

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**June 19, 2019**



**KEN TANIGAWA**

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**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Please welcome Ken Tanigawa to the media center.

Ken, this will be just your third tournament after winning your first major championship. What have the last few weeks been like for you?

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Well, this past week we just got back from Japan, right? I just played a few times, just relaxed at home, hung out with some family and friends. Recovered okay from the jet lag; that was pretty quick.

Yeah, it's been fun. Got a lot of congratulatory texts and some of the friends I saw, so it was pretty cool.

**Q. This will be your second start here at this event. Last year you finished T-15, kind of right in the middle. What are you looking forward to for this week here?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Boy, it was fun last year. It's a fun golf course, great golf course to play. It's in great shape. So just look forward to getting back out and competing.

With American Family being the sponsor, I think it's fantastic, and with everything that Steve does for the game and the community, I think just looking forward to the week.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** You had a chance to play a practice round yesterday. What have you seen on the course? Is there something that suits your game out here?

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Well, that all depends on how you're playing, right? It's in great shape. You know, the course is fun. It's got a lot of character. It's in great shape so that's really the most important I think for players to really enjoy that. And the greens are rolling fine. So I don't know if anything in particular suits your game really, it's just a good golf course and it's fun to play.

**Q. Playing here last year, a lot has changed in your life since that point in your career. How has your life changed, and have you been able to soak it in? Do you think about it or do you try to block it out and just keep your head down?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** I think my life really hasn't changed in the big picture, just the golf stuff has changed a lot. I do think about it. I just really have to pinch myself to just be able to be out here and have the opportunity to play and compete at this stage of my life against these players really that I knew a handful really back in college and some, but a lot that I kind of, like you guys, watched on TV, right? So it's really cool to be able to almost call them peers

and to be able to play alongside them.

So, but golf-wise, yeah, that's certainly changed. To play in all these tournaments and a lot of events throughout the year, which I wasn't really doing for so long, that's been an adjustment. But our kids -- just became an empty nester, our youngest just graduated high school, so just the family support's been huge. My wife, Angela, she's all in and she loves to see me having the opportunity to play and compete. And the kids are very encouraging as well.

So I guess that's a big part of all this and the journey that I'm on. So it's all been -- it's been more than -- it's just incredible really. It's hard to put in words, but I guess that really could sum it up. It's just an amazing journey.

**Q. As you neared 50, how did you prepare for this tour? Did you work extra hard on your game knowing that you had a chance to come out here and do this? And what does it mean to you to be out here and have sort of a second go-round here, or second career you might say?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Well, the latter -- it means the world to be able to play golf and to be able to play, I guess, decent enough to compete out here, right? Because prior to this when I was playing amateur golf and trying to get to this stage, you never know. These guys, they've been professionals for so long, so successful, and it shows. So to be able to get into that arena and compete alongside them, you know, it's unreal.

But how did I prepare? You know, I just played amateur events. Yeah, I played at home and practiced, but it wasn't -- you know, and I was fortunate enough when I did play well when I did and was able to win like our state amateur a few times, our mid amateur, stuff like that, I guess that gave me the encouragement and the checkpoint to say, okay, at least it's worthwhile to try. Because I wasn't going to just -- if I wasn't competing well or achieving or accomplishing those things as an amateur, you know, I guess you could have tried Q-School but it would have been more of a pipe dream, I guess, because of that if you didn't have the results to really justify entering.

But you know, like where I play at the club, I play at a club called Whisper Rock Golf Club and there's a lot of tour players, so that really helped, I think, playing with -- and there's a lot of great amateur players as well. But to play alongside them, and just even when they're fun rounds but you have friendly wagers and to be able to -- obviously their games are way up here in comparison. So just to play with them in that arena and just improve -- improving because you're playing with better players, I think that helped. So that was a preparation without the intent of preparing, if that makes sense.

So other than that, just, you know, just trying to -- you know, with Q-School you've just got to play so well at the right time, you never quite know, but obviously it's worked out.

**Q. Talked to Dan Olsen after the qualifier on Monday and he cited you as an**

inspiration as a player like him. His background is similar to yours.

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Sure.

**Q. Have you heard from people who have followed a similar path or who look to follow that along the same kind of lines, and does that add another element to what you've done?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Yes and yes. I've heard from -- since I've gotten my card and been out here for the year and a half or so, a little less than that, I've heard from a lot of people, a lot of past players and it's been really cool. They've just been all very, you know, very encouraging with everything they've said.

Along your lines, yeah, kind of egged them on and tried and -- you know, I've talked to Dan as well as other players. They've reached out. So if I could, you know, if I could be used as motivation or whatever, I think that's great. Anything to help along the game.

**Q. When you played those rounds back home at your club with some of the tour players, some of the really good players, how do you pick their brains and what did they tell you about what to expect if and when you got out here?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** They didn't really -- you know, they just said that you're plenty good enough to compete and just keep doing what you're doing.

I remember Kirk Triplett, who also lives in Phoenix, told me, hey, just -- he almost said -- I remember him saying, "Don't become that tour player," right? Just try to stay true to who you are as an amateur player and just keep doing what you've done to get there. Don't all of a sudden try any more or try to change things up too much, which it's easy to do when you get kind of put in this environment because everybody's so very competitive and everybody still works very hard at their game.

I kind of take that to heart. Just try to stay in the routine of what kind of got you here and stay true to those roots. That will help kind of sustain or keep going in the right direction instead of just trying all of a sudden, hey, you're on tour and becoming a tour player, if that makes sense.

So that was great advice and I always kind of use that and remind myself of that.

**Q. So all that buildup and obviously last year's success, but to win a major, does it feel like almost light speed in the last 18 months considering the journey to even try to get here?**

**KEN TANIGAWA:** Right. Light speed as in -- you know, I didn't expect -- you know, I really don't have expectations good or bad or results oriented. I just try to go out and do the best I

can.

Did I think I could win a major? Yeah, you always try to dream, that would be really cool, but to have it come to fruition and to actually execute and achieve that was a pinch-me moment for sure. It was a surreal moment to win on a big stage at a venue like that. Real historic, right?

So there's times back and forth throughout the round, it was a hard round to just stay in the moment, and to keep telling yourself, hey, you could do this, and try to encourage yourself. Just the mental games that you play out there.

But yeah, it's been a whirlwind in the sense that, yeah, you believe you can accomplish it, but you don't really know, right, until it happens. You know, three, four years ago if you would have told me, hey, you're going to be at a table talking to the media after winning a senior major, I would have, okay, right. It would have been one of those moments. It's just incredible to just even be here. It's a fun moment.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Thank you so much, Ken.

**KEN TANIGAWA:** For sure. Thanks, guys.