

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
February 27, 2018

HAOTONG LI



Q. Just talk about this week. How excited are you to be here for your first WGC Mexico Championship?

HAOTONG LI: So very exciting because such a big event and hopefully I can play well this week.

Q. Obviously winning in Dubai with Rory in that final day, memorable, but how's the form been since Dubai and coming here? Are you comfortable with where you are right now with your game?

HAOTONG LI: Actually, quite comfortable, especially since Dubai gave me a lot of experience. So just give me a lot of confidence, it will help me go through a lot of big events now.

Q. You played obviously a lot in the WGC HSBC Champions back home in Shanghai, you had a T7 there a couple years ago. When you come to this sort of event, there's 45 of the top 50 players in the world here this week, what's important for you to try to go out and do on Thursday morning in your first round?

HAOTONG LI: I think just play my game and enjoy the competition and stay patient. I think this is the key, especially this week, it's narrow fairways and you need to play smart.

Q. You played nine holes yesterday, I believe. Narrow fairways, but how is the golf course a challenge for you and does it fit your eye?

HAOTONG LI: Actually, yeah, quite fit my eyes. Have lot of 3-iron off the tee and also have a lot of short iron in second shots. I think distance control is going to be important this week.

Q. Looking back at the Dubai where you birdied four of the last six holes to come back from one shot behind Rory to win it, when you think of that, what gives you a lot of pride and a lot of satisfaction of knowing that you can do that in such a big tournament against a top player in the world?

HAOTONG LI: Actually, I didn't thought I could win, I didn't realize I can win since last par I made after because Rory is a superstar and actually I just, when I played that day, I think just being really, really calm for some reason and felt like nothing to lose. I think that's why I played good.

Q. Do you think this sort of experience and those sort of moments that you enjoyed

like in Dubai will help you as you go along in your career and playing in big tournaments when you have a chance to win maybe a World Golf Championship or major championship later on in your career?

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, I think for sure, for sure help a lot for play big events for me because, you know, you're against Rory and he's one of the best in the world player. If you can beat him, you can beat everyone.

Q. How is the response back home in China after you won Dubai, you spent some time at home as well after I think Malaysia. Was it a big celebration, was everyone real excited for you, and was there a big party after that?

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, pretty much everyone's like on the phone and just send me a lot of message, probably over 1,000 at least, whatever. Yeah, they happy for me and they wish me play well, continue, keep going.

Q. Does that inspire you, does that encourage you to try and achieve more in what you want to do in your young career?

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, yeah.

Q. You're still only 22, 23.

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, long way to go. Just need to play some good golf.

Q. Top 50 in the world right now, obviously getting into the Genesis Open, having the four rounds there. Is playing on the PGA TOUR regularly, is that the ultimate goal, and do you think it's within reach? How close are you to getting to that goal of yours?

HAOTONG LI: Well, I don't really know that because I get in four majors and WGC events. I think I have big chance to get card this year, so we'll see how I do it.

Q. Presidents Cup, you were close to the ultimate selection last year. With the Presidents Cup coming up against in 2019 in Australia, is that something that's within your goal to try and get on the international team?

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, for sure, since last time I was nearly there but not in, not got in. But this year was quite close, so just need to play well and keep play well and then hopefully get in next year.

Q. Do you have any recollection of the Presidents Cup when you were maybe a bit younger, say hey, you know what, I want to play that event, represent China?

HAOTONG LI: For sure.

Q. When was that?

HAOTONG LI: Because not any Chinese play there before, so I want to be that first.

Q. And THE PLAYERS Championship as well, top 50 will probably get you into THE PLAYERS Championship in Ponte Vedra in a couple months' time. Is that also within the short-term goal of yours, to stay within the top 50?

HAOTONG LI: Yeah, for sure, because those big events, it's really hard to miss, right?