

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
July 31, 2019



PAUL CASEY

DOUG MILNE: Paul Casey, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to the 2019 Wyndham Championship. You're making your seventh start in the event and first since finishing third in 2015. I looked at some numbers, and actually in your last two starts here, you've had eight straight rounds in the 60s, so obviously a course that suits your game well. So why don't you --

PAUL CASEY: You've totally cursed me, haven't you, Doug?

DOUG MILNE: I know. With that said, just a few comments on being back here at Sedgefield.

PAUL CASEY: It's great to be back, I've always loved this event. Mark and his team, Bobby Long, a whole bunch of gentlemen, people associated with this event have always been incredibly generous. They extended me invites when I needed it, so I've always sort of felt the need to come back and support this event. One of the best golf courses we play on Tour. Yeah, right down to the fans. This is just a cool week.

For me, it's a busy part of the year, but I really wanted to come here, whether or not Wyndham Rewards. That's just, I guess, the extra kind of incentive this week for me, try and move up a couple of spots if I can. So yeah, really looking forward to it.

DOUG MILNE: And speaking of that, all year long you've had five top-5 finishes highlighted by your successful defense of the Valspar Championship. Coming into the week eighth in FedExCup points, eighth in the Wyndham Rewards top-10. Just kind of assess your season for us.

PAUL CASEY: It's been really solid. I think it's been tricky trying to get the flow right with the new schedule. I think I'm doing okay. I've still got a lot of golf left. I look at it as a calendar year, so we've -- you know, you don't want me talking about it, but I'm already looking at next season and where I'm going to play. I've got to fulfill a lot of European obligations as well.

Took three weeks off before The Open Championship and so I feel, you know, like this is kind of my second half, even though we're closing out the regular season and then the FedExCup Playoffs.

It's been good. I would like it to -- my last good performance, really good performance was Travelers where I had a top-5, I think a top-5 there. Yeah, I want that again. Kind of the last couple of events, just not quite clicking. The Open, I always find links golf tough and then

just with the travel getting back to Memphis last week, just wasn't quite there. But it's on the cusp. I feel like I'm hitting it well, I'm doing a lot of things really, really well. So hopefully this is where it then kicks off for the rest of the FedExCup.

DOUG MILNE: Okay. We'll open it up for a few questions.

Q. Talk about this being the end of the season. As you've gone through this compressed new season schedule, do you like it? Has it required more change than you expected?

PAUL CASEY: Do I like it? First of all, I don't know because again, I look at it as a -- holistically, I look at it as a macro kind of big picture stuff. For me, it's -- yeah, I don't know. I've probably still got 10 events or so I've still got to play this year.

So I've looked at that, and that's why I've skipped certain weeks and tried to take breaks where I needed to, so I can last. I'll go all the way to December this year down in -- for the Aussie Open. It's more golf than I probably had planned originally. More golf than my wife wanted me to play, I think, and my poor kids haven't seen me in a while. I think I've executed the schedule relatively well for me personally, but it's still fluid and we've still got to -- it's going to be organic next year as well with the Olympic Games being thrown into the mix.

I think, look, the discussion about the majors being compressed into four months or whatever they are, they were already compressed anyway. Not a lot has changed. We're only just now finishing, what, two, three weeks earlier than we did. Obviously PGA moving.

But I don't see the big discussion because our season was always was traditional golf season; golf starts in April and we finish in August. I don't know, I don't see why a lot has changed. For me, it was just the flying around. There was just some inconveniences for certain events this year, and some of events won and some events lost. Canada to Pebble Beach to Connecticut wasn't a great stretch. Some events lost out through that kind of -- periods like that.

Q. You're the only player in the Wyndham Rewards Top-10 that's here this week. Are you a little surprised that some of the other guys didn't come?

PAUL CASEY: I would have liked to have seen more players here, but everybody -- we're all trying to -- you know, the ultimate prize, we're trying to win the FedExCup. Guys are doing whatever is necessary to get themselves in the perfect position for that.

But yes, I thought there was probably one or two guys I thought would be here, but I can't answer for them and I shouldn't -- that's just my opinion. It is what it is. I would like to see, you know -- when it moves next year, we've got a week before -- a lot of guys will have a week before next year because it's the Olympic games next year before Wyndham. I think we'll see a change in that. It was just a slow build as Doug was discussing on the way over.

I think everything new starts slow. The FedExCup was slow when it was conceived. The first year was confusing and kind of over before it started. You know, I think Wyndham should be proud of what they've achieved in the first year and it's only going to grow.

Q. And as a follow-up, you played Open Championship, WGC here and conceivably three playoffs, that's six in a row. How difficult is that to play six in a row like that?

PAUL CASEY: I'm 42 now, so it's not great. It wasn't great when I was 25. It's a challenge, but I love playing golf, so I'm playing great golf. I love what I do. I know my -- the form I've got and my opportunities are not going to be there forever. There's very few guys, guys like Mickelson, are total anomalies, outliers in their ability to perform at that level once you get into your 40s. I'm one of only a handful of guys who's still doing this at this level in the 40s, so I'm like, I'm all in right now. I'm just going to do it as hard as I can. I don't train as much as I used to. I'm trying to look after the body better than ever. Yeah, we'll see, because I believe I've got maybe four, five years of doing this at this level and then that's probably it. So for me, why not take this opportunity. Eighth right now in FedExCup and Wyndham Rewards, I'm taking the opportunity.

Q. Paul, what's it like being in the head space of not having to play your way into East Lake versus starting the Playoffs and having to play your way into it? Is it a lot easier to --

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, it's a lot easier. Yeah, I'm totally freewheeling it. Yeah, like this week for me is like claw another few points closer to Brooks and Rory and those guys. They're so far ahead. Yeah, there's no pressure on me, I can freewheel it.

It's awkward when you're trying to make the next step, you're outside the top -- I mean, I've been outside the top 125 coming in this week and it's a horrible place to be. I've been here and not enjoyed this week at all and got it done. A little easier being maybe 125 to 70, but still the same, the same mentality; you don't want your season to end early. I find it a lot of pressure.

In fact, my worst golfing experience ever was, I wasn't playing golf. I visited a friend at Q-School back when it used to be down in Palm Springs and I walked off an hour later. It was the most horrible thing I've ever seen, everybody stressing and worrying about their futures. No, I don't like that position, so the position I'm in is great.

Q. A lot of attention going to Matthew Wolff, Collin Morikawa, young guys. You've seen various generations come out here, or classes.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah.

Q. What is it about this class, they come out immediately ready to win and have done it. Is there something different you've seen in this group?

PAUL CASEY: There is something different, but I don't know what it is yet. Hovland in there as well. Probably missing guys. They've instantly backed up the hype, which we haven't always seen. I don't know. I'm still learning as you are. I like the funkiness of Wolff's swing. Then you've got classic swings. Viktor's got like a double pump going sometimes, I can't figure it out.

All I know is I wasn't as accomplished emotionally and physically as those guys are at that age. Like I said, my days are numbered, which I'm fully aware of and not upset about, which I'm trying to maximize as much as possible and at least show them I'm not bad, because they'll forget about me in about five years. They won't know who I am.

Q. To follow up on my earlier question, one of the effects in having only two events in which to get yourself to East Lake is that you've got to really step on the accelerator and there's more people who are outside whatever the cut off is for the following week or whatever.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah.

Q. Have you found that you play your best golf when your back is against the wall or when you're able to just freewheel it? How does it translate to your actual golf, or maybe you played well in both cases?

PAUL CASEY: If you have put -- it's a difficult question. For me, it's a difficult question for me to answer because I found that I haven't necessarily played well when I'm outside of a qualifying number. FedExCup, for example, trying to get into Tour championships or Ryder Cup, trying to qualify for those teams, that's the worst. You can't get it out of your mind.

Yet as a player, if I'm put in an acute situation, like a single round of golf, if I screw up a couple of holes -- I did it last week. I started off with I call it my in-and-out start because I start off double, double on like 11 and 12. You know, four over for the championship through three holes or four holes and I put myself in that position. And I actually like that condition to be able to fight my way out because I'm totally in control.

But trying to qualify for something, everybody else can affect your result as well. I like the back against the wall kind of scenario, but in the right context. And in this context, no, I don't like it.

DOUG MILNE: All right. Paul, best of luck this week. We appreciate your time.