



June 25, 2017

**Nate Pokrass, Tournament Director**  
**Jack Salzwedel, CEO – American Family Insurance**

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**Q. Can you guys sort of give us your thoughts on where we are right now in year two as we wind down this one versus what you thought last year, and were you able to successfully take that next step?**

**NATE POKRASS:** Yeah, I would say from a tournament operations standpoint, everything's been great. It has gone extremely well all week, exceeded even last year. We know last year exceeded all expectations and we set the bar high again this year. We felt we've met and exceeded those expectations again. Great week of attendance, weather's been great. We're trending towards exceeding last year's attendance numbers. We'll know that by the end of tonight on how that played out.

Adding the music element was extremely well received. We saw a great crowd at Darius on Friday night. Really enjoyable, everybody had a great time. And now the leaderboard's looking great, too. Looks like we're going to have a great champion here in about a couple hours.

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** I think the other thing that comes into play this year that's a little bit different from last year is the course. I think last year afterwards there was a little bit of discussion about the greens and the sand and the course just not being quite what they're used to, and I think that's totally been dismissed this year. I think the greens are fabulous. The players love the fact that there was a lot of rain and it drained well and the course stood up to all that rain. And I think playing Erin Hills last week, a lot of them experienced the sand that we have here, which is different than that, you know, white sand down in Florida. They're kind of talking about that and a little more used to that. So I think the course has held up much better and I think this year that's a big improvement, too.

**NATE POKRASS:** Agreed. The PGA Tour's agronomist has been speaking highly about the green speeds, getting them up to where they wanted to. Every player we've chatted with coming in, we've asked about fairways, tee boxes, greens. All in great shape. And obviously Jack's hearing the exact same thing as he's talked to the players. So kudos to University Ridge agronomy team for working hard at it all year.

**Q. That said, we're a year out from the end of the first run of AmFam's Championships. I'm guessing your timetable is such that you wouldn't want to get to the start of the tournament next year without a long-range vision for where you'll play this tournament and what it will look like?**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** This tournament has grown extremely fast. I think all of us are

pleasantly surprised with how well it's grown, how fast it's come to together, and we continue to talk with the PGA Tour and University Ridge of how best to manage that growth and how can we continue to grow along into the future. So those conversations are ongoing, and like I touched on, we've grown faster than expected, which is a great thing. It means the community's rallied behind this. Sponsors, volunteers, everybody's really supportive. So now we need to continue to grow that long-range plan, and those conversations are ongoing with the PGA Tour and University Ridge.

**Q. Jack, was there ever any thought to alternating between Madison and Milwaukee, and does the success of this mean that with what University Ridge has done and the way the players have reacted, do you see a future of this just kind of being here and maybe even at this site long term?**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** Yeah, we've had those discussions. We talked about it before year one, actually, of would we need to alternate this or would we keep it in Madison. If we kept it in Madison, would we keep it at U Ridge.

I think to Nate's point, I think the course has held up well the first couple years, and we're going to start discussions on Monday about next year and we want to get it settled pretty quickly.

So from a course standpoint, I think U Ridge has been great. The players love it, so we just need to make sure that it's set for future growth and things like that.

And then as far as Milwaukee, you know, I would say just the way things are right now, I don't know there's a need to do that, but I think we're open to it depending on how many fans we get and where the fans are coming from and the base and all that type of stuff, too.

**Q. Is there a better way of engaging the Milwaukee market if you stay here, or are there some ideas about how you can get more folks over here from Milwaukee?**

**NATE POKRASS:** There's a handful of our sponsors that come from Milwaukee. Many of them have markets here in Milwaukee and Madison, which is great. We continue to network in that aspect.

Of course, American Family's got a proud partnership with Summerfest and I think that's going to continue to grow a dynamic there as well where we can potentially have some cross promotion there.

And hopefully, too, our field is attractive, price points continue to remain attractive. We don't have the U.S. Open here next year, so we're going to be that primary tournament here throughout the state, so hopefully that continues to draw that fan base over. We partner extremely well with our marketing team and they've got an aggressive advertising plan in Milwaukee and that will continue to remain in place. So we'll continue to make those steps and grow in that market.

**Q. This has turned into such an entertainment for the weekend, a lot of people talking about the concert and then, of course, the golf, but what it come down to is the charity. Can you tell us what it's like to give what you guys do to those charities?**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** That's the unique thing about the PGA TOUR Champions. All the proceeds that are generated through this stay right here in our community. It doesn't always necessarily work that way with other major events. This is one where it all stays right here.

At times it's emotional. It's intense when you know you've got a world-renowned children's hospital in our backyard and we get to make a significant difference in that, and then last year to be able to touch 33 other charities as well through Wisconsin. So the reach is broad, which is even more impactful than we ever thought.

So I speak on behalf of our tournament team, there's moments of emotion, there's a lot of pride in that, and yet there's a lot of times you feel that overwhelmingness of we're making a big difference and we're just proud to play a small role in those efforts.

**NATE POKRASS:** Yeah, this last year in December when we actually handed the checks out just before Christmas and realizing that a lot of -- you know, the children's hospital has our name on it and they got a big check, but a lot of these smaller ones, I mean these checks are the difference between them folding and them being able to sustain themselves.

I was talking to a person yesterday, an executive director of one of the smaller ones that got a \$10,000 check, about how overwhelmed she was about just being able to do what they do and impact people's lives, and that's just one of the 33, the other 33.

So it's about golf, it's about entertainment, it's about bringing the community, together but it's about the charities. When you think about the partners that we've got, the sponsors, Steve and Nicki, I mean everybody realizes that's what we're really here for and everybody's aligned around that. It's just a really cool thing to all come together with that being the main goal. It's great.

**Q. How about those 948 volunteers that you have, what do you guys say to those guys?**

**NATE POKRASS:** They're the backbone of this event. They're the backbone of all PGA Tour events around the country. For them to come out in strong force last year was unbelievable with 1,200. We were a little worried going into the U.S. Open, would they all be busy, can they not work two weeks in a row. Just the opposite. They came back in extremely strong forces. So proud of them, can't do it without them.

We know there are more that will be back again next year, that some just couldn't have two weeks off in a row. The basis is 600. That's what the PGA Tour advises, to start with 600. If you can do that, you'll run a great event. And for us to have almost 900 again this year,

phenomenal.

And kudos to our volunteer coordinator in Gail Perla. She's been doing this for so long and it's a labor of love for her. Back in the GMO days of doing this and doing this now for us, she's a rock star. If we didn't have her in place, we'd be in a lot of trouble. So hats off to Gail leading that crew, and she's got a lot of great chair people helping here.

And she's proud of American Family. She's been an employee there for I think it's been about 36 years now. If there's anybody who loves American Family and golf more than anybody out here, if you find someone greater than Gail, please tell me because she's leading that charge.

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** Back when it was the GMO and she was one of the coordinators of the volunteers of the big tour and the GMO. The fact that we were able to get Nate to be tournament director and then get Gail to do the volunteers, and then Steve and Nicki to be host, it's just like a combination of a lot of really good people who know what they're doing and have a passion for it, and it's a dream team. It's great.

**Q. Jack, you knew that Steve would have more on his plate because he was playing and hosting, but I don't know when you mapped that part out if you ever thought he would be playing this many weeks in a row. What did you learn about your host this week in the way that he was able to build up that endurance to be as gracious this year as he was last?**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** From a golfing standpoint, I learned this year the guy tried to get an exemption for the U.S. Open, couldn't get it, and was bound and determined having it be in his home state that he wanted to represent the state at the U.S. Open. So whatever it took. So he played -- what did he play, the Memorial, then he played down in Memphis 36 holes, took a little bit of time off, but he was right back at the Open, now coming here.

So from a pure golf standpoint, I mean the guy's 50 years old and he's Superman. Think about that.

But then beyond the golf this whole week, starting with what we had going on on Monday, what we had going on on Tuesday, I mean, he's attended everything. Pairing party, Darius Rucker concert. So not just on the golf side, but really being the host and taking it seriously with the sponsors and things like that. He's tremendous.

**Q. What do you have for him to do on Monday?**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** I think he's actually going down to Scott Verplank's charity outing down in Oklahoma, getting on a plane and flying down there tomorrow to be with Scott for his charity outing tomorrow. How about that, huh? Pretty amazing. They're good buddies.

**Q. You set the bar pretty high. Are you worried you won't be able to top it again next**

**year at all?**

**NATE POKRASS:** I like the challenge. From our tournament side, our operations team, the team we have in place, we like the challenge. We grew sponsorship from last year to this year. We're ready to be back out in the community again and grow the sponsor dollars. We're ready to secure more volunteers. We're looking to find ways to continue to make it a week-long celebration. We've always got ideas out there, and some we might be pull off in year three, some might be year four or five, we'll see when it comes together.

It's not easy, but that's okay. Our team's motivated and we like the challenge, and I'm sure we're all going to be talking about it right away tonight after we get our winner. I'm sure all of us will sit around after the night and say, all right, let's get rolling already for '18. So from our standpoint, we're ready to keep growing this.

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** My main goal starting Monday is to start talking about how do we hang on to this guy and how do we hang on to Gail Perla, and how do we hang on to Lindsay and Katie and all the folks that are making a go because when you start having successful tournaments like this, the first thing that happens is other tournaments see it and they come after your talent as well. Part of what we need to do is make sure that we keep the folks right here, so we'll be working on that starting Monday.

**Q. I was watching Golf Channel this morning when they had Greg on talking about how this has kind of become a model and they're trying to get guys like David Toms and John Daly to host events and do what Steve has done here and then find local sponsors like American Family.**

**JACK SALZWEDEL:** I wasn't listening but I'm not surprised at all. I think it is the model. But it's still about having the right people in all of those different areas, and I think one of the things that I've seen is the people are so important. That's a large part of what's driving our success.

**NATE POKRASS:** In some of those conversations early on that we had with Jay Monahan and Greg, they've talked about past hosts Byron Nelson, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, and now Steve. To have Steve in those same conversations with those legendary golf figures, it's important. We understand that. We're representing Steve and his family, and of course we're representing American Family. But there's a history of some significant player hosts, and if we get to play a small role in that history, it's pretty neat.