

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 13, 2019



JASON DAY

DOUG MILNE: Jason, thanks for joining us prior to the start of the 2019 Mayakoba Golf Classic. Making your second start here in the event, taking you back to 2009, 10 years ago, Top 30 finish. Just some thoughts on the decision to be back here and play at Mayakoba this week?

JASON DAY: Yeah. So I wanted to make sure that since I got the nod, obviously there was a chance of me getting on to the Presidents Cup team, I wanted to make sure that I was playing heading into the Presidents Cup; Australian Open, Presidents Cup.

So the big thing for me was to be able to let Ernie know that I was playing in Korea, Japan and then play Mexico. Give me at least a couple weeks off where I can sit and prep and get ready for Australia and the Presidents Cup.

DOUG MILNE: And speaking of Presidents Cup, how relieved, satisfying, elated, all of that, are you to have, especially given the location.

JASON DAY: Yeah, the location is obviously important. I've actually had some success on that location. Myself and Adam, we won the World Cup there back when it was a stroke play event and then the teams were -- you know, the winning score for the teams event was based on both gross scores of the players. So I was able to win the stroke play event there and win the team event there for the World Cup, which was nice.

I've had a lot of experience around that golf course, which is good. It's crucial heading into the Presidents Cup. I played back in 2011, which was my first one down in Australia. I'm excited about playing on the Presidents Cup team, but obviously need to focus on trying to win this event here.

DOUG MILNE: And one last question for me and then we'll open it up. Coming off the season with six top-10 finishes. Steady season, but I know by your standards not up to what you want or expect. Just some thoughts on what you're feeling game-wise.

JASON DAY: Yeah, it's been a bit of a struggle. Long story short, there's been a massive change within the camp of Team Day in regards to caddying. I've gone through three caddies this year and it's mainly in the second half of the season. When you go through changes like that -- I'm on my fourth one. When you go through changes like that, trying to find the right makeup, the right chemistry, it takes some time. But I feel like with what I'm doing with David out there, I think we're slowly working on the communication and things are working and they're coming around.

I didn't have a trainer for a good part of most of this year, and then on top of it my back was acting up pretty much the whole year. So I wasn't able to go out and practice as hard as I could, which on top of it, went into my game and then the results -- and you put everything together, the results have pretty much spoken for themselves.

I've done everything I possibly -- especially in this offseason, kind of start of the season for me, to get my team back together.

DOUG MILNE: We'll take a few questions.

Q. Hello, Jason. I'm going back to the Presidents Cup. When you see the U.S. team, it's sort of like a brotherhood, they all share the same language, the same culture. How's it like in the International Team with having people from all over the world, even this time Sungjae Im, his English maybe is not perfect and he isn't able to communicate with all the rest of the team, so how is the ambiance?

JASON DAY: Yes. So it's always great at the start of the week and it's always great at the end of the week. We always seem to start out where we kind of don't know each other as much as we would like to and then by the end of the week it feels like you're family. I feel like if we can get like what we are at the end of the week earlier on, I think we'll play a lot better, guys will settle down a little bit more.

The big thing for us is we've always struggled in the alternate shot. I feel like if we can somewhat be competitive in that format, hopefully it's a lot closer because we seem to play really well in four-ball and we seem to play really well in match play.

So it is -- there is a language barrier with some of the guys, but we try our best within the team to try and get to know each other. Everyone sits with certain people and through the week you try and get to know these guys better than what you know them out here, because we're pretty much living with each other for a whole week. Every time I go away to play on the Presidents Cup team, kind of that format, it's amazing how much you didn't know about the people that you play against, especially your teammates, and how much actually you end up caring about them at the end of the week.

Q. Is Presidents Cup the main reason you're playing this weekend? And of course, it's kind of a surprise for the Mexican press and the Mexican fans, your presence here in Mexico maybe because you missed the last three, the WGCs in Mexico City?

JASON DAY: Yes, yes.

Q. Maybe after playing here you would go to the 2020 --

JASON DAY: I'm planning on it, yeah. So the big indication for me, I wasn't on the team. I should have played my way on the team and I shouldn't even have had to even thought about it. I wanted to make sure that I was letting Ernie know that I'm playing and I'm getting

ready for the Presidents Cup.

Playing Korea and Japan was a big trip over there. And I needed to fill a spot and the Mayakoba Classic fit in perfectly because it will give me about five days at home next week and then I'll take off and get ready kind of on the west coast and then from there, fly from L.A. to Sydney to get ready to obviously play in the Australian Open and the Presidents Cup.

So this was, I guess, perfect in my schedule to be able to get ready for the Presidents Cup.

Q. Jason, golf, as you know, can be an inherently selfish game, especially for the heights that you've been able to reach in your career as a former world No. 1, major champion. You also have to balance the time commitment with your family life. I'm curious -- you just had a birthday -- at this stage of your career, what motivates you?

JASON DAY: Sorry, I missed -- well, we had an early birthday for my boy, my baby boy, Arrow. And Lucy, her birthday is a day before mine, so Monday. They were supposed to come down here Tuesday. Dash is sick. And then obviously supposed to come down today and then Lucy's sick, so they're not able to come down. Maybe hopefully on the weekend.

What motivates me, it's pretty simple, like I want to get back to No. 1 in the world. So going off what I was telling you guys earlier, telling Doug here, that my team that I had around me, I didn't have a team around me per se, I just had my coach, had my wife, but had no trainer, had no physio at home. I didn't have -- I went through, like I said, I went through three caddies, I'm on my fourth, and my back was injured. Like that's not a good formula for success.

What do I need to do to be successful? I need to not have to worry about any of this. All those things that I was worrying about throughout the year is a distraction.

So I'm trying to -- I feel like I've got a good team back together. I've got my trainer, my golf trainer, got my coach and I've got a good physio trainer as well that comes on the road now. And now what I need to do is just focus on just making those small steps back to where I need to be. I think the biggest thing for me is to be healthy. I mean, golf is tough enough as it is. If I'm giving these guys an advantage with me being, you know, having a sore back or having an injury, it's not the right way to go about it, it's not professional. I need to be at my best to beat these guys.

So getting back to No. 1 is my biggest motivation right now. I don't care how long it takes, I'm going to do my best to get there.

Q. Jason, going back to the Presidents Cup, we'll have two Latin American players, Abraham and Joaquín. What can you say about them?

JASON DAY: So Abe has -- he's really great with controlling his ball flight. He's able to hit the low shots and high shots, which you need down in Australia.

And saying that, Joaquín does the exact same thing. So with being able to control your trajectory and your spin the way that those guys do is very crucial to play on the golf course that you're playing at Royal Melbourne.

It's going to be exciting for those guys to see how they play around there because I think they're very creative in the way that they play their golf.

It's not very similar, but Abe's had -- he won the Australian Open and he's had tremendous success down there early in his career, so that's a good plus for him to go back to a country that he feels comfortable in.

Joaquín is very young and he's developing as a player, but he's already won on Tour. I think it's exciting for not only me but for the team as well that we have some fresh guys in there that are able to maneuver the golf ball the way they are, but on top of it, are very hungry for a win, so that's nice to be able to see that in a team.

Q. Like you said, you had a rough year and it seems like the perfect opportunity for you to get some confidence going into the Presidents Cup. What characteristics of the golf course do you think are going to help you do that? It's playing wet, it's really --

JASON DAY: It's totally different, unfortunately. No, but the thing is that you can always find positives out of a golf course that -- I mean, it's total different grass, the way that the -- total different sand in the bunkers, it's not even the same way that it looks. It's pretty much the exact opposite, I would say.

But I could come here and work on some things that I'm trying to work on in regards to flighted shots, trajectory, spin control. I know it's going to be a very soft golf course, but more so trying to work on the things that I'm working on right now to get me back on the right path to getting back to No. 1 in the world and trying to get that confidence back in my game.

Biggest thing is like I've struggled not with confidence per se, but just like trying to feel like I've -- I'm making the right steps in the right direction. That's the biggest thing for me is once I know that I'm working towards something, I start to gain a lot more confidence and then the results will come after. So hopefully this week is a good one for me.

Q. Beside the Australian players, who will you like to be paired with and why, at the Presidents Cup?

JASON DAY: That's hard. I think I need someone that putts and chips like me because I'm never going to be like an Adam Scott or Hideki, who they hit it down the middle all the time and hit it on the green. I'm always kind of a guy that kind of lashes at it, gets it down there and I'll miss greens. So I need someone that's going to chip it close or hole putts.

I think the level -- the style of play, I need someone like that. Having someone creative like Joaquín would be nice. Abe's got a great short game as well. Obviously going past Australian players, Cam Smith would be a very good candidate to partner up with, but there's so many good players on the team. I'm interested to get into that week and see what Captain Els has going for us. I mean, we're definitely going to play practice rounds and I'm eager to get to see who he wants me to team up with.

Q. Jason, I believe you played with Rory on the weekend at the PLAYERS Championship when he won?

JASON DAY: The last day.

Q. Just wondering sort of what that does for you when you play eye to eye a guy who's at the heights that you've been at. Is that extra motivating to be in such close proximity to that?

JASON DAY: Yeah, yeah, watching the last day, I mean, it's amazing. I think the 15th hole was probably the most crucial hole of that tournament for him because he blocked it right and it hit the trees and it could have gone anywhere. Instead it kind of kicked out to the left in the bunker and he hit maybe a 5-iron very close, ended up birdieing.

But that whole day he put on a driving exhibition. It was just unbelievable to watch how confident he is within himself, the way that he goes about it. Once he gets in a flow, it was pretty cool to see.

Watching Rory, he's just got immense talent. From tee to green, he's just so super talented. He's one of the only guys who makes winning look very, very easy and it's really hard to do that. Even the drive down 18, you could probably ask him, you could probably hit that little net cut out there, stood up there with driver and looked about as confident like he was playing a practice round on a Tuesday.

The way he plays golf is totally different to the way that I play golf. He's very like grab the club and go kind of player, he's very fast. I can't process the information that he processes at. I process all that stuff very slowly. I have to go through it very methodically to be able to play the way he does and unfortunately, that's why I'm kind of like a slower player. I'm trying to quicken it up, but it's very difficult for me to be able to make it faster.

I played with the best of the best. I've got to get back to what I was doing that made me great, you know what I mean? I putted great, I had a great short game and hit some fairways, yes. I drove it nicely, but I hit my irons a lot better, so I've got to work on that. I know what to do. I think once I flip the switch and I want it more and I want to get back to No. 1 and I want to -- it will happen, I will win tournaments, it's just a matter of when it's going to happen, and it will happen soon.

Q. Tiger made comments earlier this year about a lot of players, they try to play really

well for four to five weeks a year, they're trying to play as well as they can. Do you feel that there's a difference in how players view winning versus consistency and like has that changed throughout your career?

JASON DAY: Winning versus consistency, you mean like a Matt Kuchar consistent?

Q. Playing just four to five weeks a year versus I need to have top-20s every single week or try to be consistent.

JASON DAY: I've always struggled to understand that. Why can't we just win them all, you know what I mean? But it's achievable, I mean nothing's not achievable. It's very hard to do. I know how hard it is. I think if you ask Kuchar if he'd like to win more, if he would take consistency the way that he's been, I think he would probably take consistency over winning once and missing a bunch of cuts.

Winning, focusing on four to five tournaments a year, I've always struggled to understand it because I know that in my best year that I've won five tournaments in a year, Tiger's won I think 10 times in a year, 10 or 12 times in a year, one of those two.

Like for me to come here this week, I want to put everything I've got into trying to win this week. That doesn't change throughout each other tournament.

I've never really understand peaking, either, because I never really had someone tell me how to peak for a tournament. I'm like, yeah, here guys, talk about peaking for a tournament. Next time you ask Tiger, say what do you do to peak, I bet he'll give you a roundabout answer because I don't know if anyone really knows how to peak for a tournament here.

Q. Last time you came here it was a decade ago, so a lot has changed. Once you came here, even the course has changed. What are the biggest differences you find since last time you were here?

JASON DAY: It's been so long, I think. I know that one wasn't -- I think one was the par 5, correct, the last time? Was it a par-5 with a cave? Yeah, so that was definitely different.

It's been so long. All I know is that there wasn't a lot of rain, it was really windy and it was really firm. Those are the only differences that I remember. I know that the people were fantastic here and the golf course played -- was tremendous to be able to play, but it was a very difficult driving golf course when it's windy and dry obviously because of all the trouble that we have out there. I can't really remember too much.

My big thing is to be able to come out here and try to perform the best I can and hopefully pick up the trophy on Sunday and then come back the next year. That's the main goal.

DOUG MILNE: Jason, thanks for your time. Best of luck this week.