

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
April 17, 2018

JOAQUIN NIEMANN



JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Joaquin Niemann into the interview room here at the Valero Texas Open. He's making his professional debut this week. Joaquin, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. If we can just get some comments on teeing it up this week.

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, I'm really excited for me here for my pro debut, and also thank you to the Valero Texas Open for giving me the invite for this week.

Q. Talk a little bit about you won the Latin America amateur championship, you shot a final round 63 to win that tournament. Talk a little bit about how that has helped you, and then also what your plans are going forward.

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, the Latin America was supposed to be my last week as amateur but I won it so then I get exempt for the Masters. Yeah, it was a really nice tournament. It was in Chili, my home country, and I play really good golf there.

Q. I know you made some starts as an amateur on the PGA TOUR Latinoamerica. Talk a little bit about that tour.

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, having played a couple tournaments in South America with pros, really nice, they're really good players, and also it's good stuff to learn and get better. So once I can get here, be more prepared.

JOHN BUSH: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Are you nervous at all going into your first pro start and what are your expectations for this week?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, when I was an amateur I thought I was going to feel nervous because of being pro, but I think it's just the same. You just hit the ball and try to enjoy your round. Yeah, I feel really good for this week and I think I'm prepared.

Q. And your expectations?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: I don't like to put expectations, but yeah, I just try to play good golf and enjoy every moment.

Q. Joaquin, have you had a chance to play the course yet?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, I played yesterday. I played the pro-am, I played 18 holes,

and I played this morning nine holes with Sergio.

Q. What's your impressions of it?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: It's a tough course, it's really nice and it's also going to get really windy for the week, so I think got to be prepared for low shots.

Q. Joaquin, I saw you interact with Sergio a little bit and I'll ask you a couple questions, but just starting, he gave you a big embrace on the range. How much has your relationship with Sergio helped prepare you for where you are today?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: I've been playing with Sergio a lot these couple months, I played with Sergio my first time at the U.S. Open last year and then I played with him two weeks ago at the Masters, and yeah, he's really nice with me. He always want to play with me and he's also good for me so I can learn a lot of what he's doing and how he is.

Q. How would you describe your relationship with him?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: I mean, friends.

Q. Does he feel like a big brother, a role model, what would you say?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: He's more like a role model.

Q. What advice has he given you?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: He always is saying you've got to enjoy every moment and be -- I mean, you're going to get nervous, but he just say that I've got to enjoy every moment, of course.

Q. When you watch him and the other pros whether it's on the course or off, what can you learn from just the way they go about practicing, preparing to get ready for a PGA TOUR event?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, it's really different when I was playing amateur events and now that I'm here playing with the Tour guys, it's different how they prepare. They practice a lot more and they are always trying to get better every day. So I think I've got to practice hard to be here and stay here also.

Q. Have you ever seen a green with a bunker in the middle?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, my first -- I play at Riviera last year for the U.S. Am. I don't know if it's No. 5, I think, has a bunker on the middle of the green.

Q. And do you have a game plan in terms of your schedule? What do you think the

biggest challenge will be now that you're a pro?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Sorry?

Q. What do you think the biggest challenge will be now that you're turning pro? Will it be managing your schedule?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: For this week?

Q. No, going forward.

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, I got exempt for what is coming next is Wells Fargo and also AT&T Byron Nelson and the Memorial, so I've got to prepare for what is coming now, so it's looking good.

JOHN BUSH: Will you also play some on the Web.com Tour and PGA TOUR Latinoamerica or just focus out here?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, of course I'm going to play some Web.com events, play any Monday qualifier, or if not I get any sponsor exemption for any Web.

Q. You got invited to the U.S. Open and the British Championship, but now you don't have that invitation. So is there any nerves going forward knowing that you're playing for that professional invite?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Yeah, I was supposed to play those two majors but I still can make it. I'm playing sectional also, I try to do the same I made last year, qualifying by sectionals so I don't feel that nervous.

Q. How do you feel being here in San Antonio for the first time in this tournament?

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: It feels really good to be here. They have really good weather, it's going to be windy so it's going to be tough. But yeah, here it's really nice that everybody gave me the opportunity to make my first appearance as a pro in this event, so I think I'm going to try to play good golf for this week.

JOHN BUSH: Any additional questions? Joaquin, we appreciate you coming by and best of luck this week.

JOAQUIN NIEMANN: Thank you.