

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 28, 2017



SERGIO GARCIA

MODERATOR: Sergio, welcome to Queensland and thank you so much for joining us at the Australian PGA Championship. It's fair to say we're all very excited. You, I think, arrived yesterday. Have you had a chance at all to get out and check out any of the Gold Coast, and if not, will you?

SERGIO GARCIA: I'm obviously also very excited to be back in Australia, a part of Australia that I've never been to, so it's great fun. We haven't really had much time. We got here yesterday and we were a little bit tired, relaxed, and a little more of today, same thing, just kind of relaxed a little bit. It's the last part of the year, so trying to make sure we control the energy levels for the week.

But yeah, no, it's beautiful. I mean, what we've seen, it's obviously beautiful. But I think the whole Australia is beautiful, one of my favorite countries. So we're extremely happy to be back here and going to enjoy the week, for sure.

Q. (Inaudible) last when you were here and how your year went?

SERGIO GARCIA: Last thing I played here in Australia? I think it was 2010, I want to say it was the Holden.

MODERATOR: The Masters maybe.

SERGIO GARCIA: Or the Masters maybe, yeah, in Melbourne. I don't really remember how I went. Obviously if I would have won I would have remembered, but I didn't. But yeah, I've always enjoyed -- like I said before, I've always enjoyed coming to Australia. Unfortunately, we haven't been here for a while, so it's nice to be back. I've always liked the courses that we play. I'm excited to see the course tomorrow. So like I said earlier, excited for the week and it will be a great one.

Q. Sergio, I know the Australian PGA worked on you for quite a while to get you to come down here, but what's the key motivation for the decision to come down here?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, there were several ones. Like I said earlier, I've always been a big fan of Australia. I've been talking to my managers for a couple years now saying, you know, I would love to go back. Japan is another place that I want to go back again because I haven't been there in a while. Everybody knows how much I love to play all over the world. So that was one of the biggest motivations to be back here, which is a place I enjoy coming back and playing. I think it's quite simple when it gets down to that, it's places that you want to be.

My wife, Angela, she's never been to Australia, so it's the first time and it's also a good experience for her. So it was just a great combination of things to make it down here.

Q. Sergio, obviously the Masters was very significant in your own career, and from a national point of view, what did that mean to your nation?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, I think it's been extremely positive. I think everybody was really excited. You could see it, I don't know if you got to see the El Clasico, Real Madrid against Barcelona, so I was really, really excited about it. It was a big boost of confidence for the game of golf in Spain I think, which unfortunately has been struggling the last few years with losing players and unfortunately those kind of things.

So I think that with our Masters win, with the year that Spanish golf has had worldwide, with Jon Rahm playing really great and getting some victories. I think we had nine wins on -- I think eight wins on the European Tour and then obviously the win from Jon Rahm at the beginning of the year and my Masters win. So it's been a very successful year for Spanish golf and hopefully it helps kind of bring back some of those people that kind of went away from the game the last few years, you know, get some good mojo again when it comes down to golf in Spain.

Q. After you win your first major, you've now got 14 new golf clubs in the bag, new golf ball, is it an exciting change and how's the change going, and is it something to get excited about changing golf equipment?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, not the 14 clubs are brand new. Obviously I played a couple of them. In Valderrama I won with a couple of like the putter and the wedge from Callaway.

So it is exciting. I mean it's been 15 years with the same company, so it is a change. But the feeling that I've gotten in this three, four weeks that I've been trying the new Callaway stuff, it's been very positive. I had a really good week in Dubai last week. If I would have -- I just couldn't get a hold of the greens, but if I would have putted a little bit better, I could have easily had a chance at winning the way I played.

But it's like you said, yeah, the ball is probably the biggest worry that you always have, but from what I've seen I'm very happy about it. Obviously there's still some things that we can tweak here and there to make it better. So it's going to be interesting to have another week here where we test it again, where we get more feedback, I can give more feedback to the guys at Callaway back in the U.S. and make sure that starting next year we're all set and ready to go.

Q. It's obviously been seven months or so since the win at the Masters. Has it surprised you the change in your life since that victory in terms of pressure from the media and the attention that it's brought in Spain and just wherever you go, has that been more difficult to adjust to?

SERGIO GARCIA: Not really. Fortunately or unfortunately for me, that expectation and that kind of outside pressure has always been there. So the way I look at it is, you know, I mean obviously I'm extremely honored to call myself the Masters champion and to try to help the game of golf not only in Spain but all over the world.

I think at the end of the day it just -- what matters is what I expect from myself. You know, I know what I want to do and if someone comes to me and says, Next year you should win six times and one or two majors. I know what I want to do and I know where my expectations are and I know what I need to improve on. So if I can do that, I know that my game is still in great shape. And I'm still fairly young, so I can still achieve many, many things. But it's fun to be able to have those possibilities and kind of put some nice expectations for yourself.

Q. Sergio, we had Adam bring the green jacket home to us four years ago. Have you had a moment in the seven months where you realized the magnitude and how far it's reached, whether it's at Clasico or at Valderrama, was there a moment you've realized how far beyond the green jacket reaches?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, definitely, several times. And I've said it several times, I knew -- well, I thought I knew how big the Masters was and the green jacket and how much it meant, but then once you win it and you start traveling with it and you see the reaction from not only the people but the players and everything, you realize how massive it is and how much of an icon that the green jacket is.

So it's been amazing. It's been a little bit overwhelming I would say. It also shows you the respect that you need to give to that green jacket. You know, once you become a Masters champion, there's a lot of things that you have to be careful. You have to take care of it and you just can't do freely, you have to know that a lot of eyes are on you even more than before and you want to show what's best not only for yourself but for the game.

Q. Sergio, just wondering if you had the opportunity to -- have you been picking the brains of some of your fellow players, Adam, about Royal Pines and what it will take to score well?

SERGIO GARCIA: Not much. Unfortunately, I haven't seen Scotty yet, but I've heard the greens are tricky. I've heard the greens are where the course really defends itself. So obviously it's going to be a week where iron play is going to be key to be accurate and try to leave yourself in the best spots on the greens. And then when you miss some of those greens, well, then you're going to have some tricky chips. I heard it's quite grainy around the greens so your strike has to be extremely accurate and to be able to hit good chips and hit it close to the hole. So it's just a matter of, like I said, probably iron play is going to be key and just when you miss a green here and there, chipping and putting is going to be important.

Q. You mentioned kickoff for the Clasico. What else did you have to do? (Inaudible.)

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, not as exciting as that.

Q. (No microphone.)

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, but we've had the pleasure of doing a good amount of things. Obviously we went to Wimbledon, sat in the box with the green jacket to watch some of the matches there at center court, that was exciting. We've done some events here and there for charities and stuff, so it's been a lot of fun.

But like I said, at the same time you have to be careful with what you do because you can't just do whatever you want with it. So you have to really take care of the things you do and make sure that you respect not only the green jacket but all the members at Augusta.

Q. (No microphone.)

SERGIO GARCIA: From Cristiano? No, no. Obviously I saw him there. I've met him a couple of times but I'm friendlier with like Sergio Ramos and like a couple other guys from the team. Gareth Bale, for example. They did text me and stuff, but Cristiano, I know him, but I don't think he's a huge golf fan.

Q. Sergio, when Scotty won, he brought the green jacket down. Do you have it?

SERGIO GARCIA: Of course. What kind of question that?

Q. When will we get to see it?

SERGIO GARCIA: Tonight, tonight, yeah.

Q. When you're at home, where does it usually stay?

SERGIO GARCIA: Usually in the closet. No, sorry. I mean we keep it at home, try to make sure that it doesn't get dirty, things like that. Like I said before, the green jacket, it's very respectful so you can't just wear it wherever you want. Like, sorry, if I don't say this probably my wife would kill me, obviously one of the very important moments where I wore the green jacket was at my wedding. But yeah, you have to be respectful for it and you can't just wear it to go for dinner anytime you want.

So I like to use it when it's really important and when it's worth it, and when it's not, I like to give it a rest and make sure that it's fine.

Q. Tiger's returning this week. How exciting is it from your perspective?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I think it's exciting not only from my perspective but from a golf perspective. I think it's going to be interesting to see how he does not only golf-wise but physically and mentally. When you haven't played or you've played so little in the last I want

to say four years, three, four years, it's not easy to come back and play well. But I guess the course they're playing at is probably the perfect course for him to come back. It's not a course that is putting a lot of pressure on you off the tees or something like that.

But it's going to be interesting to see how he does physically and mentally, and hopefully see if he's able to keep going because he's come back a couple of times and then played for a couple months and then he's out again, so hopefully that doesn't happen. We'll see.

Q. Sergio, obviously you're the marquee player or certainly one of the few.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.

Q. During the tail end of the season, it's obviously your body and mentally you're ready to unwind. Does it make these events a lot harder, or as a professional you've just got to accept that you've got to get up and perform every week you show up?

SERGIO GARCIA: No. Well, I think that, yeah, when it gets towards the end of the year everybody gets a little bit tired, not only myself but everyone else, looking forward to holidays and Christmas and stuff.

But at the end of the day, like you said, we are professionals and when we stand there on the first tee, you know, we try to do the best we can every single week. Obviously, I'm not going to lie to you, last week I was a little bit tired and probably because of that mentally I wasn't quite as sharp and probably that's why I struggled a little bit on the greens more than I usually do. But that doesn't mean that if I get in a good rhythm here I can have a great week.

I am excited about Christmas and some down time, but at the same time, like I said, I'm real excited about this week because I haven't played in Australia for a long time and I'm excited to play in front of all the Aussies again and I get to enjoy them as much as they will enjoy me.

Q. You mentioned the wedding before. Pretty fair to say that American fans probably weren't always the kindest to you. Has that changed since you won the Masters and then married an American girl? Have you noticed a bigger shift?

SERGIO GARCIA: It was all well planned. No, I'm kidding. I do have to say, and I've always said this, I feel very fortunate the way I've been treated all over the world, and that doesn't change in the U.S. Obviously there is a group that no matter what you do, they're always going to be a little bit rougher.

I do feel like, yeah, after winning the Masters, probably that group has gotten smaller but there's still always going to be a group there because, you know, they're out there, they're drinking, they're trying to be funny, probably out with their friends. It's not only to me, they do it even to American players. So those things unfortunately happen, but yeah, I mean,

you could say that probably that group, it's probably gotten a little bit smaller after that, after both the Masters and probably marrying Angela and everything. So it's obviously something that it's always, as a player, as a person, it's always welcome to see.

Q. Did the green jacket go with Angela's dress?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah. I mean, green always goes with white.

Q. Secondly, you've got five months to plan the menu. What do you expect at the champions dinner?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I've already started working on it, but I'm not going to tell you what it is. Obviously, yeah, it's going to be very Spanish, some of my favorite dishes. And hopefully I'm pretty confident that the people will enjoy it and I'm excited about it. I know Scotty is looking forward to it because we talked about it.

Q. Sergio, I'm assuming from what you said this is your last golfing engagement of the year. Is it?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes.

Q. So where does 2017 sit in the professional career of Sergio Garcia as a year?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, I mean, it sits on top. I think 2017 and 2008 are definitely the best years I've had in my career. This one, it's a little bit more special because I won three times in Europe, which I've never done in my career; obviously winning the Masters, getting married, you know, expecting a little baby girl. So it is definitely a top. But yeah, like I said, 2008 would be second and then some other ones.

Q. Sergio, just wondering, you mentioned down time. The Gold Coast is renowned as a holiday destination here in Australia. Will you get the opportunity to do anything on the Gold Coast while you're here?

SERGIO GARCIA: Unfortunately, not much. We'll try to see a little bit of it. Hopefully the day that we play (inaudible) and go for a nice dinner, stuff like that. We do have planned just a short holiday in New Zealand next week that we're excited about because neither of us have been to New Zealand and we've always heard great things about it. So I think it's going to be a great way to finish the year between being in Hong Kong where Angela has never been there before, I had been there once before; here in Australia and finish in New Zealand. So we're excited about ending the year there and come back and kind of relax a little bit.

MODERATOR: Sergio, thank you so much for joining us today. Best of luck this week.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.