

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
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ALFREDO DEL MAZO
BENJAMIN SALINAS
TY VOTAW

TANIA RINCON: I would like to welcome the fans and the international press, because together we are going to tell the story of the WGC Mexico Championship and prove that we are changing the history of this sport in Mexico.

We are joined today by Benjamin Salinas Sada, CEO of Azteca; Ty Votaw of the PGA TOUR. Thank you for being with us.

Miguel Angel Mancera, governor of Mexico City; Carlos Alberto Acra, sports minister of the State of Mexico; and the man of the moment who we're all very proud of, Abraham Ancer, the Mexican player who will be representing us during the WGC Mexico Championship.

Now we ask Ty Votaw to come up to the podium and give us a few words.

TY VOTAW: Thank you very much, and bienvenidos a todos. It's a pleasure to be here on behalf of the PGA TOUR for this, the second edition of the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship.

I first want to thank the members of the media who are here and who are covering the event this week. This event will be broadcast in over 227 countries and territories and over a billion households across the globe, and the stories that you tell this week will help us tell the story of how we brought this event to Mexico and we're starting a new tradition and legacy by having a PGA TOUR and WGCs here this week. To Benjamin and the entire Grupo Salinas team, we can't thank you enough for everything you've done. Your vision and your commitment to bringing this event to Mexico is one that we are very proud to be a part of and one that we are looking forward to continuing for many years to come.

It also says a lot about this event when we have public officials such as Governor Mancera and General Acra with us here today. Thank you very much for opening your arms to us and making us feel so welcome. Everyone in the field this week and everyone associated with this event is very excited to return to Club de Golf Chapultepec once again this year. We had a wonderful event last year. The hospitality and the hosting by everyone associated with Chapultepec and its members was something our players took away as wonderful memories and we're looking forward to creating new memories this year.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate Abraham as Mexico's representative in a tournament that's the top-ranked player from Mexico. This must be a special week for you and we look forward to seeing you represent your wonderful country.

This week we have 45 of the top 50 players in the world rankings highlighted by our defending champion Dustin Johnson, who sits at No. 1 in the world. Others joining include our defending FedExCup champion and current FedExCup leader Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth, Jon Rahm, Rickie Fowler, Phil Mickelson, Justin Rose, just to name a few. While the WGC Mexico Championship is a major step toward growing the game in Mexico, the PGA TOUR's presence is already very visible in this country across every level of the PGA TOUR. Everyone that's familiar with the OHL Classic at Mayakoba, which has been a mainstay on the PGA TOUR since 2007 and is a strong part of our season-opening schedule, or just next week when the Web.com will travel to Leon for the El Bosque Mexico Championship where players will fight to secure a spot on the PGA TOUR next season. And we always are thrilled to have the PGA TOUR Latinoamerica and the Mexican Open set to take place in Tijuana.

Everyone seated up here today shares a common goal, which is to grow the game of golf in Mexico and we feel a championship of this magnitude and importance will be a catalyst to inspiring the next generation of golfers from this country and this region.

So on behalf of the PGA TOUR, it is great to be back in Mexico City and we look forward to another exciting championship this week. Thank you very much.

TANIA RINCON: Thank you so much. Now we invite Carlos Alberto Acra to the podium.

CARLOS ALBERTO ACRA: Thank you, and hello to everyone. Thank you to Benjamin Salinas and Miguel Angel Mancera and all the guests. It's an honor for the State of Mexico, for Naucalpan in the State of Mexico to host the World Golf Championships for the second time. This is, of course, very important to the State of Mexico and for the country, and I'm here in representation of Alfredo del Mazo and he asks me to tell everyone that we are open to working with Grupo Salinas as we have been doing, and we're interested in participating in The First Tee.

We know that sport is fundamental to helping with people's quality of life, and this kind of World Golf tournament helps us to promote sport in Mexico. We are happy to work again with the government of Mexico City, who this year is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Olympic Games. And we are happy to be a part of this party that has a lot of famous Mexican figures like Jorge Campos.

I am pleased to welcome you all to the State of Mexico. We applaud Benjamin Salinas for this initiative that has great social impact that benefits kids and young people in Mexico. Thank you to everyone and welcome to the State of Mexico.

TANIA RINCON: Thank you very much, Mr. Carlos Alberto, and now we would like to welcome the man of the moment, the man who has the responsibility of being the only Mexican player in the field, Abraham Ancer.

ABRAHAM ANCER: Good day to everyone. First of all, I would like to say that I am very proud to be representing Mexico during this week. I'm sure it's going to be an incredible week and I'm very happy to have a huge event like this in Mexico City.

I know it's not easy to have an event like this, but it's definitely a dream come true for me. I would like to thank Benjamin Salinas and Grupo Salinas, all the sponsors of the event, and the people joining me here on the podium for helping make this dream come true. I feel I am prepared and ready to go, I'm very confident, and I would like to put Mexico in the place it deserves, on the World Golf stage. Thank you very much.

TANIA RINCON: I'm sure all the Mexicans are very proud of you. Now we would like to welcome Dr. Miguel Angel Mancera.

MIGUEL ANGEL MANCERA: Thank you very much and welcome, everyone, especially Ty Votaw and Benjamin Salinas Sada for inviting us. I would like to personally recognize the effort that he has made, and it's definitely been a group effort to pull this off. We are very proud to host this tournament in Mexico City, and we welcome any world-class event to our city.

We are proud of assisting Grupo Salinas in the logistics needed to host an event of this magnitude. We welcome all the golfers who are in the field this week.

We would also like to welcome all the members of the media who are visiting us from other parts of the country and other countries.

I would like to also thank Alfredo del Mazo for his coordinated effort between our two states in order to assist Grupo Salinas in this venture. We are constantly working together to promote sport in our country.

I would like to reiterate that it is an honor for us to host this great tournament from the 28th of February to the 5th of March at the Club de Golf Chapultepec. Mexico City is the capital of sport, and we don't say it as a slogan, we say it because we prove it every year by attracting world-class events to this city, such as NBA, NFL, and the World Golf Championships. I am pleased to tell you that this year we will have a triathlon in Mexico City. I will be giving you more information about this in due course.

This group effort of having the World Golf Championships in Mexico City will be very valuable in the future because we have a very big golf following in Mexico.

I have heard that the Chapultepec Golf Club has changed one of its holes, I think it's the eighth hole that's changed it from a par 5 to a par 4, which makes it more difficult, and I'm

sure it will be a very big challenge to all golfers this week.

I was talking to Benjamin and to Ty about the weather. We are very lucky to have great weather here in Mexico City. We only have rains during the afternoons, so it shouldn't be a problem for this week. So fans will be able to enjoy the heat and the warmth of Mexican people, who are always happy to welcome foreigners to our country. I hope we can show that warmth to 45 of the best 50 golfers in the world who will be joining us this week with their teams.

And, of course, I would like to congratulate Abraham Ancer. We are very proud of you who are participating in this world-class event. I hope you do very well and I'm sure we will be hearing a lot about you in the future. Now it's your turn to represent Mexico and we will be following you very closely. Good luck.

Mexico City welcomes you all and we are very happy to have you all. Thank you again, Benjamin, for this effort. This will be very positive for our city. We invite everybody to come out with their families and their kids and have a great time. Thank you very much and good day.

TANIA RINCON: Thank you very much to Dr. Miguel Angel Mancera, and now we would like to welcome Benjamin Salinas Sada to the podium. He is the man behind the big effort being made this week to bring the world-class golfers to Mexico. Please welcome Benjamin Salinas, CEO of Azteca TV.

BENJAMIN SALINAS: Good day to everyone. Welcome to Miguel Angel Mancera and Ty Votaw and Carlos Alberto Acra, who is representing the governor of the State of Mexico. Thank you for being here with us.

I would also like to welcome our great champion, Abraham Ancer. We will all be following you this week and I'm sure you will do very well. We are very proud that you will be representing Mexico this week.

After a successful first year, the best golf in the world comes back to Mexico. Grupo Salinas and PGA TOUR are proud to welcome you to the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship 2018. This is the continuation of a dream and we will be transmitting to 227 countries and territories around the world, and this tournament will be viewed by over a billion households. As Miguel Angel said, we have one of the hardest holes on Tour here, and we also have the 17th hole that we have named The Peak. It's 2,400 meters above sea level, making it the highest elevation hole played on the PGA TOUR.

We continue to change the history of golf in Mexico and it is our goal to promote sport and its values in our country. This tournament belongs to Mexico and Mexicans should feel very proud of it, but mostly, this tournament is for the kids. Every year that we host the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship, kids will be allowed to enter for free, and I promise that this will always happen.

Mexico's also a country of great athletes. We have several of them in attendance here today, and we are proud to have Abraham representing us in golf. Having the best players in the world competing for four days will inspire kids and that is the reason that we have set up The First Tee and we continue to work to make golf grow in our country.

With this tournament, we are writing the future of golf. Our goal is to create future generations of golfers. Through The First Tee Mexico, we are promoting the initiative to have public golf courses in each of the states in Mexico. We believe that golf instills values, integrity, trust, respect, and honesty in our youth. These are values that we at Grupo Salinas share with the PGA TOUR, and that is another reason why we wanted to bring this particular event to Mexico.

At Grupo Salinas, we are constantly looking for initiatives that promote inclusive prosperity, creating economic, environmental and social values. We view this tournament as the ideal initiative to create such value. We know that this is a long-term project and we are here to stay. This is not a one-year effort. We are here to grow the game of golf in Mexico.

I would like to thank the government officials who have committed to helping us and the more than 1,200 volunteers who are here this week, our commercial partners. Thank you all and thank you to the PGA TOUR and to all of you who have believed in this project. I would like to especially thank the thousands of fans who showed up today and will be showing up during the week to enjoy the best golf in the world. Let's all enjoy this unique experience. Thank you, everyone.

(Applause.)

TANIA RINCON: We invite the media to ask any questions.

Q. I would be curious, Senor Salinas, if you could measure how much golf has grown in interest since last year, how much of an impact last year had.

BENJAMIN SALINAS: I'll answer in English. That's a good question. I was actually just talking to Ty about that. I'm like a thermostat in regard to golf in Mexico because now I'm the go-to guy. When someone thinks of golf, I'm the go-to guy. I can feel it starting to really grow. You know that these events in the U.S. are business as usual, but in Mexico, no. This is the first one, this is an eye-opener, and this is a great event. There's a lot of interest from the Mexican people.

Coming to your question, and I think there are a lot of people who want to get involved with the golf business, they want to bring more tournaments to Mexico, and of course we're going to be supportive of that. We would like to bring tournaments that would add world ranking points to the players here in Mexico, that's our number one concern.

And I think regarding players, there's definitely a boost that we've been measuring, and

we've been measuring the private golf courses and there's a lot more participation. But the most important thing is to have public golf courses, that's our next big challenge. When we can have public golf courses built in every state, our good friend Acra told us that the State of Mexico is interested in building a public golf course, so we can do it together. So that's our next challenge.

Q. This question is for Abraham. Can you explain the process that you have to go through to adjust to playing at elevation?

ABRAHAM ANCER: Here in Mexico City we're at a very high altitude, a little bit over 7,000 feet, so the ball flies at least 10 percent more in the morning when it's cold. If you hit the ball high, for me it flies 10 percent more in the morning and in the afternoon about 15 percent more. So the first thing I do when I arrive in a city that's at a high altitude like Mexico City, I check how far the ball flies. I use TrackMan and that tells me how far I hit each club. And I use the course's yardage book to write down how far my shots are going.

Q. Benjamin, with all the effort we're putting in for The First Tee, I would like to know how you plan on changing the idea that golf is only for people of a high socioeconomic level.

BENJAMIN SALINAS: It's a great question. Unfortunately, in Mexico it has been an elitist sport because here in Mexico you need to be a member at a club to be able to play, and that's not acceptable. We need to have a place where kids can go play not just because we want them to have a place to go, but we also want to instill values that we believe in. As a side effect, we will have more golfers here in Mexico, but the most important part is to instill values.