

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
May 5, 2018



JASON DAY (-10)

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We would like to welcome Jason Day into the interview room here after three rounds at the Wells Fargo Championship, three days, three rounds in the 60s.

Jason, what are you most pleased with?

JASON DAY: I think the biggest thing is my short game was pretty spot on over the last three days. The bunker play's been nice. Being able to get up and down I don't know how many times, maybe 12 times or so out of the bunkers was really nice. But the putting's been pretty good. Today the first eight holes were a bit of a struggle for me, just couldn't quite time it up, just couldn't quite find the face. After the second shot on 9 and the tee shot on 10, started getting a little bit better with the timing and hit a lot better on the back side.

Q. Jason, earlier on, I don't know if you were watching or whatever, but when you saw what Peter did, what was that -- what did that do for you?

JASON DAY: What did he do?

Q. He shot 9 under early today.

JASON DAY: Oh, he was 9 under?

Q. Yeah, he was 9 under early. I guess scratch that question.

JASON DAY: Yeah, the biggest thing --

Q. The course seemed to be more gettable for you guys?

JASON DAY: Yeah, 100 percent. It was more so on the pin locations that we had, the tee setups. Obviously the par 3s were moved up a lot.

But yeah, fortunately I didn't see that. That's probably a good thing I didn't see it and I wouldn't have to obviously be so aggressive. But being 9 under, you're probably sitting there thinking "this is exactly where I need to be," and unfortunately he didn't finish the way he wanted to.

But I think the biggest thing for me was I was just kind of staying in my own world, just staying in just kind of my lane and not really thinking about it too much. Like I said, I knew that the first eight holes were just going to be a little blip. I knew that if I could just get myself

in position somewhere, get up and down, don't do anything too silly out there and find a way to get back into the swing of things, into the groove, I knew that I could come out of this on the better half.

So the back side was definitely a lot more gettable today, obviously showcased with, you know, a number of guys going low on the back side. It was exciting. I'm very pleased with how I handled myself, especially through the first eight holes, more so than the back side.

Q. Two things. What club did you hit on No. 9?

JASON DAY: Yeah, so I had 195 yards and it was straight downwind out of the south. I hit 9-iron. So I was just trying to land it about 180 yards and landed it pretty much spot on, bounced at least 12 or so, and it was nice to be able to kick that in.

When you're in the swing of things, it was straight downwind by, it was like five to seven paces downwind, yards downwind, and I just knew that I could just take a little bit off a 9 and just hit it up there and get it going forward.

Q. Just needed a club, but thanks for the explanation.

JASON DAY: Yeah, sorry.

Q. Secondly, with your -- where your ball was situated on 18, did you have any thoughts at all to the last time you played Quail Hollow on a Saturday?

JASON DAY: See, you guys missed the shot that I hit on the first day on Thursday. I was over to the right and hit this nice cut out, 4-iron cut out just short of the green and two-putted. That was actually more impressive. The shot that I hit out there today wasn't that impressive compared to the one that I hit on Thursday.

Q. (No microphone.)

JASON DAY: With that shot today? You're gripping up nearly to the steel. It wasn't too much. You know that you're going to catch a little bit of a flyer. So it was 132 yards front, you're trying to land it 142, you minus at least 10, add a little bit of wind, you're trying to land it 130. So it was more of a half shot. So when you're standing there, you're looking at the angle of the clubface where your ball is going to start out, you aim a little bit right. The biggest thing is always contact, just hit, contact first and then worry about things later because the moment that you hit it a little bit higher on the face it pulls left and goes in the water, so you'll have good contact on that shot.

Q. This course more than many seems like you really have to choose when to be aggressive and when to just take your par and go happily to the next tee.

JASON DAY: Yes.

Q. How tough is it for you to stick to a game plan of, you know, I'm not going to go for this pin if you're feeling really good?

JASON DAY: Yeah.

Q. How have you felt?

JASON DAY: I think there's -- when you go through it, I think yesterday through the first six holes even, and you can catch a birdie on 7 and 8, you go through 9. If you give yourself a chance, you can have a good chance of birdieing nine. You have a chance on 10, go through 11, chance on 12 if you get a good drive away, get through 13, chance on 14, change on 15, par the rest in, so that's what I'm trying to do. And fortunately I got off to a good start on the back side birdieing 10, 12, 14 and 15, which is the ones that I've been wanting to do over the last three days but it actually happened today.

So like you said, you've got to pick your spots where you can be aggressive and where not to and just understand that par's okay.

Today, if you got a good drive on 1, you can have a birdie there, but really I don't think you're going to pick up too many shots on the field. Good par, get through that first six holes and try and take those opportunities when you get them.

Q. You played well here last year at the PGA, I think it was a top-10, and you've played well here in the past in limited starts. Do you prefer either this Quail Hollow versus the PGA Quail Hollow?

JASON DAY: Quail Hollow PGA is definitely a lot harder not only because it's a major, but because it's a different grass. If you have bermudagrass, I think it makes it tougher for the whole field. I don't know how many strokes different it will make it tougher.

This grass is easier to play, it's more predictable whereas bermuda is not predictable. To a certain degree it's not really predictable, especially around the greens. With the overseed, you know that you can somehow, even if you don't quite hit a good shot, it's going to be around there.

I definitely -- I would take either/or. The harder, the better. The course that we have right now is in great shape. I think the superintendent has done a phenomenal job. The greens are bouncing very, very firm, so that's one thing that you have to keep in mind. But the green speeds are nice and it's playing tough out there.

Q. Jason, early in your career you had a pretty poor record of trying to close out 54-hole leads. Why do you think that was and what have you been able to do differently?

JASON DAY: Anything's hard when you're trying to do it for the first time. I think some guys are born to do it straightaway and others you have to learn and realize that with those failures, on the other side you learn from it and get better.

There was a point where I was going through I think two years ago, so I was finishing off 54-hole leads pretty much every single time. Then I think out of the 54-hole leads that I've had just recently, I haven't quite got it over the line, especially at the Australian Open there. Had a lead there and didn't finish it, played poorly.

But I feel different about my game this week more than any other week that I've played. I've been saying to you guys that I feel like things are close, and I really do think things are close, more so with the iron play because just piecing it all together, I feel like I can win pretty much every week.

Tomorrow is going to be a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to it. I sometimes I wish it finished today because obviously you're walking out a champion.

But I'm just taking tomorrow that I've just got to try and extend that lead every single time I'm playing up against someone. If they have a birdie, I've got to try and somehow make a birdie to extend it and hopefully don't give them any sort of opening where they can kind of close the door on me.

Q. How much does having the short game, especially the putting, back to where you want it help?

JASON DAY: It gives you all the confidence in the world sometimes. It doesn't matter how bad you hit it, you know that in the back of your mind you're going to walk off with par, whereas someone who's playing -- especially in the Sunday round, if someone's playing against you and they're flushing it and you're walking off with the same score, it's probably frustrating for them to see that and know that it won't be like that for the whole round like it was today. I think if you can just keep yourself somewhere in there, get yourself through it, don't do any harm to your scorecard, and then once things start to flow, then you can overtake and start pushing the lead a little bit more.

That's the biggest equalizer of all time is the putting and chipping. I think if you've got a great short game -- I'd much rather have a great short game than be the best ball-striker on the planet.

Q. How much did your back affect those areas of your game?

JASON DAY: You know, touch water, I haven't had a back issue this year, which has been nice.

Q. A couple years prior?

JASON DAY: Last year was obviously the year that I'm looking at where everyone kind of had an off year.

But I think there was a bit of desire things in there as well, just not wanting it as much as I had the previous two years as well. If you get up and you kind of don't really want it and don't have the motivation to improve and get better as a person and as a player, then it's a real struggle to come out and beat the best players in the world.

This year I've kind of recommitted myself to try to get back to No. 1. I know that there's a bunch of players in front of me that are trying to do the exact same thing and guys behind me trying to do the same thing. So I've got to get up every morning and do everything I possibly can to get back to that ultimate goal of getting back to No. 1. Weeks like this improve it. I've just got to focus. If it doesn't work out tomorrow or if it does work out tomorrow, the bigger picture is No. 1.

Q. You sort of just touched on what I was going to ask, but how close do you feel to being the player now that you were a couple years ago?

JASON DAY: Yeah. I mean, I feel like it's on the end of my tips, it's right on the end of the tip. I'm driving it better than I ever have before in my career. I'm No. 1 in putting and my short game's coming back nicely.

The only thing right now is I need to improve from 0 to 175 yards, get that proximity in. I just got a new set of golf clubs the week of Augusta and this is my third event with them. I'm starting to see the flights a lot better, starting to gain a little bit more confidence with what it's actually to do when it comes out, the trajectory, the lines it's holding, how it's reacting on the greens.

So once that all comes into play and I actually start to practice a little bit with them, because the weather's been terrible this year and the winter up in Ohio is extended and we're finally out of the weather now, but being able to get out there and practice with them is key.

So once I get a little bit more practice with them, get a little bit more confidence with them, I think it's right there. I definitely think it's just around the corner, it's not too far.

Q. Why did you switch the irons?

JASON DAY: Yeah, so I won at Torrey with the old set, but I went to Match Play and I was hitting 8-irons from like 140 yards just to keep them down. The funny thing was, I would hit it and it would launch high and just spin out of the air. So I just needed something where -- because I already hit it high enough and I don't need the extra spin because I spin a lot already.

Switching to the blades -- the P790 in the long irons and the 730s in the mid to short -- definitely lowered it a little bit. I'm still hitting it high where I can stop it and there's

less spin. So instead of hitting a 5-iron from 205, I'm hitting a 5-iron from 220 now. So I've gained distance and I've just got to focus that I'm just trying to get the feel for it. But it's coming around, it's nice, I'm enjoying it.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Jason, thank you for your time. Good luck tomorrow.