

**BUBBA WATSON**

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**JACK RYAN:** Before we get started, if we could just get an opening comment on being a part of the Rocket Mortgage Classic, the first PGA TOUR event in Detroit.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, it's unbelievable. Gosh, what the team has done, what they've done to the city, what they've tried to create here in bringing a golf tournament to Detroit, what a special event. I'm honored to be here and be a part of this at a golf course -- I played the back nine today. The golf course is in good shape. Looking forward to it.

But yeah, the event itself, the city, what sports means to this city and what it's done for this city, it's unbelievable. Just now a golf event here, so it's just one more thing under their belt of sports.

**JACK RYAN:** And I understand you have an announcement to make about some work that you've been doing?

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah. With Dan Gilbert, Rocket Mortgage team, the tournament, I wanted to honor him somehow and the only way I could think of it and because of golf is I'm going to donate \$20,000 to The First Tee of Greater Detroit. I saw the clinic yesterday. So sometime today a check will be going out for 20 grand coming here to Detroit and being here for The First Tee in honor of Dan Gilbert.

Dan has done so much for the city, means so much to him, and then obviously what his family's going through right now and everything, it was just in my heart to show some love in a different way. So that was my way of trying to help the city and be a part of the city for this tournament.

**Q. When you played this course for the first time, does it remind you of any other courses either in a Tour event or any other places you play tournaments?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, it's pretty wild. You think of -- I would say it's a combination of a few of them. We were talking about Canada, we were talking about Riviera, and Travelers last week. It's tree lined, but it's the kind of grass, the way the shots you're hitting into the greens with the slopes and the undulations. From tee to green, it's not too bad. It's kind of fair, kind of open. I shouldn't say that until after I tee off, but it's kind of open.

But then the tournament starts, it's the second shot or third shot, trying to get the ball in the right position. So there's a couple courses we play throughout the year with this kind of grass and this kind of, I don't know if wedges, playing safe with wedges, but trying to play smarter and leaving an easier putt to make a par or birdie.

**Q. Have you played much golf in Michigan and do you have a sense for how much people here love it?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** I can't remember. When was the last event here, 2009? It was the year I finished second, I hit a shot out of the trees on the 18th hole. I think Kenny Perry I think won, is that right? Anybody know? Long time ago.

I missed about a 15-footer to force a playoff, so that was the last time I remember playing. And I remember that because I wish I would have made the putt, so that one sticks in my head.

Yeah, so that's really the only time I can remember playing here and missing putts, I guess.

**Q. Bubba, can you rate the difficulty of this course if you can, or is it too early to tell?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Well, it's definitely too early to tell, but so far this week it's been windy. I got here yesterday; super windy yesterday, super windy today. And what I've seen so far on the weather, the wind's going to be half the speed throughout the week, which is good for me.

Like I said, it's the greens, the greens are going to be very difficult. Trying to get the speed of the greens, trying to leave the ball in the right positions if you miss the greens. Right off the greens is some high rough, so around the greens it's going to be the difficult part. Off the tee's not too bad, but around the greens and getting the putts, like a lot of breaking putts. So it's just going to be putting the ball in the right position after your tee shots.

**Q. You play tonight obviously in the Celebrity Challenge. What do you know about your teammates and how much are you looking forward to playing in this?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Oh, I'm looking forward to it a lot. Troy Mullins, I'm trying to not get outridden. And then I love basketball, so Tom is going to be a treat to talk to. I think it's the goalie, right, for the Redwings?

My son now, because my wife's from Canada, we've been in Canada for about three weeks, so my son thinks he's a goalie now, so he wants to come out here and talk to him and meet him.

So it will be fun, it will be interesting. Anytime you can hang with greats in their sport or in their business field, you can learn from that. So for me I'm just going to be out there taking it all in, trying to get some cool pictures, get some likes on Instagram. For me, it's just going to be fun just interacting and seeing a different side that I don't get to hang out as much.

**Q. Did you follow Michigan State this year and Izzo's team going to the Final Four?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Oh, always. Who doesn't watch in March, you know? That's when basketball gets real. So yeah, you always watch it and pull for your guys and people that you know and like.

**Q. Bubba, this is going to be Gary's first start as a major champion.**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Who?

**Q. Gary Woodland.**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Oh, Gary Woodland, okay.

**Q. Can you think back to after that first Masters and what it was like for you to go back to the course, to embrace starting as a major winner?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, I saw him on the putting green, first time I've seen him. That day that he was winning, I was playing Cypress. He was at Pebble. I wish I had had been at Pebble, but I was a Cypress, so it was pretty good.

But watching him win and haven't seen him yet, first thing I said to him is "Congrats," and then I said, "You've got to learn the word 'no.'"

And he said -- I'm not going to mention any names, but he said there were some other people who reached out to him and said, "You've got to learn 'no' real fast."

Six months will go by real fast, and if you don't say "no," you'll be tired. Six months from now he'll be exhausted. With two young kids in his life, he's got to watch it and make sure he saves his energy.

But the word "no" is going to be big because of sponsors, because of more fans, more people pulling at him, more tournaments pulling at him. You've just got to pace yourself.

Even though we call it -- some people call it a slump after you win if your name's not Tiger or Jack Nicklaus, but everyone calls it a slump after you win a major, the first one, it's really just you're just exhausted. You dream about winning it, and then when you do, you're like, "Now what do I do?" So that's what I told him, just learn the word "no."

And his caddie started laughing and he said a bunch of people have told him that so far. That was my advice. Anybody that wins, just learn the word "no." Not being negative, it's just you've got to pace yourself. You're exhausted, you got pushed to the limit. And I've never won a U.S. Open, never even made a cut it feels like, but you got pushed to the limit and so you've got to learn the word "no" just so you can rest. It's not about you don't want to play golf or anything, it's just you've got to rest and get excited about the game again and get the energy back.

**Q. Bubba, when you come to a new course like this, how long does it take for you to get comfortable and get your lines and everything?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** What I noticed here so far is my caddie was out yesterday, Teddy. He was giving me updates, he was giving me play by play each hole while I was on the plane over here, so I was getting the updates of how each hole looks and what he thinks. So I already knew kind of what to expect when I got here today.

What I saw on the fairways is you've got the fairway cut one way, down grain you've got the fairway cut into the grain. So on the tee shots the right side looked better to me just because I could see the fairway a lot better because it's been cut down grain, so that's going to be my target line. I like to cut the ball anyway, so I'm looking at that right side and trying to cut it back to the center.

But no, everything looks good. There's a lot of bunkers out there you've got to try to avoid. But no, when you come to a new course, you just try to learn it real fast. We can all play golf, so it just comes down to calming your mind down and focusing on the tee shots.

And then like I said, these greens are so tricky, that's what everybody's focusing on right now is trying to get these greens. And if they start getting firm, this golf course can play really hard. Even though people say it doesn't have length, the green complexes is what does it.