



BRIDGESTONE SENIOR PLAYERS ANNOUNCEMENT
Firestone Country Club – Akron, Ohio

April 12, 2018

STEWART MOORE: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

STEWART MOORE: It's a great good morning reply, very nice.

Thank you for joining us today here at Firestone Country Club for a special announcement featuring PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan and Bridgestone America CEO and President Gordon Knapp. My name is Stuart Moore, I'm senior director of communications for the PGA TOUR and I'll be the emcee for today's press conference.

Today couldn't be a possibility without a few special individuals in the room. I'd like to briefly acknowledge them. If you wouldn't mind, when your name is called, please stand up and we'll get started from there.

Bridgestone Corporation CEO Masaaki Tsuya, Bridgestone Corporation executive vice president Asahiko "Duke" Nishiyama, Bridgestone Americas chief administrative officer Chris Karbowski, Bridgestone Americas chief marketing officer Philip Dobbs, Bridgestone Americas chief technology officer Nizar Trigui, Bridgestone Golf senior director of marketing Corey Consuegra, senior vice president of golf operations of ClubCorp representing Firestone Country Club Mark Gore, Constellation Energy vice president Kristina Gregory, PGA TOUR Champions president Greg McLaughlin, and last but certainly not least, PGA TOUR Champions players Colin Montgomerie and Scott McCarron.

(Applause.)

STEWART MOORE: Colin was giving me the look like "when are you going to get to me," so finally we got there.

After much anticipation, we're happy to be here to discuss the future of PGA TOUR golf in Northeast Ohio. At this time I would like to turn it over to Commissioner Monahan.

JAY MONAHAN: Thank you, Stewart, and top of the morning to everybody. It's great to be here in Akron, Ohio, and it's always great to be here at Firestone Country Club where we have an incredible tradition of professional golf, a tradition that's well represented in the hallways when you stop and look at all the incredible photos that you see and all the incredible memories that have been created here at Firestone Country Club. So again, great to be back here.

As I said, the PGA has had an incredible run here of professional golf for the last 65 years, most recently with the World Golf Championships where this August we will conclude an incredible 19-year run and start a new tradition beginning in 2019, a tradition that I am very proud to announce will be named the Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS. We are bringing a major championship on PGA TOUR Champions to Akron, Ohio, starting in 2019, thanks to our great partners, Bridgestone, who have made a four-year commitment cementing that tradition through 2022. So thank you to Bridgestone.

(Applause.)

JAY MONAHAN: The event will be played July 8 to 14 and will be right in the heart of the PGA TOUR Champions schedule. As I mentioned, it is a major championship. We have two majors championships that we control on the PGA TOUR, they are THE PLAYERS and SENIOR PLAYERS, Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS now. This is an event we are extraordinarily proud of and committed to, and we look forward to building it right here in Akron, Ohio, for a long time to come.

Bridgestone, so Bridgestone has been a partner of the PGA TOUR since 2005, title sponsor here since 2006. We like to think they're part of our family because they are part of our family and we've laid a great foundation. We are as committed as they are to continuing on that tradition of partnership for a long time to come.

So, Gord, thank you for your leadership and your commitment and thank you also because we're pleased to announce that our official marketing partnership will also extend through 2022, Bridgestone is the official tire of the PGA TOUR and PGA TOUR Champions, so thank you for that as well.

Stewart recognized Colin and Scott, We thought we'd get this off to an exciting start by sharing with you a video of all the excitement and the competitive fire that we see out on PGA TOUR Champions week in and week out.

(Video played.)

STEWART MOORE: Bernhard Langer stealing the show yet again on the PGA TOUR Champions announcement.

Commissioner, you mentioned in your opening comments SENIOR PLAYERS Championship is one of five majors on the PGA TOUR Champions. What makes this event

one of the most premier tournaments in golf?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think it all starts with the players. You look at the champions of this event, an event that goes back to 1983, and the list includes Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player. It includes Hale Irwin, Bernhard Langer, Fred Couples, Mark O'Meara and Scott McCarron in 2017. It's a championship that they all want to win, so they're going to bring their greatest game to the next most important item, which is an incredible asset here and that's Firestone Country Club.

It's all about the venues and this is a venue, as they just mentioned in the video, that they love and they've longed for, they've missed. Now they're coming back to it and they know that they're going to be received with great enthusiastic crowds, and this is a championship that has moved to and from great venues. You look at the fact that it played at Canterbury just up the road, the site of Mr. Palmer's last major championship, to Philly Cricket Club, to Fox Chapel, to Westchester, to Caves Valley, and we'll play at Exmoor this year outside of Chicago. But now we're going to be here for the next four years at Firestone Country Club.

So there will be a different approach. Players know they're going to be playing here for a long time to come, and like I said, this golf course has a special place in their heart. So those two things are extraordinarily important, and then you add on top of that commitment and community. Commitment has been demonstrated to the PGA TOUR by this community. We have a four-year commitment from Bridgestone. I think that puts us in a really solid position to plan and grow.

And we've got a great leader in Don Padgett, who's going to, along with the council, help us do that and make a big impact because you have volunteers who have been committing years, decades of their time to support this event. I was hearing last night that there's a volunteer here that's been here 56 straight years, which is just incredible.

You have so many charities that have benefited from professional golf here that will continue to benefit and you have a community that's I would just say rabid, loves the game.

So a long-winded way of saying I think this is a perfect recipe.

STEWART MOORE: It's great to see support from Bridgestone's global leadership team here with us today to celebrate this great announcement. Gord, why is it important to Bridgestone to continue its support of golf and the PGA TOUR?

GORDON KNAPP: Maybe just before I answer your question, I would like to welcome and thank everyone for being here. This is a special day for us, it's an exciting day for us and it really relates to your question because the sport of golf and the communities in Northeast Ohio have been a special part of our history and we're absolutely committed to making sure they remain a special part going forward.

Commissioner Monahan said, I think, the sport of golf is in our DNA. We started producing

our first golf balls, the Bridgestone Golf balls, more than 80 years ago. As the commissioner said, we've maintained a really good working relationship and partnership for more than a decade with the PGA TOUR and we're just really glad to continue as official marketing partners and we're committed to make sure that we had a world-class golfing event here in Northeast Ohio. I think we've done exactly that by securing the title sponsorship of the Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS Championship. It will be world class, it will be contested by an international field, and I think for the fans of Northeast Ohio, it's just going to give them unrivaled access to really the legends of the game, and of course it's going to be played here at the Firestone Golf and Country Club and what could be better than that, so we're really excited.

STEWART MOORE: You mentioned the significance of what makes this community so important to the company?

GORDON KNAPP: The community here and maybe more specifically the broader community of Akron has just been core to our past. It's the birthplace for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Today we employ more than 1,300 teammates across Northeast Ohio. We have about 800 in our technical R&D center in Akron today who does all the research and development to support our product lines across North and South America. But we also have offices in Cleveland and we have a large number of retail outlets across the region.

These folks, we just don't employ this folks here, they live here, they raise their families here, and so it was really important to us to maintain a world-class event here every summer in Northeast Ohio and we're going to do exactly that starting in 2019 and continuing through 2022. Again we're really excited. This is an important day for us.

STEWART MOORE: Great to hear. Commissioner, it's often been said it's different on PGA TOUR Champions. How so, how will the fans and the community benefit from that?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think we were just at a great breakfast meeting with the council and Greg McLaughlin, president of PGA Tour Champions, gave a presentation on PGA TOUR Champions. You saw it reflected in the video. You look at the fact there are 35 World Golf Hall of Famers that are playing on PGA TOUR Champions, I think there's on average 16 golf World Golf Hall of Famers playing week in and week out. You've got the greats of the game, the legends of the game and there's a level of camaraderie and esprit de corps that exists out there that is awesome to see. And it's not just amongst the players. It translates to the fans and the sponsors and it just creates a great atmosphere.

I think that is something, again going back to the passionate golf fans in Northeast Ohio, that is going to be really well received and really special about the Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS as we go forward, and that extends itself into earlier in the week. We'll now return to a pro-am on Wednesday. Pro-am is typically one of the great assets in golf, but nobody does it better than it's done out on PGA TOUR Champions. And the couple days that lead into that will be a wonderful opportunity for Bridgestone and all of our partners to see and meet these players and I think that's really the big difference.

For all the years that we've had success here, you've seen the best players in the world play the WGC Bridgestone Invitational. You're going to continue to see the best players in the world play, but I think you'll also get to meet over the next four years and hopefully beyond these Hall of Famers and get an appreciation for what remarkable people they are.

So it's an exciting time to know that we're going to run this through to the end at the WGC Bridgestone Invitational this year, have a great year, and when we get to Monday we're going to turn our attention to the 2019 Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS and I think this community is going to benefit for a long time to come as a result.

STEWART MOORE: Great. At this time, if you two would unveil the new tournament logo for us.

Thank you very much, gentlemen. If you return to the front row. Media members, we'll have availability for both Gord and Jay as well as some other attendees in the patio room following the press conference.

At this time I would like to invite our players up, World Golf Hall of Fame member Colin Montgomerie and reigning SENIOR PLAYERS champion Scott McCarron.

SCOTT McCARRON: Thanks, Stewart.

STEWART MOORE: And the joking really never stops. That joke exists during the round on Sunday afternoons trying to win titles.

SCOTT McCARRON: I've got to help him up here, he's older than I am.

STEWART MOORE: Thank you so much for joining us here today. Fantastic resumes, both of you competed at Firestone Country Club through the years. Back to what we finished speaking to the commissioner about, in your opinion what differentiates PGA TOUR Champions from the PGA TOUR making it a unique product from the players perspective.?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, it's definitely a different product. When you go to a PGA TOUR event, we like to say you get to see Rory McIlroy, you get to see Rickie Fowler, you get to see Jordan Spieth.

When you come to a PGA TOUR Champions event, you get to meet Colin Montgomerie, you get to meet Scott McCarron, you get to meet these guys who are out there. We have pro-ams, we're going to have a pro-am aspect here. We have pro-am pairings parties where we'll have anywhere from 25 to 50 guys.

So we get it. We were on the PGA TOUR for many, many years and to come out here we know what it takes to keep these tournaments going, to keep our sponsors happy, to keep the fans happy. So I think there's just a little bit more of that out here on the PGA TOUR

Champions than there might be on the PGA Tour.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I totally agree. What I found when I joined the PGA TOUR Champions, there's no envy out here. Everyone's out here for a reason. They've all been successful enough to be eligible to play so there's no great envy out here, there's no great egos. That's gone. The ego and envy thing's gone, so it's a nice place to be. Everybody really appears to be genuinely happy for anyone else's success and I've never seen that before.

I was impressed, though, I must admit with going back to the Masters briefly last week when Rickie Fowler was waiting for Patrick Reed to finish. I was very impressed with that. That doesn't happen in many sports, if any sport, that the No. 2 player really for that particular week congratulates No. 1 and really means it. It's great that the PGA TOUR Champions and the PGA TOUR have that.

We are genuinely happy for anyone else's success because we know, we understand how difficult it is to win. I'm not saying it's easy to finish in the top-10, you can ask Bernhard Langer that provides he gets his hair cut, of course.

But what we see is the difficulty of winning and we have not lost our desire or our ambition or our drive to succeed. That's what makes this tour in my opinion, as Bernhard was saying, it's the best tour over 50 in the world. In our opinion it's the best damn tour in the world, period, never mind over 50 or not.

So we're very fortunate to be doing this at 50. You tell me another sport that you can play and start again really if you like over the age of 50. It's the only game in the world, they say this game's from 8 to 80. Well, we're living proof, we all are.

It's a very exciting time to be here today and to announce the Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS. And may I say on behalf of Scott and all the players that are going to come here and participate here at Firestone Country Club, we're all very, very honored and excited.

STEWART MOORE: You mentioned the level of competition. Both of you turned 50, a major debut at one point. Colin, Scott alluded you did it before him, that's fine.

What was that kind of "hello moment" that you thought you were just going to waltz out to the PGA TOUR Champions and realized everyone is still fiercely competitive?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Yeah, you finish playing on the European Tour and you've had a reasonable career and you think you come over here and win. Haha. Well, that was wrong, completely wrong.

That's the first thing that everyone says out on the PGA Champions is the standard of play. Everybody is shocked at the standard of play. We're not playing courses at 6,600 yards long here. Our average is just over 7,000 yards. And this course here, the Firestone

Country Club, will be no different, it will be over 7,000 when we're playing the course.

It is extremely high quality of play, I can't fathom it, and it's getting stronger all the time. You see the guys coming on. You read in your notes there that Phil Mickelson will no doubt be participating here in 2020. Steve Stricker. The standard is improving all the time. As we -- I, we -- get older, it gets better at the other end. It's hard work, but at the same time that's the one thing that shocked me is the standard of play, it is phenomenal.

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, I would have to say if you took a PGA TOUR player and put him out with us, the winning score wouldn't be much different. There might be more guys in the top-10 or top 20, but the winning score would not be much different.

I'm so impressed when I first got out here at Sunningdale in 2015 how much these guys still practice, how much they still love the game. I don't know if it's because there is a finite time that we'll be done. There will be some point where we won't be playing anymore and I think we realize it and really enjoy it and cherish every moment that we get to still play golf for a living. I've got to pinch myself every day that I get to do this.

STEWART MOORE: Colin's reasonable career by the way included eight appearances in the Ryder Cup with an undefeated record in Sunday singles.

SCOTT McCARRON: Boo.

STEWART MOORE: Fairly reasonable.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I was under orders, I'm sorry. I apologize for all our American colleagues here today. But you are getting better, so it's okay. Paris will be another fantastic celebration, if you like, of our sport and it's a 50/50 split again, it's a coin toss as to who's going to win in Paris and it's exceptional competition again and players from the European tour and PGA TOUR competing against each other. It's a fabulous event and I was proud to be part of it.

STEWART MOORE: Five majors on PGA TOUR Champions, Scott. Obviously you won at Caves Valley last year. What makes this event stand out among the rest?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, it's really our major championship, it's the players championship. We have a full field, we play four days, we play great golf courses so far since I've been on it, and now to be able to come to Firestone for the next four years and hopefully for the next maybe 10 or 20 years, we just love it. This golf course is just fantastic.

When we were on the driving range before we came here in Atlanta telling guys that we were coming up here to announce the Bridgestone PLAYERS Championship at Firestone, guys couldn't believe we get to go back to Firestone. The kind of history that this course has, we've almost -- every guy on our tour has played here at one time or another, so we are so fortunate and so happy to be coming back here.

STEWART MOORE: Colin?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Well, I have to agree. Talking to everybody that wasn't aware of this announcement today was staggered. As Scott rightly said, we have an opportunity of going back to Firestone because most of the PGA TOUR Champions have played here. Most, if not everybody, has played here at one stage whether it be a couple of times or 10 times, whatever. I managed to play here nine times so I'm probably average I suppose.

So everybody knows the quality of the golf course, knows the hospitality of Firestone Country Club, knows the area, and it's also great that you probably have this question there I'm about to answer it about the local community.

I think that it's great that the local community's going to benefit for a minimum again of four years of professional golf here, and what the PGA TOUR do in a charitable way is quite phenomenal. We think we're pretty good in Europe and in Britain in a charity sense. Nothing, nothing compared to America. You're the most charitable nation on earth by a mile. I think we're second, but we're a long way behind.

What you do on the PGA TOUR to give back to the local communities and where you are is quite phenomenal. The figures branded \$2 billion over the years, well in excess of that now and growing is extraordinary and it's great to feel, to be a part of that wherever we go. Whether we're PGA TOUR or PGA TOUR Champions, wherever we go we're giving back to that community and I think that's just staggering what goes on out here. And it's kept -- I would like to sing it from the rooftops more than it is because it's not -- it's not put out there as much as it possibly should be because it's a fantastic asset to have, to give back to local communities.

STEWART MOORE: Last question, obviously you took my community question, I appreciate that.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Sorry.

STEWART MOORE: I will update my resume when we conclude, a new moderator. Both of you competed at Firestone. Any vivid memories? Scott, you told a wonderful story last night.

SCOTT McCARRON: I don't know if it was wonderful, it made them laugh though.

STEWART MOORE: Colin, I know you had three top-10s here, just happened to be three years Tiger won.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: We had dinner last night in one of the other restaurants and there's far too many pictures of Tiger Woods on the wall. I suppose if you go to many country clubs in America you'll find the same thing.

I'm still trying to finish the 16th hole, I'm still on the 16th hole, I'm still trying to reach the end of it. But there's a challenge on every hole and I think that the memories here are the fairness of the golf course and you get rewarded for good shots and you get penalized for bad ones. I think that's the power to the fairness of this golf course and that's why people love it so much, that if you play well, you will get rewarded. I think that's what we're all after on golf courses and especially this one with the history of it.

STEWART MOORE: Scott?

SCOTT McCARRON: The only memory I have -- I have two, I told one story last night. The second story, I didn't have a great record here. I finished maybe 26th the first time in '96, 35th, and then my last year in 2002 I prided myself of never finishing last in any Tour event and I finished tied for 75th. I wasn't last because I was tied, so I never finished last.

But I do remember the 16th hole, I think it was Saturday, Friday or Saturday actually. It was right after the movie Tin Cup had just come out and I had laid up to a perfect yardage right down there. I had like 95 to the hole and going to hit it just past the hole and spin it back in a little bit. I hit it only about 95 and it hit hole high.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: A bit like Sergio, you mean?

SCOTT McCARRON: Kind of like Sergio, hole high.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Just spin it back just a wee bit too much.

SCOTT McCARRON: Exactly. They were all good shots. Landed right by the hole, spun it back in the water. Instead of going up I kind of hit it from the same spot, and spun it back in the water. Now the crowd is starting to get on me and they're all yelling "Tin Cup, Tin Cup." I hadn't seen the movie yet. I was like, Why are they yelling Tin Cup? I don't know what that means.

Another ball on the green, in the water. Another ball on the green in the water. I think I made 10 or 11, and I happened to go see the movie and now I know what they were talking about.

STEWART MOORE: Great story to end on. Thank you so much, everyone, for coming out today. I think we've got a fantastic foundation for a wonderful future here in Akron. I've always said there's a four key parts to any great golf tournament: Certainly a title sponsor, and thank you to Bridgestone for stepping up in that regard; a wonderful community, and we have that here in Northeast Ohio and Akron; a tremendous venue, Firestone Country Club, one of the legendary courses in all the golf; and obviously the players, and nowhere else will you find the legends of the game more so on PGA TOUR Champions. Those four add up to hopefully create a wonderful charitable and community impact here and we're excited for the future.

Media members, we're going to stage a few photos up here, for those of you wishing to interview the commissioner or Gord or either of the players, Greg McLaughlin over in the patio room, they'll be available in about 10 minutes, we'll help facilitate as best we can.

Thank you so much everyone for coming out. It's going to be a great future here at Firestone.