

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 1, 2019

JASON DAY



MARK WILLIAMS: Thanks for joining us. We would like to welcome Jason Day, the defending champion of the Wells Fargo Championship, and alongside him, Kobe Narcisse, who's from The First Tee of New Orleans and he just played in the pro-am today with Jason. They just finished 18 holes. Kobe was the winner of an essay competition that was the initiative of Wells Fargo and The First Tee; they do it every year. He was at the pairings party last night and chose to play with Jason.

Let's start with Kobe first. Can you give us some idea of your experience today and what that was like playing with one of the greatest players in the world?

KOBE NARCISSE: It was a great experience today, a dream of mine. I've been wanting to play with Jason Day for a while. It's a tough course definitely. Greens are fast, tough chipping. My iron game's been good. It's been good getting tips from this guy even though I think I can still putt better than him.

JASON DAY: That's good.

KOBE NARCISSE: It was great today. It was great fun.

JASON DAY: He was trying to take my money out there.

MARK WILLIAMS: Jason, just some comments on Kobe's game.

JASON DAY: It's great. This is the first time I've played with obviously Kobe, I met him today. We were just in New Orleans last week, so to be able to play with one of the guys from The First Tee of New Orleans. Actually, to be honest, this is the first time -- I've met a lot of First Tee kids before, but to be able to play with one was a unique thing going on today that was exciting. I think we had a lot of fun out there.

KOBE NARCISSE: Definitely.

MARK WILLIAMS: Jason, you've had a pretty good season so far, five top-10s including a couple at THE PLAYERS and Masters. Coming in here this week, how do you assess your game?

JASON DAY: It's good, I feel good about my game. Obviously it's hard to be patient sometimes because you know you want to win. I feel it's right there. I feel really good about the process that I've made. Even though last week wasn't, you know, how we wanted it, me and Scotty, but overall I feel like I played pretty good. So I'm coming in this week feeling

pretty confident about how my game is progressing, especially up until this year -- up until right now.

MARK WILLIAMS: And just before we take questions, I'll ask Kobe one more question. What was the best part about Jason's game for you? What did you like about it?

KOBE NARCISSE: He's very long on the tee.

JASON DAY: Yes.

KOBE NARCISSE: He definitely crushes the ball down there. Tried to make some waves with him; unfortunately, I lost. It was very fun.

Q. Two questions, Jason. Can I ask about your health, how you're feeling?

JASON DAY: I feel good, I feel fine. It's hot out, so usually when it's hot my back is nice.

Q. Second with the Presidents Cup coming here, I know it's a long ways away, 2021, can you envision this as a Presidents Cup course, how they're going to reroute it?

JASON DAY: Yes, definitely. There's some tough holes, but you're coming down 14, 15 are gettable. I mean, I don't know how they're going to finish it. In the past they can -- they've moved holes around with regards to the layout of the golf course. I don't know where they're going to start and where they're going to finish. I think they can, I guess, fiddle around with it. They did a good job at Liberty with the way we started on the fourth hole instead of the first. I think there's a lot of good golf holes out there that you can get things going.

So it will be exciting to see how the Presidents Cup, you know, goes when we're here in 2021, but that's a long way away.

Q. Jason, how has your training changed over the years? Are you using something like a hyperbaric chamber, using technology?

JASON DAY: No. I was explaining the other week that I was blowing into balloons, which is crazy because training, I haven't really trained much at all this year because I've just been so sore. Any sort of training will actually kind of aggravate my back even more, so I've just kind of stayed away from it. I've just been rehabbing. I'm in like the rehab phrase where I'm just trying to get through each and every week. I feel good about how things feel this week. I mean, last week was a bit tough with the stop-and-go starts. I think I warmed up five times in two days, which is crazy.

But overall I feel good about my body right now. I'm very optimistic about it. You know, I'm just kind of rehabbing everything, seeing my guy every morning and every night and then I'm doing any exercises. It's probably an hour and a half worth of rehab every single day.

Q. Are you using any technology for recovery or anything like that?

JASON DAY: No. I just told you I was blowing into balloons, so that's how far I go. Long story short, I try to keep my rib cage down. My rib cage gets up and then it blocks my mid back and then I can't really turn, so I get it from somewhere else and that's why my back flares up. But no, I've got a guy that I pay and he does a really good job with my back.

Q. Kobe, what's the best piece of advice Jason gave you and what was your best shot out there?

KOBE NARCISSE: Putting, yeah, putting was the best thing.

JASON DAY: He's very strong off the tee, right?

KOBE NARCISSE: That's my best part of the game. During putting he told me that you need a consistent speed and you need a speed that will get you to the hole, get you past. And also my putting, usually when I putt is not straight online, I usually push it or pull it a little bit right.

JASON DAY: I wanted to -- the big thing is that I noticed early that he kind of was flaring putts out to the right, so I was just trying to -- I told him if he had a mirror, and he does, and put some tees in the mirror, make sure you putt through that gate, and then put a marker out in front of that mirror so that you can -- from where your ball is is a straight line. So it just teaches you to hit it straight all the time so it's more consistent that way, so speed and line. Hopefully he takes it and runs with it and putts good.

Q. Jason, we often hear players talk about trying to peak four times a year, at least wanting to peak four times a year for the major championships.

JASON DAY: I don't understand that.

Q. I don't, either. I was going to ask you.

JASON DAY: I've never understood it. Like I've heard trainers talk about peaking. I would say, okay, how are we going to peak, and no one's ever told me how to peak. I've talked to a lot of people.

Don't you want to peak for all of them? I mean, I know like certain levels like sometimes you've got to lower expectations I guess to a certain degree to get back up to peak level. It would be nice to win all of them, right? To go into -- I mean, every time I would watch Tiger in interviews back when he was dominating, he said a win. And what stopped him from winning 10 times? He could have won 11 times.

That's what I'm getting at. We always say we want to peak for majors, but if you ask them

how do you peak, they probably don't know how they're peaking. I have no clue.

I think obviously a lot of it is with regards to rest, making sure that you do all your groundwork for that upcoming tournament before the event so that when you get there you don't have to think about it. And then on top of it, knowing exactly what lines you need to take. And then big key, especially in major championships, is obviously driving and short game. If you can get it somewhat on the green, you're going to play pretty decent, but you've got to save yourself.

So obviously the big part of it is the mental approach to obviously playing major tournaments. There's guys that go out there and they win early on the season; they just kind of fizzle out a little bit. It's not saying they're playing bad, it's just they hit their peak early and they're coming down. I've never understood the peak thing, that's just me.

Q. You talked about the physical issues. How hard is that to not let it leak into the mental issue --

JASON DAY: Yeah.

Q. -- and how do you deal with that?

JASON DAY: It's hard. I've talked about this so much beforehand, but you come back -- you have an injury, you feel like your world's ending because this is all you know and this is all you do. You're a professional golfer and this is kind of how you live your life, especially for me because I wake up thinking about golf and go to bed thinking about golf. I'm eating thinking about golf. So this is my life. Outside of my family, golf is it.

Sometimes it's difficult when you have an injury to ever think, "Is that the final thing that's going to push me over the line to actually have to hang up the clubs?" You always have to have a good team in place with regards to a good doctor and good trainer, good physio.

You know, having a good wife, having a good support system around you, knowing that it's not about right now, it's trying to build to get back to peak performance. That's what you're trying to do.

Q. Does it give you a greater appreciation for what Tiger has done?

JASON DAY: Oh, yeah, yeah, 100 percent. I mean, isn't it amazing? I'm still shocked he still won Augusta and I played against him. For him to be able to go through what he did with his back, have four back surgeries, have four knee surgeries and then come back at Augusta and win the first major of the year is pretty impressive. I mean, that's the Tiger that I grew up watching.

Q. I had another question, but I'm just curious, have you ever had a job?

JASON DAY: A what?

Q. A job.

JASON DAY: A job, no. This is my job.

Q. You never made money anything except for golf?

JASON DAY: No. I turned professional when I was 18 and other than that I was in school.

Q. No newspaper routes, nothing like that?

JASON DAY: No.

Q. There's no newspapers left, so don't worry about it.

JASON DAY: Yeah. Last question.

Q. Did you say last one or next one? I've got better ones. What do you think will be the biggest difference between playing the PGA in May compared with August?

JASON DAY: You can get it to -- you can get to the Northeast courses a little bit easier. I'm not saying that you can do it now, but the conditions of the course will be -- you're not having to worry about killing greens and stuff, especially with the humidity that we have. Beforehand you can go up there and not have to put the fans out on the greens, not have to worry about any of that stuff. It's going to be a lot more lush, it's going to be harder.

They have a lot more opportunity to make it harder, that's what I will say. If we go up to the Northeast with the PGA later in the year, there's so much you can actually do with it, so much water you can put down, so much fans, you can get the wind going so there's no humidity in the air where it can harm the greens.

And once again, we're guests on a golf course, on a club's -- someone's golf course that we're playing for the week, so we've got to look after what they need as well because it's their golf course that they're lending to us. So we want to make sure that we leave it in somewhat good shape when we finish it.

I think there's a lot more opportunity now to make a lot -- you can play with it, you can make it as hard or as easy as you want, especially with the conditions of the weather that we'll get.

Q. And kind of along those lines in terms of anticipation for lack of a better word, is it different when it's a month after the Masters in the middle of major season compared with having a big run through the summer and you finish with the last one?

JASON DAY: Yeah. I mean, it's definitely not glory's last shot anymore. I kind of, I like how

the schedule goes now. I like how it's a big tournament every month starting with THE PLAYERS, going all the way through to the Open Championship. I like how that runs now.

For me personally, I think what I struggled with the most was going from like the U.S. Open to The Open, and now I can play -- I'm going to play 3M Open this year. But I like how kind of bunched they are because you're not taking time off with regards to taking two or three weeks off, unless you're Tiger, but I'm able to play a lot more and actually kind of hopefully play my way into, you know, good positive play is what I'm essentially saying.

Q. To each his own, but if you took somebody like Tiger or Bryson DeChambeau, is having a month off and just going major to major, is that enough or not enough time to lose form?

JASON DAY: It can, yeah. Definitely you can. There's a difference between a social round at a club with your buddies or even with PGA Tour pros, and then there's a difference between playing tournament golf. Different beast, it's a total different beast. There's a lot of good club players that think they can play, but then they get out to an elite level and it's a different story, let alone going from Augusta to Bethpage. They're two different golf courses. Augusta's Augusta, but Bethpage is long, it's usually thick rough and it's kind of brutal to play there. It would be interesting to see how they set that up.

Q. Fans are different, too, at Bethpage?

JASON DAY: They're a little quiet, right, up in New York?

Q. Gentle.

JASON DAY: Yeah, gentle. Right.

Q. Along those lines, does your preparation, does it impact -- it doesn't sound like it impacts your preparation at all?

JASON DAY: No.

Q. And is your preparation different for a major versus sort of a regular tournament?

JASON DAY: Usually is. I don't know if I'm going to go up to New York early or not. I may go like maybe the Friday or Saturday and go up there and prep. The big thing is just getting used to the green, the contours of the green and actually how the greens fit and chipping and putting a lot. I've got a feeling we're going to be chipping and putting a lot that week just for how long it is. You get yourself in the rough, you won't be able to get to some of the greens, you'll be chipping out sideways. I think the PGA will make it very acceptable, though.

But yeah, typically I get maybe the weekend before and lead my way into it. I'm glad that I'm

playing this week, which is a very difficult golf course. It's in tremendous shape, so we'll get next week off and then I'm heading into the PGA.

Q. Jason, last year here you said you fought through some demons at the end that you picked up the year before at the PGA. Is that something that you've been able to --

JASON DAY: That wasn't correlated from the PGA to last year. That was just because I was hitting it off the map and I was trying to get it in the hole. Go ahead.

Q. Is that something that you've been able to put in your mental preparation since then, or is that kind of specific to Quail Hollow?

JASON DAY: No, not really. I was just trying to win the golf tournament. I think obviously with what happened at the PGA Championship, you know, I would like -- I think I had a 9 or something like that, I can't remember. I've got a really short memory, so I'm glad I have that.

Last year I was just trying to get it in. I just felt like as the week progressed, I couldn't quite find the bottom of the swing and I just couldn't quite find the fairways. Luckily enough I had my short game to back myself up on it. It was a tough weekend.

So being able to get through it and push, you always learn something about yourself and see how far you can actually push yourself. Hopefully none of that this year and I can actually finish it out in style would be nice.

Q. One more?

JASON DAY: Okay, Doug, what have you got?

Q. If golf didn't exist and you couldn't play any sport for a living, what would be your dream job?

JASON DAY: I would go in the military, I like that. I think I need structure.

MARK WILLIAMS: All right. Thanks, gentlemen. We appreciate your time.