

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**July 31, 2019**



**HAROLD VARNER**  
**MARK BRAZIL**  
**STEPHEN HAMBLIN**

---

**JOHN BUSH:** We would like to welcome everyone to the Wyndham Championship. Special morning for us here this morning. First of all, we're joined by Harold Varner, III. Making his fourth start at the Wyndham Championship, his best finish here was a T-10 in 2017.

We're also joined by Mr. Stephen Hamblin, the executive director of the AJGA, and Mark Brazil, tournament director here at the Wyndham Championship.

First of all, Harold, we'll get started with you. Welcome back to a tournament that I know is very special to you.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Yeah, just being so close to home, it's obviously been super special to me. Have some great memories, that tenth when I had to have it. So it's just the support's the biggest thing, but I just want to play really well, honestly. I'm ready to compete.

**JOHN BUSH:** You enter the week 97th in the FedExCup, so you're good for your Tour card for next season. You've advanced to the FedExCup Playoffs your first three seasons on Tour and you'll now do so for the fourth time. Talk a little bit about your goals as the FedExCup Playoffs approach.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** I mean, this sounds so bad, but I've never been to Chicago, not once. I've never been to visit, I've never been for the tournament. So I'm just going to aim a little smaller for a change, because like I'm always like, let's go to East Lake, and I never make it to Chicago. So it's hard to get to East Lake and not go to Chicago.

So I just need to play some good golf. I've been playing really well this year, just haven't finished. But just being there, I've learned a lot. So I just need to keep putting myself there and I've got two great opportunities the next two weeks.

**JOHN BUSH:** Great. Now we'll throw it over to Mark, who has some exciting news for us.

**MARK BRAZIL:** Yeah, thanks a lot, John. This is very exciting. On behalf of the Wyndham Championship and the AJGA, I actually -- obviously the tournament director of the Wyndham Championship and I sit on the board of the directors on the foundation side of the AJGA, and obviously the AJGA is where I cut my teeth and learned everything from the man to my left and Harold's left.

So this is a real treat for me to be able to announce that June 22nd through 25th of 2020, we're going to introduce a brand new AJGA event over in Winston-Salem at Tanglewood. We've just come to terms with Tanglewood, which we're really excited about playing their championship golf course.

It's going to be the HV3 Foundation Junior All-Star Classic. So we've got the funding already. Ben Sutton and Teall have stepped up, they're going to help us out. We've got a couple other sponsors actually looking to get into it more, but the Wyndham Championship is also going to be a big supporter of it. I'm going to help raise the money for it, but right now we're in solid financial position.

We want to do -- I've had some really interesting conversations with my buddy here, Harold, and we both love The First Tee. I'm on the board here of The First Tee of the Triad. I love what they've done. We would like to see -- we both share in the mission of doing what we can for The First Tee chapters of North Carolina, to see some of these young kids that might not all the opportunities of the other kids to take it to the next level and to be -- to start playing some Carolina Golf Association events and get ranked in North Carolina and just play a little bit higher and climb what I call the ladder of junior golf up to Stephen's organization, the AJGA.

I'm looking forward to Stephen's comments, but I know the AJGA has done something that I also really enjoy watching is they've been partnering with The First Tee, not only to get some of the kids in The First Tee at their tournaments with junior clinics or if they're really good kids, they're accomplished golfers from The First Tee to get into AJGA events, but also to show kids in The First Tee the business side of running a -- professionally running a junior golf tournament. There's nobody in the world, in the world of golf that runs better junior tournaments than Stephen and his team down in Georgia with the AJGA.

So there's a lot that can happen at this tournament. And, I mean, Harold's, you know, if he's not my best friend out here on Tour, he's one of my top three with Webb and Brandt. I mean, I'm just giddy about this whole thing. I am so excited about this tournament. Again, June 22nd through the 25th in Winston-Salem. And depending on his schedule, but he'll come over for a Monday, Tuesday for sure and then we'll maybe get him over to a pro-am if he needs to play that week, but this is going to be a lot of fun and, buddy, we're excited about it.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Hey, umm, am I going? I wasn't sure.

Like you said, we've had some really good deep conversations about junior golf and the direction it's going and how, you know, how I would like to see it.

He probably won't remember this, but we're sitting there eating in Quail Hollow and the best thing I've ever heard -- we hear this all the time, we don't want to give things away, you don't want a handout, and Braz stopped everyone and he was like, you know, everyone's had a handout. I thought that was so important because like, I've always called it opportunity, but

like everyone this in room has had a handout in some form or fashion. And if you haven't I would rather not talk to you because someone's -- you've had it, it's there.

And that's our job, like because when it's all said and done, no one's going to remember if I win 30 times, 100 times, but they'll remember if I changed their life and gave them opportunity. And I talked to Braz about that and how golf has done that for me, and I would love to do that for obviously kids in North Carolina, it's pretty special, but obviously it's a bigger picture with the AJGA and super excited.

**JOHN BUSH:** Stephen, exciting times for the AJGA and the partnership here with Harold. If we can get some comments, please.

**STEPHEN HAMBLIN:** Yeah, just so proud of Harold to step up and put his name and his foundation behind an AJGA event. There's so much good work we're doing with First Tee. We started a program this year, Mark mentioned it, where we're bringing out First Tee to AJGA events, First Tee kids. We're putting them in a cart, we're giving them an AJGA hat, we're giving them a radio, and they're a rules official with our rules official for nine holes. They're helping make rulings, they're giving out pace of play red cards, they're there with giving out a code of conduct if we need it. We were going to just do two or three of these for a pilot program this year. It was so -- met with so much success, the kids love it, First Tee loved it, we did it eight times this year.

So I'm proud of Harold. I'm proud of the LPGA and PGA TOUR that the young pros that are coming out and giving right away. It's amazing. Before they even get their careers off the ground, they're thinking about giving. That's just a tremendous opportunity for us.

Mark, thank you so much for all you've done for junior golf. We had a tournament here in Greensboro and when Mark came on as tournament director, he said, Let's step this thing up, and Wyndham came on board. What a great partnership we've created with the Wyndham Cup.

Wyndham has endowed an ACE grant. An ACE grant is Achieving Competitive Excellence, a financial assistance program for kids who have the talent to play on a national level but just don't have the financial wherewithal. We've seen time after time -- Mark was instrumental -- we started this program just as he was about to leave and he was the one that convinced Wally Uihlein that this was the thing to do. And Wally was a little stubborn at first, but Mark talked him into it. We've been doing this, gosh, this year we've given out \$4 million now to ACE grant kids, to their families, to play on a national level. That \$4 million has turned into \$15 million in scholarships for these kids.

So really proud to have you as part of the team. Love to see what we're going to do for kids and golf.

**MARK BRAZIL:** John, one last thing. Thanks, Stephen, that's great. Appreciate you being up here.

So with this tournament we're going to raise enough money that each year we're going to try to cover the ACE grant kids in North Carolina under his name and the Wyndham Championship name. That's going to be kind of our goal with the tournament and that way it's kind of benefiting you and Harold's foundation, so we'll do this thing in tandem, so we're excited about that.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** It's awesome just because it at the end of the day it's not about us. You know, like, it's about the kid that's coming through. That was me, I used to say not that long ago, but it was a long time.

**MARK BRAZIL:** You're so old.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** I'm just super excited not to give someone the opportunity, but just to fight for somebody who needs that fight, because someone was fighting for me before I even knew there was a fight. I was just playing golf.

Yeah, thank you so much. You know, dude, I get goosebumps talking about it, but it's going to be super fun. Like I love being around kids and just whatever I can do to just help them, because one day they're going to be taking care of me, for sure.

**JOHN BUSH:** Excellent. We'll open it up to questions now.

**Q. Will this be part of the regular season then for the AJGA, and what about bumping up with your guys' tournament here or is it back-to-back weeks?**

**MARK BRAZIL:** It's after the Wyndham Invitational and I'll let Stephen talk about the Junior All-Star, the elements to that.

**STEPHEN HAMBLIN:** Yes, it's part of our regular schedule. We've set up an entire series of tournaments for young men and women from 12 to 15. It's really their first taste of national level junior golf. We did this to just kind of ease them into that national platform so they don't have to compete against guys like him when he was a junior or senior. Just gives them a little easier transition into the game.

**Q. Is this tournament boys and girls? I know the Wyndham Invitational is a boys invitational.**

**MARK BRAZIL:** Boys and girls, yes, which I am excited about because we only have boys. We need to do what we did with the girls as well.

**Q. How will it be more open, I guess, because I know the AJGA is the best of the best that show up here. How will it be more open at Tanglewood?**

**STEPHEN HAMBLIN:** One of the things that we do for most every AJGA event and we'll do

for this event as well is we'll have a qualifier of 100 spots in the qualifier. Ten percent of the qualifier field will earn their way into the tournament. We want to make sure that the area kids take advantage of this opportunity, and they can do that by either getting into the tournament through the process or through the qualifier.

**Q. This is for all three of you, but y'all talk about giving back and opening an opportunity for many people. Who was the person for all three of your journeys opening the first door?**

**MARK BRAZIL:** It's probably this guy to my left. Stephen kind of gave me, and C.A. Roberts, a good friend of mine, they gave me my first opportunity in golf back in 1993. There was an opening for a director of tournament administration and it could be absolutely the worst job in all of golf competition, but I did it for three years and I learned to smile with it and, you know, I learned a lot of things at that job.

You know, I've heard people talk about you learn the most with your worst job, but I learned a lot those three years. Then I made it really clear to Stephen that I really wanted to get into development and sponsor relations and sales, and so when there was an opportunity, he gave me that opportunity. I owe a lot to that guy.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Is that pretty cool? Like the guy that's sitting right next to you? That's pretty awesome.

Mine would be my dad, obviously because he's a parent, and a guy named Bruce Sudderth. I had never had a lesson. I started working at Gaston Country Club. I'll never forget, I was so nervous to ask him to get a lesson and he's like, Oh I'll see you tomorrow at 10:00. Like super nice.

I took lessons -- I still take lessons from him sometimes ever since I was 15, 16. I'm 28 now. He texted me this morning. I guess the guy I'm playing with today, his son takes lessons from him. Clay Meyers is his name.

Yeah, he taught me how to play golf, but when I turned pro he taught me how to be a professional. Like I got a haircut this morning because on Monday I had all this stuff on my face. As I'm getting a haircut all I could think about was -- yeah, it's getting close -- all I could think about is just, like sometimes I'll even do an interview and I have some stuff on my face and I'm like, I'll get it off. But just someone you respect and whenever they speak, you listen.

And I'd have to say a guy like Preston McFall who was my coach at East Carolina. Obviously he can be pretty hard, but just he changed my life. He just gave me -- obviously gave me the confidence, but knew when to knock me down and make me tough.

Yeah, those are three.

**STEPHEN HAMBLIN:** For me it was Jay Overton at Innisbrook Resort, director of golf there for probably 20-plus years. He was the most difficult man I've ever dealt with, and usually it was -- when he called me up, it was holding the phone out to here, yes, sir, that will never happen again, okay. But because he was so difficult to work for, I figured if I could work for him, if I could handle him, I can handle anything.

My father was also in the military, so there's a discipline that comes with being a child of an officer. So those two gentlemen helped me.

**Q. There's a lot of great golf courses in this state. Can you walk us through the process of choosing Tanglewood for this tournament?**

**HAROLD VARNER III:** You want me to do it? I was going to say, it was his deal.

**MARK BRAZIL:** I'm pretty serious about this region and I wanted to keep it here. That's the bottom line. We're having some discussions about moving it to Bryan Park the second year and it might go back and forth. It might go somewhere -- I would like to try to keep it here because it's home of the Wyndham Championship, so we'll continue to have those discussions as we go.

**Q. Harold, do you know the tradition or history of Tanglewood and who won the '74 PGA there?**

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Yeah, I played there a few times. I think it's super hard. You know, I know what I shot when I was a kid there. I'm intrigued to see how they're going to play there and how you set it up. That's not my cup of tea, but I'll be out there watching. It's just going to be, I think it's hard. I know Lee Trevino won there. That par 3, I don't know what hole it is down the hill, it's like 500 yards. That's the only hole I remember. And every time I get there, every person I play with they're like, he laid up there and he made par every day. I'm like, Well, I'm not laying up, I might make double.

**Q. They just renovated it.**

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Yeah, I haven't played it since, but I'm sure it's still hard, though.

**MARK BRAZIL:** I played it the other day, I think it's really good.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Really good or really hard?

**MARK BRAZIL:** I think it's much fairer now.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** When I played it it was so hard.

**Q. They took away like 30 bunkers out of it.**

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Oh, that's no fun.

**Q.** Just to change gears for a second, guys, Harold, to be able to play in your home state after traveling so much throughout the year, maybe some purple and gold in the gallery, what does that mean to be able to do that?

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Oh, it means a lot. I don't know. The people that are coming out to watch have supported me since I was little, even when I was terrible at golf. Yeah, it's going to be a lot of fun. There will be some crazy people out there and I'll enjoy every second of it. The cool thing about East Carolina is that if there was some other kid out there doing it, I would be the kid that would be yelling, so proud of him.

It's going to be an eventful day today. The new AD is actually caddying for me. I've never met him, only spoke to him on the phone. That's what's really awesome about East Carolina is that no matter through the thick and thin, it's like, all right, dude, you went to East Carolina, let's figure this out, we're going to do this together. You know, if our country would come together like that I think we'd be in a way better place.

**MARK BRAZIL:** So ECU is part of our University Row, so we're expecting University Row to be a little rowdier this year.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** It will be louder. I'm not sure they'll be there very long, but it'll be louder.

**JOHN BUSH:** Mark, Harold, Stephen, we appreciate your time. Harold, best of luck this week. Go get that trophy on Sunday.

**HAROLD VARNER III:** Thank you.