

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW

January 29, 2018



JASON DAY (-10, won playoff)

DOUG MILNE: We will go ahead and get started. We'd like to welcome the 2015 and now 2018 Farmers Insurance Open champion Jason Day. Jason, took a little extra time but congratulations on getting the job done. Your 11th career PGA TOUR victory and with the victory move inside the top-10 within the FedExCup standings and obviously a win that's really jump started something that you've been striving for for quite a while. With that said, just a few comments on getting the job done this week.

JASON DAY: Yeah, I mean, it is special to be able to win here again. Like I said earlier on the putting green, this was my first win when I first came over here as a junior, I won the World Junior Championships here, and being able to win in 2015 really propelled me to a really great year. I won my first major, got to No. 1 in the world and I'm hoping to do much of the same this year. Obviously the preparation and the hard work over the holidays has really paid off early quickly so I need to make sure that I stay on top of it.

Playing all week, with how things were at the start of the week with my back, like I said earlier, I had an MRI I think a week and a half ago just to see what was going on in there because for a good week and a half it was just I couldn't bend over and hit a golf ball. But coming into Palm Springs I was able to get it sorted out and get ready for this week, which was nice. You know, yesterday played really difficult. I mean the winds were up, there was a massive backup, I played with CT Pan, he made an 8 on 3. Just to put -- show you how hard it was, it was 131 yards on 3 and Rose laid up to the right on a par 3. When you're laying up on a par 3, that really shows how difficult the conditions were yesterday. So being able to get through the first nine holes 4 under and I knew the back nine, it's always tough for me but it's always tough for everyone. So being able to get through there and just give myself a shot was great.

The night prior I actually called Tiger and asked how his day went. He said he hit three fairways, but his short game was solid. I asked him about momentum because in every sport there's momentum, how to control that, and his piece of advice was not to make a bogey.

So I tried my best, but unfortunately I made a couple bogeys coming home. It's great to be in the winner's circle again. I'm really, really pleased. This is a good kickoff to start the year and hopefully bigger things to come.

Q. Mate, just talk more to the motivation of getting back to the top of the game. This is, like you just said, a potential springboard to get that going again and just your desire to do that?

JASON DAY: Yeah, I think last year was a good kick in the butt, you know, not really being talked about -- and being talked about for the wrong reasons. Obviously take my mum and stuff out of the equation, but just I see the guys winning, Jordan and Dustin's playing some tremendous golf, Jon Rahm's playing some tremendous golf, and I feel like I should be there as well winning.

I've said it for the longest time, I've always wanted to be the No. 1 player in the world. I got there for 51 weeks but I've always wanted to be a dominant No. 1 player in the world and that is going to take time. That's going to take a lot of hard work and dedication because I know how hard it is to get to No. 1 in the world and I know the quality of play is that fighting to get to No. 1 as well.

So I'm going to have to work twice as hard, I'm going to have to give my life to this for the next 10, 15 years to be able to hopefully achieve that goal one day. Yeah, like I said last year wasn't a great year. I was thoroughly disappointed in how I performed but also on the back end of that being able to get through to Tour Champs, I thought I was going to play the first two FedExCup events and be done and I somehow played some really nice golf going into it. Got through to the last two and finished 17th, which was okay. But being able to start off this year, I know that I've got a win now, I've got to keep trying to build and build and build and hopefully win the FedEx Cup at the end of the year.

Q. Jason, you talked about just the win here in 2015 propelled you toward No. 1 and the phenomenal year that you had. Can you talk specifically about what that win did for you and how it propelled you to that?

JASON DAY: Yeah, so I think it gave me more confidence that I actually really do belong out here because prior to that I didn't really win too much. Knowing that under the pump I can hit the certain shots because during that playoff I hit a lot of good quality shots, hit a great chip in the playoff to extend it, and then to hit the 5-iron that I did on the 16th hole to finish it off was great. You know, I knew that it was just coming and it happened and I kind of went on a little bit of a break there during the middle part, but right after the British Open things just kind of started clicking for me. I know right now that everything's great and I've just won the tournament, but I'm really looking forward to getting back to work and trying to win the next tournament that I enter.

Q. Just to follow up, do you feel this win may signal the return to that 2015 form?

JASON DAY: I hope so, I really do. I feel different this year than what I did last year. Last year I felt mentally stressed but also rundown, burnt out. It was hard for me to be on the golf course, but this year my whole mindset's different. I'm very motivated to get back to the No. 1 spot and I know that the only way to get back to the No. 1 spot is win and that's what I've just got to do.

Q. I'm just curious what it was like for you to be a part of this unique Monday finish and to be finishing without the crowd there?

JASON DAY: Yeah, it was a little strange but we did have a few people up in the stands, which was nice. A Monday finish is not what -- you know, it's great to finish the tournament and all, but it would have been nice to finish yesterday with all the people there. But myself, Alex and Ryan hit some nice golf shots coming down the stretch in the playoff. Going shot for shot was pretty cool with Alex over that five-hole stretch, and unfortunately we just couldn't get it -- we just didn't want to give it up.

Being able to come back this morning, it was really unfortunate for him to hit it in the water because I know how good of a shot he actually hit there because that's really tough to go with a 3-wood into a green like that.

And it's almost -- I think it's almost a blessing that I actually missed the fairway knowing that I had to lay up and knowing that I kind of worked on that number before, actually went out there, I was on the range hitting that exact same number.

Yeah, to finish on a Monday is kind of like eerily quiet, but it's a different feeling. Like I said, I would play until Wednesday if I need to to try to get that win. That's why we get up every morning and practice. This win is just as special as the first one.

Q. Two questions. The first one is you mentioned you were on your third-string caddie, how did that come about?

JASON DAY: Well, Luke, who caddied for me the end of last year, his visa took forever and then it's still being processed. And then my other buddy who was supposed to be here last week, David, he used to play on the PGA TOUR, David Lutterus, and he was going to be my second string -- I keep calling them second string, they're all good players, great players and great caddies, I shouldn't say that. My second-in-line guy, his visa got kind of pushed back as well. So my third guy, Rika, he's marrying an American and I knew that he's in here already. So I was like I've got to grab someone, either grab him or grab someone out of the crowd. The thing is with Rika, he's my best mate and we grew up together. We've known each other since we were like eight, nine years old. We played golf together for a very, very long time. He knows my game and I know his game and he's a professional golfer. But to have him on the bag first week out, he was nervous because I kind of threw him in the deep end quick. We're in a group in front of Tiger's group, there's people everywhere. Even up until yesterday I'm telling him, go get his ball, go get his ball like to playing partners when playing partners hit in the bunkers he might just be standing there, I'm looking at him in the fourth round, I'm like you've got to go get his ball, making sure there's that like common courtesy. He did a fantastic job. The great thing is I wanted to win this tournament for myself but to be able to impact him because we're childhood friends and the hard work that put in over the last two weeks, it's really going to help him and his wife, his new wife Katie along the way.

Q. The second question, last night you know you're coming back, you could play one hole, you could play 18 holes, how do you sleep?

JASON DAY: I didn't sleep well. No, I didn't sleep well at all. No, it was tough. And I asked Rika this morning, How did you sleep, and he goes, No, I was up.

The crazy thing is you feel like you're going to go out and play 18 holes again but you're not, you're actually coming out like okay, I've got to make sure I beat this guy I have to make sure I beat this guy because it could be over in one hole, which it was and luckily I was on the right side of it.

Yeah, you kind of -- you're nervous but on the other hand you're not. Like I said yesterday, I was more nervous in regulation than I was in the actual playoff, and the same thing happened today, I was just kind of really calm about it because I knew that I had a shot. It was just me and him and I kind of like that match play scenario. I've won two WGC Match Plays and going one on one I actually really like that.

Q. Jason, just housekeeping, first of all, what was the yardage into the hole today and what was the club?

JASON DAY: 85 yards and it was a lob wedge, 60-degree.

Q. And how close was that yardage to all your shots yesterday?

JASON DAY: Yeah, so the first one was like 75 because I actually hit a little bit too far. Then the second one was like 79, 80 yards, so it was really close. I knew that as long as I could get a lob wedge, the greens were bouncing really firm. I don't put as much spin as Alex does. He obviously in the playoff on the first hole he hit it at least 10 past and he was back down that hill. I put spin on it, but not as much as him because he's a little bit more steeper on the ball and creates that.

But when I got up there and it was 85, I hit my lob wedge 95 yards, so I'm like this is perfect, just a little bit off, I can be aggressive at it, it will bounce past with how firm the greens were and spin back down. Luckily enough, it was to that because still over that putt like this far I was still nervous, I was like don't miss it, and I ended up holing it, which was nice.

Q. The back, did you get an answer on why it was hurting?

JASON DAY: Yeah.

Q. And also, you got off to a rough start, so did you have to kind of kick yourself in the butt --

JASON DAY: Yeah.

Q. -- to not get down after a tough start?

JASON DAY: Well, luckily enough, Benjie came up to me and said, You shot 1 over the first day in 2015 and then you went and played good on the north side. So that was a nice little -- you know, I was more confident in myself because I actually made five birdies that day on a course that's really tough. If I'm making a lot of birdies, I'm not too worried about it because I know that if I can tidy it up and keep those birdies there, I'll be around the lead somewhere.

Fortunately, I got off to a great start on Friday with 6 under through 9 holes and kind of just a couple on the back side, and then coming into the south side where we've had the U.S. Open here, it's a difficult golf course. You never know, I think on the weekends the leads don't go too far. I picked 13 under at the start of the week. I think with no wind yesterday, it definitely would have got to 13 under.

So once again, I chatted to Tiger about it and he's like just get -- pick one up on the front side, pick one up on the back side and go into 18 and try and shoot something in the 60s. Unfortunately, if I would have birdied the last hole I would have finished it off, so he was 100 percent right. But grabbing that experience from someone who's done it 80-plus times is kind of -- being able to chat to him. You can't really -- no one can really pick up the phone and say, hey, what do you think? So kind of picking his brain on how he thinks about chasing a lead down, making sure you're doing the right things out on the golf course really helps.

Q. Did you do that every day?

JASON DAY: No, I talked to him like Saturday night. I talked to him about momentum. I said sometimes when you're out there playing golf, sometimes you can feel it, you can go -- you're playing good golf. It was like on the Saturday I was playing really good golf on the front side but I just knew, I'm like, oh, no, I could feel a momentum switch. It's not so much like out of the blue, it's just like you've got a feeling inside that you know there's a momentum switch coming because you get off to a good start and you just kind of, it's like slowing down.

But yesterday was great because I played good the front side. I did have a hiccup on 11, but my short game really took over. Even though the iron play wasn't as spot on on the back side, my short game really took over, hit a lot of quality chip shots pretty close not giving up those pars. Like Tiger said, don't make a bogey, but it's easier said than done.

Q. Did you get an answer on the back?

JASON DAY: The back, it's just, it's something that I've dealt with since I was like 14 years old. Jimmy Bradley is my head doc, he's out of Pittsburgh, one of the smartest guys I know. He was talking to me about it, how my facet joints just got a little bit larger over the years just through constant wear and tear of hitting golf balls. When they get a little bit larger, they get a little bit closer to the nerve, and when they get close to the nerve and things kind of all align, your back can go out and you can get shooting pains down both legs. Even last night

to a certain degree I had pain going down my right leg.

But getting back to preparation, I know that I need to do my posture, my mobility exercises. I know that I need to go back and ice it straightaway and I need to heat it up every morning before I come. So I'm constantly doing stuff, I'm constantly about an hour, hour and a half of stuff every single day of just trying to maintain my back.

Q. I just want to get to Tiger, did he ask you anything about his game?

JASON DAY: Ask me?

Q. Yeah, because you're calling him for advice but he's just come back. I know you couldn't watch him.

JASON DAY: No. I told him, I said, dude, once you figure out the driver, once again, it's a little bit of rust, more so rust than anything because take out this tournament last year and Dubai which he really didn't play, he hadn't played in two years. So saying that, I said, your short game's spot on so you should know that your short game is spot on. Just hit a few more fairways, give yourself a few more opportunities.

I think he's going to win this year, personally, once he figures it out, once he gets some more competitive rounds under his belt. It's just hard because everyone's good now these days. I think it's not so much gone are the days that Tiger has that effect on you anymore, but Tiger's Tiger and he could come out and win the next event, but as long as he's like keeping it straight and narrow.

Q. My other question was you sort of touched on it earlier, you're 30 now, you're out of the young gun brigade, so to speak.

JASON DAY: Thanks.

Q. How much does it fire you up to see all the chat on Jordan, Justin, Rahm? These 22-, 23-year-olds, to be fair, have done a lot at a very young age.

JASON DAY: 100 percent, yeah. These guys are good and they're going to be good for a very long time. They're young, really young. They're early 20s, mid 20s, and like you said, I'm in my 30s. So what's so great about this day and age is that we have so much technology and we have -- as long as you get the right people around you, you can extend your career for as long as you want as long as you have the will and the motivation to keep pushing on.

You see it today with Tom Brady, you see it today with Roger Federer, who won his 20th Grand Slam which is unbelievable. He's one of my idols so it's awesome to see that. These guys are playing and they're a lot older, but they're still competitive. They have the competitive edge still in their mind, but with everything that they have on their team, they're

able to extend themselves, extend their longevity in their careers.

I'm hoping what I'm doing right now will extend that. If I'm around for a long time and I keep having more and more experience, hopefully winning will come a lot easier that way. I know that I have to compete against these young guys, so when I see -- this is my first event I walked in the locker room and walking around the family dining, I'm like, I have no idea who anyone is, you know what I mean? They all look different. It's good to see young and up-and-coming players like that because it keeps me hungry. I know I need to get in the gym because if I'm not in the gym, there's someone that's younger than me and more hungry than me to hit it past me or to hit it straighter than me or putt better than me, so it always keeps me going.

Q. How much more positively do you look on 2018 after this win?

JASON DAY: Last year, like I said, it was tough. It was a great year and a tough year because I just signed a deal with Nike the year prior, I extended the deal with TaylorMade. And Phil Knight and Curtis Graham from Nike to be able to put faith in me and wear the brand, and the Nike brand was a great confidence builder but unfortunately I didn't perform the way I wanted to. Being able to get off to a great start this year only sets up -- makes me more hungry and sets up major championships because, like I said out there on the putting green, I'm really focused on the major championships every year but I'm really looking forward to this week off to prepare for Pebble Beach and further on from there because I finished T-11 and T-11 in Korea and China and I'm just trying to build from there.

DOUG MILNE: Jason, congratulations.

JASON DAY: Thank you, guys.