



CAMERON CHAMP

PRESTON SMITH: Cameron, obviously you've had an incredible start for your rookie year, winning at Sanderson Farms Championship, ninth in FedExCup standings. Can you just comment on your start to your rookie season?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, my start's been great. The win, I wouldn't say was expected, but it was just the way I did it. Yeah, I've just been playing with confidence really. The Web really just made me feel comfortable in my game. Coming out here on to the PGA TOUR wasn't much adjusting, so I've just been just kind of playing and sticking to our game plans and I've been able to post some decent numbers.

PRESTON SMITH: Perfect. **We'll go ahead and open it up for questions.**

Q. As this has unfolded, have you sensed the attention that has been sort of gathering around you more and more with each start or have you been able to ignore it? And if you have, have you adjusted to it or do you feel differently?

CAMERON CHAMP: I would say I've definitely noticed it, but I try to just ignore that kind of stuff. I just try to just focus on what I'm doing. I know, you know, prior, that kind of stuff, I let that kind of stuff just get in my head a little bit too much. Obviously everyone likes to talk about my distance so I think that's one thing I've really blocked out. Just try to focus on other aspects of my game, just my game in general, so I feel like I've handled that pretty well so far.

Q. Are you irked that most of the attention is because of your power?

CAMERON CHAMP: No, that's kind of what our game's around right now. Athletic players hit it far, and then once they learn how to hit wedges like DJ did, then the sky's the limit. It doesn't bother me anymore. It never really bothered me before, but now with the attention, like I said, I just try to block it all out.

Q. The other thing that I've noticed that stands out is your demeanor. Where does that come from?

CAMERON CHAMP: Probably my mom. As a kid, I wouldn't say I was a hothead, but it was just more I wanted it so bad, just let my emotions get the best of me. So I think growing up and through college I've just gradually gotten better. Realize that when I get mad, it lasts for three or four holes, which you can't really do in golf. So I just try to stay as calm as I can, whether I'm 6 under or 6 over. It's one thing I'm still working on, but I think I'm doing better.

Q. Hate to ask you a distance question, but I'm going to. Were you always long or did you learn how to become long? And if you did learn, how?

CAMERON CHAMP: I would say I've always been long since I was a kid. Obviously as I've gotten older, I've gotten gradually a little bit longer, but it hasn't been much since I was 15, maybe 10 or 15 yards since then. I've just kind of always been a long player. Obviously as a kid I struggled in most other areas of my game compared to now.

Q. Your experience here playing the SEC Championship, can you just talk about the experience and the putt you made to beat Alabama in the semi final, what's that like and how -- have you played the golf course yet?

CAMERON CHAMP: I'm going to play it tomorrow in the pro-am. So to answer your question, yeah, we played here a lot during SECs. I'm very comfortable, I like the course. We've played it in all conditions possible: Rain, cold, blowing, hot, no wind. So it's a course I really like. It's very demanding in all aspects of the game, but at the same time it brings out the good in your game as well.

Like you said, that putt I made, it was just a good experience. It was kind of the first good golf I played that semester since my injury, just kind of led on to that summer.

Q. Cameron, I wanted to go back to the calm demeanor that you've worked so hard to develop. Surely there was a moment as a junior of -- basically I'm looking for your best temper story, the biggest club throw, bench over a cliff, or whatever the case may be, and was there ever a moment where you said, "Okay, I've got to flip this"?

CAMERON CHAMP: Nothing big. I would never do that as a kid because my dad -- I would be in a little bit of trouble when I got home. I think it was just over time. Like I said, I was just extremely hard on myself. It wasn't really frustration, it was just because I wanted it so bad. So I just had to learn how to just get over it because it would last three or four holes and I would make two or three bogeys when I shouldn't have. Over the years I've really worked on that, try to stay even keel, like I said, no matter what I'm doing, like I said, if I'm 6 under or 5 over. I think it's really helped me, especially with last year with the struggles at the beginning of the year and then mid season, just kind of how everything progressed. So I'm just going to try to keep learning and moving forward.

Q. What's the balance between even keel but still wanting a little bit of fire to burn?

CAMERON CHAMP: The fire's still there, I think Sanderson Farms kind of showed that. Like I said, I don't really show much emotion, but coming down the stretch there, I felt like I showed more than I have in a very long time. You know, the fire is still there, it's kind of -- I like to, I guess, look at, you know, Brooks' demeanor. Brooks Koepka, he's a prime example I try to follow. He's very even keel, but when you see him in the hunt and stuff, he has that fire in him and a fist pump or whatnot.

Q. Did you watch tape of your win?

CAMERON CHAMP: I haven't watched much, no.

Q. What are you most looking forward to about going home when this is all done, this tournament is done?

CAMERON CHAMP: Just being home. This four-week stretch, it's felt long. Yeah, it will just be nice to get a break before January comes since it will be a busy, busy year for me. Just trying to plan things out. Obviously, you know, I'm big into cars and whatnot, and my truck will be done, so I'll be able to drive that finally and just enjoy it.

Q. What kind of truck is it?

CAMERON CHAMP: It's a 2016 Duramax.

Q. And Sacramento is still home?

CAMERON CHAMP: No, San Antonio.

Q. Any celebrations planned that you know of?

CAMERON CHAMP: Not that I know of. Unless my friends have something going on for me, I have no idea.

Q. What needs to be done to the truck?

CAMERON CHAMP: I have to finish some paint stuff underneath. Already done all the engine components, so just finishing it up. It's kind of my dream build, so I'll be happy that it's finally done.

Q. Last fall you missed a few cuts, including one here. It seems like a light bulb kind of went off in Nashville, there was a tie for 11th, then you had five top-10s in a row in the victory. Is there any one or two things you can pinpoint that created that quick a turnaround, a turnaround that's kind of lasted to this point?

CAMERON CHAMP: I would say my caddie has been a big part of that, just with everything he does. I like having positivity when we're out there, keeping me going. Like I said, I can get down on myself and not really show it. He just keeps me going. I trust him in the numbers, he's made it really easy for me. He says a number and we play that to where I don't have to second-guess things.

I think during that stretch I just really didn't make any mistakes that I made in the beginning of the season, you know, with my mid irons. I feel like I made too many mistakes in the beginning of the season, missing too many greens short-sided and whatnot. During that

stretch was probably some of the best ball-striking so far in my professional career, and then that led to I started making the putts as well.

Q. His name is?

CAMERON CHAMP: Kurt Kowaluk.

Q. Was he your caddie all year?

CAMERON CHAMP: Not the beginning of the year, no. We started -- I think we started in Nashville. No. I think we started in Nashville, yeah.

Q. Now that you're a winner, you get to set your own schedule. Have you identified the tournaments that you're going to play the first couple months of next year?

CAMERON CHAMP: I'll play TOC, then Sony. I know I'm playing the West Coast Swing. I might take off Palm Springs, I'm not exactly sure yet. I know that far for now. Then obviously other tournaments I've gotten in middle of the year, but I think we'll just kind of plan out after the West Coast Swing.

Q. Just a couple of short ones. What's the longest drive you've ever hit?

CAMERON CHAMP: Probably Utah when I won on the par 5, I think I hit -- funny thing is, the one that's on video hit the cart path, which no one really knows about. It's just funny because I wasn't even going to say anything and people were just talking about it. I hit one during the second round there like 415 on one of the par 5s, but again, it was elevation, straight downwind. I would say those are probably my two longest.

Q. Are you ever surprised at how far one of your shots goes with any club in your bag?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yes, and no. It's one thing about my game is I can hit an 8-iron a certain distance, but I can have a 50-yard gap if I need it. I just try to swing at 80 percent, but if I need the extra 20, I can go at it. If it's a front pin and I would rather hit a harder shot versus a soft shot, I'll just go with the harder one because you usually make better committed swings like that. I would say sometimes I can shock myself, but usually I kind of know what my ranges are.

Q. Two-part question on the equipment and iron distance. I recall last time I saw you in Savannah on the Web.com you had a 2-iron. Now you carry two 4-irons in your bag. I just wanted you to explain the difference. And also be kind enough to explain your stock iron shots, go down the list, just the distance when you go 5, 6, 7?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, the 4-irons, they came out with the new I-500 and it just got a little more height, so my regular 4-iron is roughly 230 to 240 depending on weather

conditions. Then the bigger one, we just call it the bigger one, the bigger 4 is kind of, you know, 250 to 265, like I said, depending on conditions, on grass, on tee.

Actually went to another one, I have a 3-iron but it's bent strong. I took out my 3-wood, so it's kind of -- it's a really strong 2-iron so it acts as my 3-wood. So that off the tee today was going 285, 290. For me, that's a big tool just because 3-wood I don't use much. I use it a lot off the tee, so I just figured be a little more accurate, better ball flight, whatnot.

To answer your second question, pitching wedge is 140 to 155. 9-iron stock shots are 155 to 165. Then stock 8-iron's 165 to 180. It's basically in 15 increments. 7-iron, 180 to 195. 6-iron, 195 to 210. 5-iron, 210 to 225.

Q. A stock swing, is that what percentage -- you kind of talked just now about a gap in the percentage of power for that stock, what would you consider that?

CAMERON CHAMP: Usually 80 percent, that's what -- that's just to stay in balance. That's one thing I've worked on just trying to be consistent with it. Like I said, if I have a situation where I need to add a little more, take a little more off, I can do that as well.

Q. Cameron, do you find more satisfaction -- there was a shot at Mayakoba, I want to say it was the 15th, I want to say it was a par 3, where you played a low draw right at the flag. In flighting it and shaping it just the way you picture it or smashing it off the tee, what brings you more joy, I guess?

CAMERON CHAMP: I would definitely say flighting and shaping shots is one thing I've really worked on, especially flighting shots. I rarely hit a full shot usually, unless it's a calm day. But usually I like to flight shots lower, my numbers are more consistent that way instead of just throwing it up in the sky. Like I say, that's one thing I've really worked on in the last few years coming out of college and turning pro and now I'm very comfortable with it and it's kind of my go-to.

Q. Going into Safeway, did you have a goal for the fall season, or what would you have considered a successful fall?

CAMERON CHAMP: I just want to make all the cuts, that was my main goal. I knew I was playing good, I was close to putting four good rounds together each event. And Safeway, it was kind of a struggle the first two days, but I just stuck it out and then played well on the weekend. Things just kind of progressed from there.

Q. Did you do anything crazy to make the putt, make a putt of any length or anything?

CAMERON CHAMP: Not that I can remember. I think I made it on the dot. No, actually I didn't birdie the last hole, I parred it. But nothing that I can remember.

Q. Making that cut, was it just making that cut very important for then what followed?

CAMERON CHAMP: I think so. Like I said, I was really struggling with ball-striking and I just wasn't making the putts. I just made it on the number. Then I played okay on Saturday and played amazing on Sunday, and this win, that kind of boosted me up to top-25.

Q. Cameron, you're in second in the Birdies Fore Love program with \$300,000 to the charity of your choice with the win. What type of motivation is that for this week, the last event of the fall?

CAMERON CHAMP: It's huge. Charity and giving back has always been a thing of mine and my family personally. Like I said, we didn't come from much, but we always gave back as much as possible. We started my own foundation, the Cameron Champ Foundation, and we're taking over a local par-3 course I grew up at starting in January. Obviously the focus is on the tournament but also that as well. It definitely hits home for me, like I said. To be able to have that opportunity to donate to my charity or a few charities we have in mind would help tremendously.

Q. And thinking back to your time on the Web.com Tour and the goal is top-25 to get your card and the style of play out there versus now on the PGA TOUR and there might be different goals, are there any kind of ways you found yourself, your pre-tournament preparation and how you approach a tournament at the PGA TOUR level kind of based on the goals as opposed to the Web where the 25 is that kind of main goal?

CAMERON CHAMP: Can you say that again? I'm trying to understand the question fully.

Q. Yeah. With the Web.com Tour, the goal is to finish in the 25, so that might lend to a certain style of play, whereas now on the PGA TOUR you have different goals, a variety of different goals. Austin Cook talked about how he kind of rests more on the PGA TOUR because it's not as much of a sprint to the finish with all the weeks together. Is there anything you kind of noticed about that in your preparation, your approach to PGA TOUR?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, that's a prime example. It's a very long season. I think just picking the courses that I feel suit me the best, I think that's the main thing. Like you said, yeah, it's a long season, rest is key. Today I got all my work done in the morning, I'm going to be done after this, so I feel like that's one thing I've done very well that I learned the hard way on the Web.com Tour, just burning myself out and not having anything left in the tank.

Yeah, like I said, plan my schedule right, what fits me, rest. And then obviously I feel like if I do that, it will give me a better chance to reach the goals I'm looking to meet.

Q. I'm kind of curious about like precollege stuff. If you didn't come from what people might refer to as like a country club upbringing type thing, had a very

successful career in terms of Junior Ryder Cup and All-American, this, that and the other, how did you get recognized? How were you able to kind of get the competition you needed where you needed it, things like that, and develop?

CAMERON CHAMP: Growing up I played The First Tee program back home. We had a very good program at the time and I played that all the way up to high school.

Then we have a good family friend, John Wood, who at the time caddied for Hunter Mahan, and Hunter -- I can't remember if he sponsored it or whatnot, but there was an AJGA event in I want to say Ft. Worth. I could be wrong on that. I'm pretty sure it's Ft. Worth.

John talked to Hunter and he got me an invite, and that was kind of my first big tournament for me. I ended up losing in a playoff. So that kind of just spurred me on, I got enough points, all the AJGA rankings and whatnot to move up. I played my next one and next one, kept playing good and got the rankings. And from there, it just kind of went on.

I still look back on that as if I didn't get that, who knows what would happen just because, like I said, for my family there was no way for us to be able to travel and play so many of those events to get rankings up.

Q. Did you get some support from the AJGA then?

CAMERON CHAMP: I believe, yeah, there was those grants I believe it was. We had some help with that and we had some family friends also contribute as well.

Q. The money question is, who beat you in the playoff, do you remember?

CAMERON CHAMP: Branson Davis. Branson Davis beat me in the playoff. I think we played 18 twice if I recall correctly.

Q. Are you still stung by it or are you over it okay?

CAMERON CHAMP: I'm okay, I'm good now.

Q. That Sunday at Safeway you talked about, was there anything in your game that clicked or was it just the confidence of putting in another good round on tour?

CAMERON CHAMP: Nothing really clicked. Like I said, I wasn't hitting it well all week and then that Sunday everything was just on. I mean, it was blowing 25, gusting a little more maybe and I was flighting the shots right, hitting the shots where I needed to, and then I made a few good putts. One thing led after another, and I didn't really make any mistakes that day.

PRESTON SMITH: Cameron, thank you for your time.