

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 15, 2017



DAVIS LOVE III

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Let's get started. We would like to welcome tournament host Davis Love III here to the interview room at the RSM Classic.

Davis, it's a short history of this tournament but it's already established itself as a tradition. What can we expect this week from the RSM Classic?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I think we've got our best field I think we've had. I haven't looked at numbers, but listening to people talk and the names I see on the list, exciting field for the eighth time here. It's hard to believe it's been that long.

We had some exciting news last night. The Birdies for Love program that we started and the RSM folks took over, they gave us a check for \$2 million last night at the pro-am draw party, so that's a pretty good way to kick off the week. They did \$1.5 million last year, so \$2 million to start the week and then whatever we can generate from our side this week is going to be again a record week for us from the charity standpoint.

Just a lot of little things have added up to an exciting week. We got Bubba Watson at the last minute, Brandt Snedeker at the last minute, and Matt Kuchar, I don't know why he was waiting so long to commit since he lives right down the street. The field really came together at the end and it's going to be an exciting week.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Exciting with our pro-am I caught a glimpse at your group this morning, it sounded like you guys had a good time and some really good players out there.

DAVIS LOVE III: We had a bunch of good players. Joe Adams from RSM gets better every year and made a lot of pars and a birdie today. And we had Jeff Knox, who has gotten famous at Augusta as the most famous marker in major championship history, who's a great player. And then John Lester from the Cubs and Jake Owen, who I had no -- if they played from my tees, I would have been embarrassed because I would have been outdriven every hole. I might have hit a few more fairways than them, but they bombed it and made a bunch of birdies so it was a lot of fun.

First time meeting Jake, who's doing a show for us tonight and then the big show Saturday night. So very excited to have him here. He's played with Jordan Spieth a bunch and knows a lot of the pros and does a lot of concerts and charity events for golf, like Darius Rucker, Toby Keith. He's really into what the PGA TOUR stands for and what they do. Plus, I think he got maybe two shots today or four. He's a really good player.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Well, as the 21-time PGA TOUR winner in the group and recent

Hall of Famer, Davis, how's your game?

DAVIS LOVE III: Not as good as Jake or John's maybe. I'm not hitting it very far. I'm having some seems continual hit problems the last couple years, I'm kind of old and stiff this week in the cold weather. I'm hoping for sunshine tomorrow and some more bounce in my step.

Not great. I always enjoy playing here, though. I'm on my home course, and hopefully when the bell rings, we always say it goes farther on Thursday. So I'm hoping it works for me tomorrow and I can hole a few putts, but I got a great pairing and I'm excited about playing a home game.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: With that, we will start with questions.

Q. What are your general thoughts on changes you would like to make to the Plantation?

DAVIS LOVE III: We're excited about it. We joke all the time that Mark sits in an office that looks over Plantation and he's drawn it over and over and over. You know, we grew up on these golf courses, and if you don't know the history, there was four different architects of each nine and then Fazio and Rees Jones tried to put the two of the nines to make two 18s.

Now it's time really to do something again with Plantation, but I had a house on Plantation, my mom has a house on Plantation, we grew up kind of over on that golf course. So it's exciting for Love Golf Design, exciting for us. And we're such good friends with everybody that's involved in the project from the Sea Island side that it's going to be a group effort and we all know what we need, what Barry needs from the agronomy side, we know what we need for the membership side. You know, we did this for them over at Retreat and it came out very well, so we're excited about it.

It's going to be more old-school, you know. We keep throwing out historical design ideas and I think make it look like this was an old plantation and it's an old golf course with a lot of -- I love what they did at the Old White course. It's really a classic golf course at a classic resort. I think that's what we need here is a good -- Seaside, the original Seaside nine was a classic nine and they tried to make the whole 18 holes look like that. We're going to do that over here, try to make it a really classic looking old-school design golf course. More on a Raynor side probably. We kind of did a Ross look over there, Pine Needles, low-profile Ross, and we'll probably do more of a Raynor look over here. A lot less bunkers, Barry don't want to rake bunkers anymore.

That course is hard for the members. We say as pros, if the wind doesn't blow, that course is probably actually harder. So I think a little more friendly for the members, a little more challenging for the experts and everybody will be happy.

Q. First question is, have you hit a spot in the fall calendar that you like with this

week before Thanksgiving? You experimented a little bit before Florida, Georgia, maybe a little bit after. Is this a spot that you think works best?

DAVIS LOVE III: As a PGA TOUR board member, we're very happy with our schedule. We didn't choose this date is a nice way to put it. Sea Island and RSM have made it work and I think it works very well.

I would rather be at the end or the beginning, to answer your question. I would rather be right at the beginning of the start of this season or at the end of the start where we are now. If the weather works, it's great. It looks like we're going to get good weather. But it works well for the resort. RSM has -- they were not happy about it in the beginning, but I think we've worked our way into where we like it. The players seem to like it, so it's working.

But it's hard to say. We sit around again in Mark's office and debate where would you rather be, would you rather be at the beginning or would you rather be at the end, and everybody has a different choice. It's hard coming off of when we were at the Presidents Cup to turn right around and come down here and play, that would have been tough for everybody. So it's six of one, half dozen of another. But we like being in the start of the season somewhere, yes. We're not anxiously trying to get to the spring or to the summer. We like it October, November somewhere.

Q. Could you make a case that if they're committed to having a Web.com Tour event in Atlantic Beach, that the first one of the fall would make a little bit of sense because the guys who qualified out of that could have a little bit of an easy travel rather than going to Napa?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes. I would think I talked to Joe Sanderson when I played over there, it would be nice to have those two back-to-back as well, Sea Island and Jackson. That would be a nice fit. But yeah, coming out of Jacksonville and coming up here would be nice.

As a board member, the Tour schedule is so incredibly complex to lay it out. I'm actually after Thanksgiving going to set down with Jay and just going to lay out what he's thinking -- Jay Monahan -- for the next three or four years.

When we first got into this eight years ago, I thought, this is simple, I'm going to go right here. Well, it's not that simple. There's so many factors that are involved. So it's a give and take, a push and pull. Hopefully we've settled in where we are now and we asked the Tour to commit to more than just one year of doing it and it's worked out the last few years. Look at the field, we're pretty happy with where we are right now.

Q. I guess you just answered it, but is it too early to tell how the new schedule in 2019, the PGA shift, the player shifting the FedExCup, is it too early to tell how it might affect this?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, it's too early. We're going to open up a few weeks obviously after

the Playoffs and so there's a lot of moving parts to that. In the Olympics, I think in the big vision of Olympics is good for golf, it was good for golf and I don't argue that, but it's messed up our schedule. It throws another -- every Ryder Cup year, home game Ryder Cup year it throws a wrench in our plans. We just have to -- there's a lot of moving parts. But no, it's too early to tell when the Playoffs, when the PGA switches, I'm confused on it so I know if a board member's still confused on it, the Tour's still working it out.

Q. Davis, I was looking at some of the things you do with your tournament to raise money for charity and the Birdies for Love, is that something that you created here?

DAVIS LOVE III: We didn't create it, we copied it.

Q. Who did you copy it from?

DAVIS LOVE III: From other tournaments. We were in a meeting I guess it was maybe four or five years ago and I was obviously not paying attention, and then all of a sudden somebody said, well, the John Deere Classic does X amount of dollars with their birdies program and I said, Whoa, whoa, say that again?

We got really interested in that and we tried it and I think the first few years we were, you know, \$100,000 or something. We didn't do that well with it.

Then RSM saw us trying, and so many things they see us -- we want to do a caddie hospitality and make it nice, they go, okay, we'll pay for it. Anything we come up with, they jump in. They said you've tried this, let us try it. We're going to go to our offices around the country and we're going to raise money in each office and create some awareness of what we're doing with the tournament.

I don't know what they did the first year, but last year they did \$1.5 million. I should know what they did the first year. Maybe Melanie knows. But \$2 million this year, three and a half million dollars in two years for a program that we just saw that John Deere was successful with it. It's just incredible.

And they are into it. Like I was at the Boston office earlier this year and they're raising money for Birdies for Love, but also have created all these other programs in their community spinning off of that. Then they're getting their money back -- the money comes to us, they wrote us a check for \$2 million last night at the pro-am draw party, but the money goes back to each individual community that raised that money.

We do some programs here, too, where we match; if somebody goes out and raises money, we match that. So partnering with RSM, it made it really work. Obviously they're banking on our name and the golf tournament, but they're the ones doing all the legwork. Obviously our volunteers do the legwork here, but their volunteers in their offices do it. It's just been incredible.

We talked about it over the last few days. I want to go do some research on the PGA TOUR about these birdies programs and who's doing the most. I know John Deere -- I'm pretty sure John Deere's the leader in the clubhouse. I think they do a better job with it than anybody else, but the smaller market tournaments like us have to be creative and do things to -- you know, I don't know the exact number. We did \$600,000 or \$700,000 locally and \$1.5 million nationally. So we raised a lot of money last year, but like Dallas or Phoenix, they're doing \$6, \$8, \$10 million. But the economic impact and the money we donate here is huge for our town.

Q. And you also have something similar to I think what they do on a couple of Web.com Tour events where local and regional charities can sell tickets to the tournament. Can you explain how that works?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. If they sell the tickets, they get the money. We don't make any money off of it. So it's a way when somebody comes to us and says, will you give us the money, we say sure, you sell tickets, we'll give you the money.

Q. And you get to keep it?

DAVIS LOVE III: So that way we choose some major charities that we support financially and then give the opportunity for anybody. And again, we learned that John Deere has so many smaller charities all around the Quad Cities and the four states and probably a farther reach through how big John Deere is that they support just by little programs like that.

It really spreads it out. We don't just say we're just doing Boys and Girls Club and Special Olympics, we touch so many other charities through those programs.

Q. How much of a help do you think it is for the PGA TOUR to have well-known players associated with different tournaments like you are with this one and Steve Stricker and Zach Johnson -- not that Zach isn't here, but Zach Johnson has been with the Quad Cities. He always calls that his fifth major. Do you think that that's a trend that we can look for in the future?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I think what I saw was Jack Nicklaus with the Memorial tournament and Arnold Palmer in Orlando, that they were -- that was the next thing in their giving back to the game was to create a golf tournament, to support a golf tournament, to have a tournament at their home course. You know, I recognized that, Tiger recognizes that, Steve recognizes that. So many other guys may not have their name on it, but it's kind of their home tournament and they support it. Zach Johnson is on the board at the John Deere and it's a big part of what he does for the year is support the John Deere Classic.

So yes, it is important. But we have 150-something guys here that are doing that for me, for the Tour week in and week out, and one of them will be one day in the Hall of Fame and they will be trying to do this in their community. So we're just continuing on what Arnold and Jack taught us, and they learned it from the local communities that started the tournaments

that they played in. They said, hey, I want to do that in Orlando and build a hospital. Arnold saw the power of what he had helped create and he wanted to do it in his hometown, so it's a big part of what we do.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: That first year of birdies for Love in 2012, it was \$16,000.

DAVIS LOVE III: So we've grown a little, added a bunch of zeroes. \$16,000. It was a great idea that we had and RSM executed it very well.

Q. Quick question going back to the scheduling. I realize you're still awaiting the briefing from Jay, but you mentioned something about putting some space after the Playoffs. Do you understand that there are going to be open dates?

DAVIS LOVE III: No. When the Playoffs slide back, that leaves more room to start -- a longer start to the season after the Playoffs. So what goes where, there's a lot of talk about, you know. The guys at Sanderson would love to have a date. There's a lot of people that would like to have a date, an unencumbered, not an opposite date.

I think the worst thing for us is just to leave a month open. Somebody's going to fill it if we leave it open. So no, I don't think there will be open weeks, it's just a matter of who goes where. If you slide back two weeks, three weeks, those guys have to go the other direction. Somebody has to move behind it if you're ahead of it.

So we're talking about maybe losing one -- shortening the Playoffs by one week. That's only one week. So if you slide it back, somebody has to jump ahead. The mechanics of it, I remember sitting with Andy Padzer one time going, Why am I here, and he started showing me all these reasons. How do you ever figure out a schedule? People complain, well, they haven't released but eight weeks of the schedule they haven't released for next year. I say, if you only knew how hard it is to put it together, and one sponsor pulls out and you don't know if they're going to be replaced two years down the road, throws a whole other wrench in it. It's amazing to me that they get it done.

Now, I'm still going to go complain and beg for my day. I'm going to try to yell louder than everybody else and get what I want, but I also understand when they say, This is your date, make it work, then we'll make it work.

Q. Davis, I know you've dealt with various injuries, you had the thumb thing this year and you say your hip and other things, but if you can get healthy, how motivated are you to play these days?

DAVIS LOVE III: I still love playing. Pat Perez all week over at Malaysia goes, What in the world with you doing here? I'm trying to be you and it's just not working.

I just love to play. I don't want to give up on the PGA TOUR. There's a lot of goals now to kind of refocus. Obviously now if I win, I am the oldest to have ever won on the PGA TOUR.

Little things like Jeff Knox is going to play with Peyton Manning tomorrow. I said, Tell Peyton he gave me a lot of confidence that I could come back and play and win.

When I had my neck surgery, I said I don't want to just retire and go do TV and be happy, I wanted to have neck surgery and come back and win.

I'm just motivated to stay out there and play. I've had -- this week Robby Shelton's trying to play and all these young kids, and Dru Love and all these kids I'm hanging around with. I don't want to give up on playing with them.

I love my weeks on the Champions Tour and I know I'll be there maybe next year, maybe the year after I'll be out there playing full time. But even Dru asked me, he said, You're going to play at least 15 tournaments a year the next 10 years? I said, I sure hope so. He just couldn't believe it, and he's seen me play for 30-plus years.

Never a doubt in my mind that on one tour or another I want to play at least 15, play a full schedule. That's my dilemma with TV. If I do 17 events on the TV, can I still play 15 or 20 events on the Tour? That's why I haven't really committed to do anything other than playing.

Q. Is having Dru now playing kind of keep the fires burning for you on this tour specifically?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I enjoyed watching him play at Sanderson but I was mad that I missed the cut by one. So I was out there for two days walking around, that was a weird feeling. Miss the cut and then watch two days. I usually am gone in two hours, much less stay another two days. But it's fun, yeah. Sure, I want to watch him or help him if I can.

I watched the Tom Kite induction speech again last night. He didn't really realize how much he was helping me. I don't think I really realized how much I was helping Patton Kizzire. He thanks me for helping him. I don't think I did anything really for Patton but obviously Tom Kite didn't realize what he was doing for me. If I can do that for Dru Love or any of these kids that are hanging around here and stay out and play, then that makes it more fun for me.

But I'm not going to stay and play if I can't compete. If I'm scratching to make cuts, I'm not going to do it. But if I think there's a chance, I had a couple weeks this year, even Malaysia I felt like I was competitive. I had a couple bad holes, but I felt I was competitive.

Yeah, you're right, if I can get healthy and eight more miles an hour clubhead speed by spring, I'll be all right. I don't want even want to go on TrackMan right now, don't tell me how slow it's going.

Q. Davis, in late July we were up here visiting, you mentioned all you knew about your induction speech was Tom was going to introduce you. I would like to know what was the evolution of what actually happened during your speech where the turkey call and the different drivers and then finally bringing Eloise out there. What

was your thought process and were you concerned at all about Eloise kind of coming out and then --

DAVIS LOVE III: She was the coolest customer of anybody behind stage because she was promised some gummy worms if she would come out there and stand with me for a little bit.

I would ask you, how did I do from summer when I had no idea what I was going to do? But you know Michael Bamberger and Michael and I talked about it. I tried to do it on my own because I didn't want -- I wanted to talk about Michael maybe. I said, I'm going to do this on my own, and it didn't work. So Michael bailed me out two or three weeks to go and we started talking about it.

I actually watched whatever the awards show was a few weeks before the Hall of Fame that the Hollywood awards were, Emmys or Oscars or whatever it was. They got up there and they talked about people that I didn't know who they are. They thanked a bunch of people who I didn't know who they were, and I didn't want to get up and really bore people but not have a message.

I went back and looked at -- Freddie's speech was great, I watched that several times and I learned something about Fred Couples and where he came from.

I watched a couple NFL Hall of Fame speeches that were popular, that people liked, and it was more giving a message and saying what they believed in rather than thanking their coach or their mom or their dad or their cousin, who we don't know.

So I tried to go in a different direction. I got cut in half. I had an iron skillet and a motorcycle helmet and a President Trump joke and it all got cut out, so someday I need to release the entire script because it was very good. Talked about my mom and bologna sandwiches and iron skillet and I pulled out an iron skillet. I couldn't pull it off in the amount of time. It went an hour over what it was supposed to already and I cut my speech in half. Gary Player kind of hijacked my 10 minutes.

It turned out okay. I was nervous and I kind of bumbled it a little bit, but Eloise saved the day in the end.

But I thought it was cool when I went to my mom's house a couple years ago and I found the 1964 crystal vase that my dad won. It was exactly the same as the one that I got every time I shot the low score. So I thought things like that that tied the history of the game and the values of the game and the traditions of the game.

We had a little more political stuff in the first couple versions we decided we had better bail out on. But because of the whole kneeling in the NFL, all those things were coming together for us to go to the Presidents Cup in New York and I just felt like, you know, stating what I believed in or what the game stands for was a better way to go.

Q. And finally, do you get those turkey calls for life now?

DAVIS LOVE III: I have plenty of turkey calls. You can ask Robin when you see her.

Q. What was that guy's name again, you said he was the Tiger Woods --

DAVIS LOVE III: Neil Cost is a legend. Who's the most famous club maker, Willie Parker? He's the man that everybody realizes is the best turkey call maker.

But there's probably 100 people in the country that got that joke, who Neil Cost was at the turkey call. But that's why I was going to do like the frying pan and the motorcycle. A few people would get it, but they would see that that's where I came from was traditions, you know.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: With that, we will continue on a new tradition of the 2017 RSM Classic here. Thank you, Davis.