

NATE LASHLEY (-25)

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome the 2019 Rocket Mortgage Classic champion, Nate Lashley, into the interview room. Nate, from the alternate list to this table as a champion on the PGA TOUR, if we can get your thoughts on what has been just a fantastic week.

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah. I mean, I wasn't even sure I was going to get into the tournament. Ending up being in here right now, it's a dream. I'm just really grateful that I got into the tournament. Happy to be here in Detroit and love the place and look forward to coming back.

JOHN BUSH: And this opens up so many opportunities for you now, you move up to No. 40 in the FedExCup standings, but in terms of the Top 30 making it to the Playoff Finale at East Lake, the Wyndham Rewards Top-10, just so many things that are now on the horizon for you.

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah. You know, job security for one; getting into the majors, the Masters, it's a dream come true. Obviously getting into that Top-40, that's going to be my goal for the rest of the year is to get to that Top-30 and make the TOUR Championship. So just looking forward to that with the rest of the season.

Q. Nate, just wondering if you can tell us what it was like to share that moment with your sister on the 18th green?

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah, it was great. I'm glad they all, my friends and family, were able to make it out. It's a special moment to be able to have it with them. Something I'll always remember.

Q. Nate, congratulations.

NATE LASHLEY: Thank you.

Q. I think it was Jay Farner during the ceremony that talked about Detroit, the comeback city, the underdog story. Knowing the history of this city, the first time this tournament's been in Detroit, a PGA event, has that sunk in how important this means obviously with your story and the city of Detroit as well?

NATE LASHLEY: I don't think it's -- nothing's quite sunk in yet, but the fans were just absolutely great, especially today to me, rooting me on. It was great having them on my side. It made it feel like I wasn't out there alone and I'm just really thankful for how great

they were to me today.

Q. From the tragedy you underwent while you were in college to really you finished 14th in the qualifier at the Orchards, making it as a final alternate here, can you talk about your own personal comeback you've made that culminates with your first PGA TOUR victory?

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah, I mean, I've been through a lot. It took a lot of years for me to get over my parents' death, for sure. It was mentally holding me back for a long time, and getting in this week -- I don't know, like you said, not getting in through the Monday was a little disappointing. I feel like I played really well. I knew I still had an outside chance of getting in, and once I moved up to first alternate and found out that David Berganio wasn't going to play, I was just really happy. I was just excited to be in the golf tournament really.

Q. Nate, congratulations. You mentioned job security. When is the last time in your life at all that you've had job security?

NATE LASHLEY: Well, not yet on the PGA TOUR, just on the Web Tour when I had full status in, it would have been 2016, I believe.

Q. But this is better?

NATE LASHLEY: What's that?

Q. This is better?

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah, this is just a little better. You know, now the Korn Ferry Tour, it's a great tour as well, but getting out here and having job security, there's no better feeling.

Q. Just going into the round today, I mean, how comfortable were you? I mean, it was a huge lead. You seemed pretty -- you made a couple bogeys early, but no one even really came close. Was it a comfortable round of golf?

NATE LASHLEY: No, I wouldn't say it was comfortable. You know, the start helped a lot, birdieing one, birdieing three was nice, kind of calmed my nerves. But making bogeys on six and nine and they kind of came back, snuck back a little bit.

But nobody really made a big run at me today, so that kind of kept me a little more relaxed. Nobody ended up getting to like past 20 under par, so I had a little cushion to play with. So yeah, that was a little more easy on my nerves.

Q. Nate, you said during yesterday's round that you found that there were moments where your thoughts were drifting back to your parents. Was that also the case today during the final round?

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah. There was a couple times out there late in the round where it's -- it happens all the time. I think about my parents all the time. And thinking about them today, I was getting a little emotional even walking up 18 even before I hit my second shot thinking about my parents, because without them I wouldn't be sitting here right now.

Q. When you stopped playing professional golf, like how long was that? Was it even a year or not quite a year or more than?

NATE LASHLEY: It was maybe, I don't know, three, four months. Just kind of took a break. I was a little burnt out. I wouldn't fully say I was -- had given up on golf, but I really needed a break.

It was nice to take a few months off, and by taking those few months off and doing some other stuff, I realized golf's a lot of fun, it's a blessing to be able to come out here and compete. Especially now playing at the highest level, I'm glad I stuck it out.

Q. Nate, congratulations. This win secures you a place in The Open at Royal Portrush. How do you feel about that, and then how much are you looking forward to playing over in Ireland?

NATE LASHLEY: It hasn't quite sunk in. I've actually never been over to Europe, so I'm really looking forward to it. Really, it's just a dream come true really getting to go over and play in The Open, getting to play in the Masters. I'm just really looking forward to it already.

Q. Did you actually sell any houses, how many, and were you very good at it?

NATE LASHLEY: Well, I've had my real estate license for just -- maybe just a couple years out of college. One of my buddies is a broker and he kind of convinced me to get it, so I've had it for a long time. Sold some houses. I've done some rental properties and stuff like that. I kind of stayed in the real estate business in Arizona and Scottsdale and that area. Yeah. I've used it more than you would think.

Q. Nate, congrats. After your approach on No. 18, can you take us through your experience, your thoughts as you're walking up the 18th green? You're a PGA champion and hearing the crowd cheer for you after a great round.

NATE LASHLEY: It was surreal, to be honest with you. I didn't know what to think. There was a lot going through my mind. It's just an unreal feeling. Just so happy to be here and happy to be in Detroit and I'll always remember this place. Going to be a special place to me.

Q. Nate, so for all the years on mini tours and doing Monday qualifiers and things like that, can you kind of put into perspective, that idea of trying to chase the idea of one week can change everything and you have to do that every single week? How do you go about that and what's it really like?

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah, like you said, one week can change -- it's a career changing event getting a win out here. It gives you job security, it gets you into majors, you have two more years to basically get more comfortable and play better golf. So you really can't put into words how much this means and it's just huge for my career.

Q. How do you actually continue to convince yourself that that week is coming?

NATE LASHLEY: You know, over the years I feel like I've continued to get better and better, so it's just -- it's something I've always felt like I could compete out here and I just kept telling myself that. With over the years getting better and getting wins from the Latin Tour, moving up to the Web, getting a win, you know, those weeks gave me enough confidence. When I came out here, I felt like my first year I struggled a little, it was a tough year, but at the same time I had some times when I played some pretty good golf. So I knew that if I could just maybe get a little bit better, get a little better mentally that I was going to have an opportunity out here to win.

Q. It seemed like it got a chuckle, but what was your reaction to being introduced as an alternate on the first tee?

NATE LASHLEY: It was kind of funny, I liked it. You know, last man in the field. I was just happy to get in this week, and to end up winning is just a dream come true.

Q. I asked you yesterday if you were having any fun. Are you having any fun yet?

NATE LASHLEY: Well, a little bit of fun right now. I'm going to have some more fun here in a little bit. Like I said, it hasn't quite sunk in yet. Never been in this situation, winning a PGA TOUR event. Just really looking forward to everything in store and finishing the year off strong.

Q. When did you get word that your sister was coming in, and your friends? Did you know they were all coming in? When did you first see them today?

NATE LASHLEY: They had texted me or called me yesterday and, you know, asked if I wanted them to come in and I said yeah. So it was yesterday at some point after my round they decided to come out.

Q. When did you see them first?

NATE LASHLEY: You know, I didn't really see -- I saw a couple guys randomly walking during the round, but I didn't see -- it was a lot of people following us, so I didn't really see anybody at all that much. I was really just trying to focus on, you know, keeping my head down, keeping going forward in each shot. So I was trying to not, you know, wander off into the crowd and stuff like that. I was really just focused on my game.

Q. Outside of golf here in Detroit, how did you enjoy your stay, or what did you do while you were here?

NATE LASHLEY: Well, I got a good friend, Ted, that lives over in Plymouth, so I hung out a couple days with him. Nice little area over there, great little downtown. Went down there and had dinner a couple nights.

Other than that, though, I was staying north of the city here, about 15 minutes north of the golf course. Once the tournament starts, you kind of get in lockdown mode. You just kind of go out to dinner and then you're back to the hotel room and getting some rest. So I haven't seen a whole lot of Detroit, but I think we're going to stay downtown tonight, so we'll probably see a little bit more of it tonight.

Q. Ricky was telling me yesterday that when he was going to the airport on Tuesday, the guy who drove him to the airport, he told the guy who drove him to the airport that Nate is going to win this week. Did he tell you that and do you believe that?

NATE LASHLEY: No, he didn't tell me that. That's -- I don't know that many caddies will ever say that to their player. It's not something that -- at the beginning of the week you're always thinking about winning, but you're really just kind of focused on you just want to play some good golf. And into that, as you play good golf, the week kind of culminates into having a chance to win.

But no, Ricky didn't say anything to me about it before. I was just happy he was able to make it out on Tuesday and be here.

Q. Do you believe him when he says he said that?

NATE LASHLEY: Do I believe?

Q. Yeah, like I asked him if he really said that.

NATE LASHLEY: Yeah, I believe him. I mean, he tells me that all the time. We finish tournaments where we're being around that top-10, top-20 range, you know, and he's told me numerous times I'm good enough to win out here, it's going to come, and it happened this week for us.

JOHN BUSH: Well, I think I speak for everyone in the room, we couldn't be happier for you, Nate. Congratulations.

NATE LASHLEY: I appreciate it. Thanks, everybody.