

WEBB SIMPSON

MARK WILLIAMS: Webb, we would like to welcome you to the Rocket Mortgage Classic. This is your first start here, you come in as No. 1 in the FedExCup standings having come off your most recent start with a victory at the RBC Heritage. I guess you were scheduled to play the Travelers championship. If you could just update us with the situation on your family and yourself and your health. Hopefully, everything's good.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, so everyone's great. My daughter wasn't really experiencing any symptoms last week, but it was kind of a fluke thing. She had some banana stuck in her throat. My wife, just out of caution, wanted to make sure that her tonsils weren't swollen, so they go just to make sure it's not strep throat or something like that. So sure enough, the first test was positive, but got tested again by the more accurate tests, along with my other four kids and my wife, and everyone was negative.

So we felt confident that she never had it. Never had any symptoms, no one else had it. We felt great, but obviously a lot of support I felt not only dropping out of Travelers, but just from everyone wishing my daughter well. And it's a bit odd I feel like in this pandemic because a lot of times people might have it and they don't have any symptoms, or a case like my daughter's who we don't believe had it, and you're getting these well wishes. So it's a bit of an odd time.

But happy to be here at the Rocket Mortgage Classic. I love this golf course. I grew up a Donald Ross fan, he's my favorite designer, so it feels great to be here, great to be playing again and look forward to starting tomorrow.

MARK WILLIAMS: I was going to ask you about the golf course and what you thought. You just mentioned that you like it. We'll go straight to questions.

Q. Webb, just wondering, considering all the fine play you've had of late, all the statistics, all the FedExCup points and world ranking and stuff, do you feel you're getting enough attention as one of the top players in the world right now?

WEBB SIMPSON: Honestly, as much as I respect the journalists and media, I don't pay a whole lot of attention to it just because I feel like I'm very busy at what I'm trying to accomplish, so I don't read a whole lot of articles or the buzz or what's going on. So I don't think it would be fair for me to comment on am I getting enough attention just because I don't really read it. I'm busy with five littles at home, so I'm not doing a whole lot of reading golf articles on my off weeks.

So, yeah, if they want to give me credit, great. If not, it's all right, too, because I've got to

worry about me.

Q. After last week's scare, if you will, can you just kind of share your perspective of playing and competing and the testing that's going on and having another player test positive, just kind of where you're at with everything going on in our world and I guess with your family briefly?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. I mean, it's so multifaceted, I feel like. There's different tests, doctors are saying certain tests are more reliable than others. I've heard a number thrown around that that first rapid test my daughter took where you get the result pretty quick, some 10 percent of all positives are false-positives. That's a lot, that's a big number.

I applaud the PGA TOUR and everything they've done and are doing to keep us safe. I mentioned to the commissioner last week that based on our numbers, our stats, I told him the safest place anyone can be in the United States right now is on the PGA TOUR. I mean, we had at that point, that conversation, we had I think seven out of 2,300, 2,400 positive, which is amazing. So the lengths that the Tour is going to to make sure everyplace we go is safe and secure and our testing and all that, I feel very good about being out here.

But I do think the elephant in the room and the tough thing that they're dealing with every week is these positives, that guys are feeling great and then they test negative after that and another test negative. You know, two negative tests in a row I guess is what I'm trying to say. It's hard to know. I know that those are unfortunate situations and they have to be safe about it, take the safe side even if they think it could have been a false-positive. But I'm just happy to be out here and playing golf. The next few weeks looks bright for us, it looks like we're going to continue on, which I'm really thankful for.

Q. So, you mentioned earlier that you have a love for Donald Ross-designed courses. Could you talk a little bit about some of those characteristics that you love and what you see here at Detroit?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. I mean, typically the Ross courses I've played are not that long, and what's difficult about Donald Ross courses, how the greens are so undulating and almost like a flipped upside down bowl that balls will roll off the green if they get near the edge. I think that really puts a premium on approach shots and accuracy of approach shots, distance control of approach shots and I'm a big fan of that.

I feel like Donald Ross had in his mind, even though I don't know this, I feel like he had in his mind that he wanted to put a premium on the shot into the green more than most designers. His greens aren't big. Like I said, they're very sloped, undulating and it's challenging. Just because you have a wedge in your hand doesn't mean it's necessarily a great birdie opportunity. And these greens at Detroit Golf Club, they're very challenging. The pins, 3 and 4 from the left to right side make it very difficult for guys to get it close to the hole at times even with the short clubs. So I think he just puts the challenge to us, gives the challenge to us in a very kind of right in front of you type of way. There's no tricks about it.

Q. Do you find that his designs benefit your game?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think so. I mean, I think approaches to the green has always been a strength of mine. Like I said, you have to have your approaches be at a very high level this week, I feel like. Nobody's going to be able to have a good week or a high finish without having their approaches to the green be, say, top-15, top-20 for the field, I don't think.

Q. I think this is a bit nerdy, but much of the ball speed debate that like Bryson has drummed up and some of the longest hitters on Tour have drummed up, they're chasing after something that is 190 miles per hour, 195 miles an hour for Bryson. I'm curious if you know what your average ball speed is with the driver and if ball speed is something that you think about very often?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I definitely think about it on off weeks. My ball speed is anywhere from 168 to 172 with the driver. So, you know, I've been able to increase it one to two miles an hour a year for the last three years. Bryson's made a 20, 25-mile an hour jump in a year, which is insane. I told somebody this earlier today, that no one's ever come close to -- no one's ever done what he's done or even come close to it. The jump he's made, we've never seen. I don't know if we ever will see it again at this level.

Q. I apologize if both of these questions have already been asked, but the roll that you're on, are you expecting more of yourself each week as you go from tournament to tournament?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, Steve, I feel very confident and I feel like Paul and I have simplified kind of what we're working on, what we're focused on. The biggest challenge this week is a new golf course we've never seen before, but the rest of the summer these are courses I've been playing. So I just feel like my game and our thought process and our strategy for how we're going to play golf courses is very simple and it just comes down to me going out and executing.

Q. And with what happened at Hilton Head in the days after Hilton Head, will you be doing anything differently this week inside the ropes or outside the ropes?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yes. Hilton Head was -- I guess to Colonial, I didn't hit it well. We made kind of a shift in focus with my golf swing going into Hilton Head, and on Tuesday and Wednesday in Hilton Head we only focused on a couple of swing thoughts that kind of we've always worked on, but we really, really honed in on it and that made me feel a lot clearer over the golf ball. My bad shots were better, my good shots were better, and that's kind of what we're going to try to do this week and moving forward is just stick with those couple of thoughts and not add anything here or there, just kind of keep it as simple as we can.

It's hard in this game because, you know, I was just practicing, there's so many things we could work on. Golf is so complex, but that's what worked for me at Hilton Head is I didn't

really have any thoughts besides a couple and that's what we did all week.

Q. I sort of meant you've been directly involved with a COVID positive test. Will you be changing anything differently now when you go forward now that you had a direct relationship with it?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yes, I think especially now through the end of Atlanta, my wife and I talked that we're going to really have to lock down our house. You know, at the end of COVID, before the Colonial, we were getting a little bit more relaxed, you know, having people over on our back porch, a friend come see me, maybe a friend come work out with me, thinking we were kind of moving away from it. But since the numbers have come back stronger, and I'm seeing that out here, you test positive, you're out for two to even three tournaments depending on when you test positive. So we will be more strict. I'm wearing my mask more than I was and I'm not really going out to dinner or even going to get takeout. We're staying in a hotel this week, we're going to try to get room service every night just to limit the chance of anything.

Q. That was my question, too. I'll try to change it up a little bit. You mentioned that you think the PGA's one of the safest places to be right now. Do you think part of that is because there's so much individual accountability with the players? You just mentioned if you test positive, you have to sit out for a few weeks, so it's really on the players to make sure that you stay on the course?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, and I think this being the fourth tournament, I think guys are so aware of how easy it is to catch this disease that I think everyone else is becoming more strict. That first week at Colonial there were still fist bumps after the round, closer contact I think on the range or player dining. There's way less of that now. Now, nobody's touching; maybe an elbow here or there. I'm definitely seeing how it's affecting everyone, not just those who have had contact with someone.

Q. I wanted to ask about Jordan mentioned the other week about how getting used to the sightlines without the framing of stands. I just want to get your take on that, on how that's been. I know it's a little thing, but is it something you've had to sort of hone in on?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, for sure. Somebody mentioned it today, there used to be a grandstand last year on 18 that was a great sightline off the tee. A course like this where there's long rough, where the rough hides a lot of the bunkering, it's harder to see exactly where you need to go at first. It's nice to have the boards around the green because a lot of times I'll say my target to Paul and it might be the Rocket Mortgage or the FedEx symbol, whatever it might be. So we're definitely missing some of that. It's more off the tee I think than into the greens.

MARK WILLIAMS: If you can just comment on playing with defending champion Nate Lashley and Rickie Fowler, Rocket Mortgage ambassador.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I played with Rickie a couple of times, I actually grew up playing with Nate and his caddie Ricky, so we go way back. But Rickie and I, we decided yesterday that we're just going to follow Nate around and whatever he hits, we're going to hit because he shot 25 under last year. Hopefully he can go first for us and we can just copy what he does. But I'm looking forward to playing with them. Anytime you can get paired out here with guys you grew up playing with, it's always a bonus. It's getting more and more that way with guys you grew up playing with, they're having success and you get paired with them, it's really fun.

Q. Webb, specific to this week and Colonial, I'm just curious if you find your life after hours, when you're done with the tournament for the day, to be a lot more boring and lonely than it was, say, a year ago? Not that you're lighting up the town, I'm not suggesting that.

WEBB SIMPSON: No, me and you usually bond at Starbucks, we see each other for our afternoon hit. I have switched to making my own coffee, so I travel with my own coffee set now and it's still -- after golf is still coffee hour for me. But there is more time, just kind of laid back. I'm in Birmingham, 20 minutes from here, it's a really cool town. I think if things were how they used to be, definitely a couple afternoons this week I would have walked through the town, checked out a couple restaurants, but that part's definitely different now. Life is quieter. I'm trying to watch a little more shows, read a few more books, but a lot more time in the room or in the rental house than I had before.

Q. Is it boring or lonely, which one?

WEBB SIMPSON: I haven't thought of it as boring, so probably lonely. My family's not coming out. Paulie's a great friend and a great caddie, but I mean, he likes his naps, so it's a lot of alone time.

Q. That's boring. Thanks, Webb.

WEBB SIMPSON: You got it.

MARK WILLIAMS: Webb, thanks for the insight. We appreciate you making the time. Have a great week.

WEBB SIMPSON: Thanks, guys.