

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 20, 2019



LANTO GRIFFIN

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Lanto Griffin into the media center here at the RSM Classic. Lanto, first of all, just an excellent fall season for you with the win, obviously culminating with the win at the Houston Open. If we can talk about that first, please?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Yeah, Houston was obviously the highlight of the fall, but the first four events, having four top-20s, that kind of gave me the freedom to kind of get freed up in Houston. Yeah, I've been playing solid. Been working hard to get more consistent around the greens and off the tee and it's been clicking, so it's been a really fun fall.

JOHN BUSH: There's a lot on the line for you this week, a little cushion in the RSM Birdies Fore Love competition, I think you're up by eight as that competition ends this week, so I know that is really on your mind.

LANTO GRIFFIN: Yeah, it's really important for me. After Houston, finding out about the RSM Birdies Fore Love program, they gave me \$50,000 to donate to a charity. And then after that I found out that whoever has the most birdies into the fall earns \$300,000 for charity, so I added Bermuda to the schedule. That means a lot to me and I know that the money that RSM's donating to charity can really make a big impact in my hometown. So I've been thinking about it a lot and I'm excited to tee it up this week.

JOHN BUSH: And while I did mention that you have a little bit of a cushion, the top six players are in the field, so you can't take anything for granted.

LANTO GRIFFIN: I've got five really good players right behind me, so obviously I'm going to need to make the cut and make a bunch of birdies. But the way I'm looking at it, obviously I'm not going to change my game plan at all, what I'm doing is working, so if I can just keep doing what I'm doing, I think I have a good shot.

Q. Lanto, we've been asking guys just about this is the last event of the decade for golf. So I don't know for you maybe what your memories are and what you think about when you think about the game of golf in the last decade?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Yeah, I think -- well, I graduated college in 2010, so it's hard to believe I've been a pro for 10 years. When I got out of college, you never know how long your career's going to be, so to make it 10 years is pretty cool. And obviously to win on the PGA TOUR has been a lifelong dream.

Man, 2010, it would be cool to see the guys who won majors in 2010 and where they're at now. Obviously Tiger, Tiger's last victory before Augusta this year was at Torrey Pines in

2008. I feel like golf's come a long ways in this decade. There's a lot of new, young talent. Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas and Rory, they all kind of broke on the scene this decade. I feel like golf's in a -- golf's healthy, a lot of young talent and obviously it's exciting to be part of it. Not the young part, but part of the Tour.

Q. What's the biggest way life has changed since you won?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Probably finally being able to pick a schedule. For pretty much my entire life I've had to play every tournament that I've been able to get in, even on the Korn Ferry Tour. Haven't really felt like I could afford to take a week off. It's tough for me because my mindset's still that play every week, and with a little bit of a different platform now after Houston, I feel like I'm going to need to take more weeks off just with a little bit more attention. Not that I'm trying to act like I'm one of the top players in the world, but it is a little bit more exhausting.

But it's just exciting knowing that I'm going to be in the PLAYERS Championship and Sentry Tournament of Champions and PGA Championship at Harding. I mean, these tournaments are the ones I grew up watching on TV and have always dreamed of playing in. Now I'm going to be in them for the, at least the next two years, the invitationals.

But other than that, I don't feel any different. I still have to brush my own teeth and wash my own dishes and everything and do my own laundry. Growing up, I always dreamed of winning on Tour and what it would feel like. It's interesting doing it and kind of looking back on what you thought it would be like versus what reality is. But yeah, it's an exciting time for me and my family, for sure.

Q. Lanto, do you have any idea who's made the second-most cuts on the PGA TOUR currently?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Tommy Fleetwood. Oh, me, but Tommy Fleetwood's ahead of me.

Q. Good, I'm impressed you know that. So you started out your career, you only made five of your first 18. How did you flip that and all of a sudden become a cut-making machine?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Every single week I think, Is it going to end this week? But luckily, looking back, I just started getting comfortable. I did the same thing on the Korn Ferry Tour in 2017. I really struggled early, I won in Nashville and I got confidence from that and I made 10 cuts in a road to finish the year after that win. I think it was starting at Quicken Loans, that was when I started the streak, right after the U.S. Open. I missed the cut at the U.S. Open by one on my birthday, I missed a three-and-a-half footer and since then I haven't missed a cut.

Q. Travelers.

LANTO GRIFFIN: Okay, the week after the U.S. Open, at Travelers. I'm very realistic, I know I'm not going to go Tiger's 230 or 250 cuts made. It's probably more than that. But it's been fun. The way I look at golf tournaments, there's two tournaments, there's one making the cut, you can't win the tournament if you don't make the cut, and then on the weekend it's a little bit different feel.

I've always played well on Fridays for whatever reason. I tend to get off to slow starts on Thursday and my good weeks are when I play well on Thursday and I get off a little bit ahead of the eight ball and I can keep pushing further and further ahead of the cut and have a cushion going into the weekend. But I've always been a pretty good player on cut day.

So hopefully I can keep that going this week, and if Tommy ever misses a cut, that would be a cool stat to be leading.

Q. You've obviously got some big events ahead on the schedule. You said you've been pro for 10 years. What's the smallest event you've ever played in as a professional?

LANTO GRIFFIN: Oh, man, I don't think we have time to go through all those. We played Moonlight -- I've played every tournament you can imagine from Moonlights down to Orlando to probably 40 or 50 Monday qualifiers to the old eGolf Tour, that's where I got my start, the SwingThought Tour to the G-Pro Tour, the Florida Elite Tour. Last fall I played a full year on the PGA TOUR and went and played a Florida Elite event at Orange County National. During the first round. I was like, man, this place is playing pretty tough, and I was like, the cut's probably going to be 1 over. The cut was 3 under and the winner shot like 18 under for three days. I came off a full year on the PGA TOUR and I was that far off on the cut.

It just shows you how deep golf is. There's so many good players on the mini tours that a lot of people have never heard about. That's where I was for seven straight consecutive years. The Latin America Tour, the Canada Tour, the Mackenzie Tour, golf is so deep. For me to have three years or basically a three-year exemption knowing that there's so many people that almost deserve to be there almost as much as me, I feel really pretty fortunate to be where I am.

Q. Luckily, the Florida Elite Tour doesn't count toward your cut streak.

LANTO GRIFFIN: Yeah, that doesn't count, because I missed the cut there last fall.

JOHN BUSH: Lanto, appreciate your time. Best of luck this week.

LANTO GRIFFIN: Awesome.