

TIGER WOODS

Q. Tiger, first of all, welcome back to Charlotte. If we can get some comments on playing with Shahbaz today?

TIGER WOODS: I think we had a great time today. We went out there and I think we posted a good enough number, we might actually win this thing. I think Shahbaz is certainly deserving of all the accolades. He's done well in school, he's an incredible person, and just really excited about him going off to Indiana and doing his thing.

Q. Shahbaz, comments on playing with Tiger.

SHABHAZ HASHMI: Well, first I would just like to say how thankful I am not only to, of course, Mr. Woods, but the Quail Hollow Club, the Wells Fargo Succeeding Together Program for affording me this opportunity. I mean, Mr. Woods is my hero unequivocally and I think a lot of us can say the same. So I'm so grateful and I'm still in a little bit of a state of shock. I'm satisfied with how I held it together for the most part on the course. Just extremely, extremely grateful.

Q. Did he give you a glove?

SHABHAZ HASHMI: Yes, he gave me a glove on The First Tee.

Q. Tiger, what was it like for a guy like him to have to step in and play with your gallery. I know at 7:00 a.m. it wasn't large, but it grew bigger and bigger during the day. The pressure of being that age and playing with you?

TIGER WOODS: I think it's up to me and Joey and for us who have been out here a while to make all our amateur partners feel comfortable. Shahbaz, I mean, he did fantastically today. He hit it well, putted it well. This is not an easy golf course. I know the tees are up for the amateurs, but it's still a very hard golf course. I think he just did wonderfully. It was exciting to see him out there and his dad and they were into it. You can tell that they're very close to one another. That's something that it was fun to see.

Q. What part of his game impressed you the most, and then Shahbaz, same question for you with Tiger.

TIGER WOODS: Well, some of the shots he hit today, the flight of some of the drives he hit were penetrating and solid, especially as the wind came up. The drive down 18 he piped. Those are shots I think he'll remember, some of the little spinners he hit around the greens, too. Made a few putts.

As we all know, the hardest pins all week that we play are on Wednesday. They put them in the center of the greens on knobs and I think he made two legit birdies today and it was some really good playing.

Q. Shab haz, your comments on Tiger?

SHABHAZ HASHMI: I think one thing that impressed me the most about Mr. Woods that you can't really tell on TV is his tempo. You swing the club, what, 129 miles an hour?

TIGER WOODS: One time.

SHABHAZ HASHMI: One time. But the tempo in which he plays, he just seems so aware of what's going on, especially on the course. He has a great sense of knowing what's around him, looking at the low points, looking at the high points. The read and the pace on his putts, oh, my God. He let me hit his putter today, that was just surreal. I can't say one thing I was impressed by because I was impressed by all of it.

Q. Tiger, give me your connection to The First Tee. Was this a little extra special to be with someone who represents The First Tee?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, we've worked with The First Tee for a number of years, since its inception. Tim and I worked closely at the very beginning and my foundation's been involved with them throughout the years. This is the type of quality people that, if given a chance, that can emerge. Shahbaz is a shining example of that. I just think there are so many of these kids that have come through The First Tee programs that have gone off to college, who have gone off into the workforce but have turned their lives around and it's because of the program.

Q. Tiger, do you feel like since having the procedure done on your back, (inaudible) tempo side of things that you've been able to pick up your tempo (no microphone.)

TIGER WOODS: Well, I didn't have any speed probably the last four, five years. My back wasn't very good and what I thought was speed was not, it was slow motion. Swinging at 115 miles an hour, that's not very quick especially out here now. But now that I'm able to do that with my 3-wood and so I didn't realize for how many number of years how bad my back was until I had it fixed. It's kind of neat. I'm seeing speeds and velocities I hadn't seen since my early 20s, which is nice because I was long then relatively speaking.

Q. On hole 17 you gave your glove to Adam, the kid with cerebral palsy. What's the relationship with him and why did you make a point to stop for him?

TIGER WOODS: Well, there's so many of these kids that come out and support us and follow us on the Tour at events that, you know, the parents sacrifice so much. I saw the father early in the round and he was saying something about how great it is to be a parent. I

think it was on 14. You know, it is, and I'm so fortunate, so lucky to have two healthy kids and I don't have to deal with the struggles that he may have to deal with. I think it's for all of us who see kids like that, we should help as much as we possibly can.

Q. Tiger there's a lot of people out here pulling for you both in the galleries and fellow competitors is that something you can feel, and if so, is that something you can maybe even feed off of?

TIGER WOODS: Well, there's no doubt I've sensed it since I started playing this year. I've been away from the game for a few years and the support's been incredible from the fans, from the players, from the guys that I grew up playing against that are on the Champions Tour and to the guys who have emerged when I was gone like Justin Thomas, Patrick Reed, Bryson, these guys, Jordan. They were just coming out when I was basically kind of on my way off the Tour with my back. So from one generation to the other, from one spectrum to the other, it's been incredible the support.

Q. Tiger could you talk about as we watched you on this comeback, you just seem like you really appreciate back out here. You've been a great champion, but what's it been like to recover from an injury like that and just your whole life in terms of how it feels to be back out here?

TIGER WOODS: Well, going back not that far but at the Presidents Cup last year, I didn't know if I would be able to play golf again. My back wasn't fusing. It's hard to imagine, but that was only September of last year. I didn't know if I would ever be able to play golf, let alone be out here on Tour. These were all unknowns and it wasn't that long ago. So yeah, I'm very thankful. There was a long period of time where I didn't think I would ever play golf again. I was just hoping I could walk without pain and now I'm out here playing against these guys.

Q. Tiger, you talked in the early part of the year everything was geared toward April. What are you building for now and what's your outlook for the rest of the week?

TIGER WOODS: Building towards next week. Hopefully, I can have everything peak for this week and next week, but mainly next week, and after that, getting ready for Shinnecock.

Q. Tiger, can you talk a little bit about Patrick Reed and what he did at Augusta just in general with him?

TIGER WOODS: Well, Patty, he's fiery. He's very committed to being the best golfer he can possibly be and he works at it. I mean, he puts in way more time than people actually think. He spends hours upon hours putting, chipping, hitting, working. You know, you've got to hand it to him because you look at his set of clubs, he piecemealed it together. You don't understand how much effort that takes, the amount of practicing that takes to piece together a set like that. That's pretty amazing. And the amount of confidence that he displays when he plays, it's refreshing, it's fun to watch.

Q. Tiger, your thoughts on all the changes you've seen the past couple days for the first time?

TIGER WOODS: Well, the golf course is much harder than it used to be, that's for sure. It's longer but it's also more difficult. The greens aren't quite as fast as when I remember playing here, but they are more difficult. Some of these holes have become a lot more stout. The bunkers are certainly more in play than they used to be, and the greens are new, so they're a little more springy. Even though we're hitting certain shots with 9 irons and wedges, they're still springing up in the air. Some of the holes yesterday afternoon, we were surprised because some of the bounces I got almost flag high. If it's like this for the rest of the week, they're going to be pretty springy.

Q. How long did you shut it down after the Masters and what specifically did you want to see improve before you got back in competition?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I threw my clubs in the closet for about 10 days, got away from the game, didn't touch a club, didn't make a golf swing. I started to lift a little bit, I tried to make sure I kept flexible, and then I started grinding and trying to get my muscle strength back and eventually my speed and I got them all back.

Q. You had such a good runup leading up to Augusta. Other than putting the clubs away, did you assess kind of what was missing at Augusta and kind of what have you done other than lifting to kind of --

TIGER WOODS: You saw it, I didn't hit my irons very good. I drove it great on the weekend, but I kept hitting the ball in -- and if I did hit a green, I hit it above the hole, I hit it in the wrong spot. I had defensive putts for most of the days. Even on Sunday I shot 4 under par, but I was still in tough spots. You know, I need to be more precise and I wasn't. Still need to continue to work on it and try to get sharp and hopefully this will be a good week.

Q. Tiger, you had a lot of good obviously in this comeback. Is that the part of the game that's come back the slowest or was it just that week?

TIGER WOODS: It was just that week because I hit my irons pretty good in Florida. I probably didn't quite drive it as good with my driver until I switched shafts and now I'm driving it good, and ironically I'm not hitting my irons as good.

Q. If you're going to win this week, what's going to be the biggest challenge for you out here?

TIGER WOODS: You've got to get the ball in the fairway here because we need to have spin coming into these greens, so the challenge is getting the ball in the fairway so we can control spin. These greens are tough to hit just from the fairway let alone from the rough, so it's imperative to get the ball in play.

Q. The young guys you mentioned, Justin, Jason, Patrick, have said they haven't been hearing from you as much as when you were off. Are they on their own now?

TIGER WOODS: No, no, they're still friends of mine, we still text. Now I'm working on my game, there's less time for them to either come out to dinner or to ask me questions or hop on the phone. I'm busy with my kids, I'm busy trying to prepare and trying to practice myself and get ready. I think you might forget how much time it takes to practice and to get ready. I've got to spend the time to do it.

Q. (No microphone.) How did you feel those 10 days?

TIGER WOODS: It felt great, it felt great. It felt good just to shut it down. I played a little bit more golf than I was expecting to play, and missing the cut in L.A. and then obviously adding Valspar in there and the stress of coming down the stretch, that all adds up. And I played a lot of golf heading into Augusta, more golf than I thought I would be able to play because this is all new. It was nice to shut it down, reflect, analyze, sit back and try and figure out what's the best course of action going forward so I can win events.

Q. Jack's place, it's got a lot of changes, too, Tiger. Where's Memorial in your plans?

TIGER WOODS: We'll see. Certainly on the list of tournaments I would like to play, but I don't quite know yet.

Q. Can you talk about the new irons, how different are they?

TIGER WOODS: Well, they basically look the same. The back is a little bit different. I really don't care what you put on the back of the club as long as it looks good in the playing position and it flies through the windows that I want and the distances that I want. Other than that, you can put whatever you want on the back. We kept the same bounce, the same configurations.

The difficulty was throughout this process is trying to find -- trying to go with the right metal. For me, I prefer a different metal than what TaylorMade was using and also a different groove configuration than what TaylorMade was using. Trying to figure all that out with this process, and to be honest with you, not hitting too many golf balls and not testing too much because I was still coming back. I was trying to figure it out and I didn't want to spend so much time like I could in years past where I could hit a lot of golf balls in a day. We had to be very cautious about how much we hit. So we had a testing process basically since December of last year and we finally got to the point where, yeah, I can put them in the bag and play.

Q. Tiger, your fitness routine's always been second to none. How have you adjusted that?

TIGER WOODS: It certainly is different and I certainly can't lift the weights I used to, I can't run the way I used to. There's a lot of things I wish I could do but I can't. Trying to adjust my programs for a fused spine has been a challenge, but I feel like I'm -- we've got a pretty good handle on it. There's a lot of strength involved in it but there's also a lot of flexibility as well. I have to keep other body parts more limber just because I don't have the rotation like I used to in my lower spine. I've got to grab it from other places.

Q. What do you remember about being Shahbaz's age?

TIGER WOODS: I can't remember. I probably was about a hundred pounds lighter than I am now, I hit the ball hard, far, didn't know where it was going. I played in pro-ams and Tour events when I was 17 and it's eye opening. It's awe inspiring to be able to play out here on the Tour and to see these guys, guys that I looked up to and watched on TV. I got a chance to hit golf balls next to them on the range, got a chance to watch them on the putting green. These are things that it is eye opening and I certainly was one. I played the Nelson when I was 17, I played the Honda Classic as well. As I said, seeing these guys is totally different than watching them on TV. And on top of that it was nice to have free range balls. That was a big difference.