surprise you or did you sort of expect this type of performance?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** To answer your question, I'm very surprised at these last five events and I just hope I can keep it going.

**Q. Right now do you feel like there's anyone in the world playing better than you?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Everyone out here is so good. I've been fortunate to play well these last five weeks, and any other pro, if they get on a run, they'll probably do the same thing and I feel like there's a lot of other players that are better than I am.

**Q. Hideki, congratulations, first of all. Just on the larger picture, do you think this would make any difference to encourage, your winning on a big stage like this, Korea, India, Thailand, coming up on a world stage, so do you think this will be kind of a boost?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** There's a lot of great players in Asia and hopefully, through my success, a lot more of them now will try to come to the United States and play on the PGA Tour and hopefully that will increase the popularity and level of golf in Asia.

**Q. Hideki, if you continue to win, you might offer free Japanese lessons to the media. In a week like this with a seven-shot lead evaporates quickly, what do you think that learning can help you going forward?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** It is difficult to have a seven-stroke lead, believe it or not, but hopefully it's through the experience that I had today, especially playing against some of the best golfers in the world, will help me in the future should this opportunity arise again.

**Q. What about the free Japanese lessons?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** We'll see.

**Q. Hideki, at most tournaments, if not this one, you have a lot of journalists from your country following your every shot. How much, if any, pressure do you feel to be the Tiger Woods of Japan?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** When I first turned pro and came to the PGA Tour, the Japanese media would ask me questions after every round whether I played good or bad. At first it was difficult for me and I felt a lot of pressure then, but then I learned that talking with the media is just part of my job as a professional golfer. Once I realized that, it became easier and I didn't feel that pressure.

**Q. Two questions. How well do you know Mae from a standpoint of when it got kind of tight on the back nine, what kind of things do you guys say to each other to kind of get back in the right place?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Yeah, I'm the type when things get tough and difficult, I sometimes put my head down and become quiet, but Mae was always positive throughout even the back nine and was giving me good vibes, which really helped coming in.

**Q. Secondly, with the long year and a nice break back home, how much golf will you play?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Hopefully I don't have to play any, with my goal, my next goal being the Masters, I know I'm going to need to practice probably not this week but starting next

week, and then I'll be preparing and getting ready for Kapalua at the same time.

**Q. Congratulations on your win. I'm from the Ministry of Tourism so this will probably be the only non-golf question you're going to get. I just wanted to know if you enjoyed yourself here and did you get to experience any of the Bahamian culture?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Unfortunately, I couldn't do any tourist things this visit, but it's such a beautiful country and the beaches and the ocean and the sea, and to be able just to wake up and look out over the beautiful scenery. And then also to be able to play golf on such a great golf course at the same time, it was a marvelous week.

**Q. Hideki, there's already an argument that at just 24 you're the greatest golfer Japan has produced. Can I get your thoughts on that?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** There's been some great golfers in Japan. Just to name a few, Jumbo Ozaki, Isao Aoki, Shigeki Maruyama, Tsuneyuki Nakajima. And to be able to follow in their footsteps is a great honor. And then to come to the PGA Tour and learn from really the best golfers in the world, it's really helped my game. I'm grateful for all of their help. But to answer your question, I'm not the greatest golfer from Japan.

**Q. So my follow-up then, what will make you the greatest golfer from Japan?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** That's a good question. You know, Jumbo won a hundred times, so unless I win a hundred times, I wouldn't be greater than Jumbo.

**Q. Not just one major?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** No. And again, that's my next goal and that's one of the things I'll be working hard to accomplish.

**Q. Hideki, a two-part question. One is who you're good friends with on the PGA Tour, and two, what do you do outside of golf to unwind and relax?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** Unfortunately, my English isn't up to par yet and so I want to be able to make more friends on the PGA Tour and be able to talk to my comrades, but right now there's still a wall because I don't speak English as well as I should. But my fellow players from Asia, I think they understand where I'm coming from as far as English is concerned, and so they've been very helpful and kind so I have a lot of good friends on Tour from Asia.

As far as unwinding and relaxing, probably drink sake.

**Q. Just curious, do you recall how old you were when you first beat your father?**

**HIDEKI MATSUYAMA:** I don't remember. Even if I did, he was always better than I was in my mind, but hopefully he'll be proud of me now.

**JOHN BUSH:** All right, Hideki Matsuyama, thank you very much, and Bob Turner, thank you for your assistance.