

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
August 16, 2020



JIM HERMAN (-21)

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome our 2020 champion of the Wyndham Championship, Jim Herman. He collects his third PGA TOUR victory.

Jim, congratulations on stepping back into the winner's circle. If we can get some comments on an excellent day and week.

JIM HERMAN: Thank you. Appreciate that, John.

Yeah. I mean, pretty regular 36 holes going into the weekend. Just getting through to the weekend was, you know, obviously what you're looking to do, then you never know what can happen on the weekends.

Obviously, playing yesterday morning, going first off at 7:00, you know, then to think I was going to be sitting here after the 72nd hole is pretty amazing. Just some really good golf, that's all I can say. I think I made one bogey in the 36 holes on the weekend, and that was even a really good approach shot on No. 6 that just -- I think just hit a little slope and rolled over and I didn't play the fringe very well.

Yeah, I mean, winning the first one was amazing, life changing. Last summer was just a little validating, overcoming some injuries and just, you know, getting old. You get old pretty quick out here with the young guys. They make you feel inadequate off the tee and especially long irons. You know, it's mentally frustrating. To overcome it all and get here for a third time is pretty amazing.

JOHN BUSH: And you move up to No. 54 in the FedExCup standings. You make the largest jump ever since 2009 at the Wyndham Championship. Talk a little bit about that and the momentum now that you have heading into the Northern Trust.

JIM HERMAN: Yeah, I mean, if you're 190 and you win, I think that's a pretty big jump. Yeah, FedExCup was definitely off the radar. I thought I needed to get off to a pretty good start after we restarted back at Colonial and I just didn't have it. I wasn't playing poorly, just wasn't getting the results that I liked, making weekends or making any money.

Played pretty decent at Hilton Head and okay at the Memorial and Workday, but missed both cuts. That was a little depressing on that. I really enjoy playing Muirfield Village.

So going into the PGA, my whole goal was just to play six of the 10 events, two weeks on, two weeks off, so stuck to that. Going into the PGA Championship, had very mixed feelings going into it. I didn't feel like I was going to be able to compete there. The rough was

definitely up and the only way was if I was going to drive the ball very well. I felt like I did that for a while, but the weekend was just terrible for me.

So coming into this week, I've played well here before. I've never played this well obviously, but I think I was in the final few groups maybe 2015, or I really don't know the year. It's just I guess a better positive attitude can lead to better golf. This game will beat you down, you do it long enough, and you get a little nagging foot injury, a hip that's starting to hurt more each week and you think it might be coming to an end. Last year obviously was giving me a redemption, giving me a couple more years out here. Now to do it again, I mean, I was definitely off the radar I'm sure going into this week.

Q. Jim, congratulations. So last week at the PGA there were a lot of stats about how Brooks Koepka only beat one guy on Sunday and you were that one guy. How aware were you that that stat was kind of floating around and can you just talk to the turnaround from where you were a week ago to where you were today?

JIM HERMAN: Usually that's a good stat, you know, with Brooks. He's usually at the top. Obviously that was not his best day and it was not my best day, either. Stats can be a little misleading, you're in the back of the pack just trying to finish, get done with your round. I was on the 16th hole just trying to do whatever you can, get in. I hit it up in the tree and the ball didn't come down. Add in a double late in the round on Sunday at Harding Park wasn't much fun.

Yeah, you see it. You hate those stats. Everybody, we all read what is written about us, it gets to us. Yeah, you don't like you were the high man on Sunday at a major, it was pretty depressing. I played terribly. I should say I drove the ball terribly. I don't know if something was wrong in my setup. It's usually a setup thing, I don't do a whole lot of mechanical things with my swing.

You know, just got here, went to the range and missed the first -- I started on 10, missed 10, missed 11, missed 13 and missed 14 fairways and I thought -- turned to my caddie on 14, we were in the rough. I missed them all left. I was missing them all right in the final day at Harding Park, so I was missing every fairway left and I told Jeremy "Well, this is going to be a pretty quick week if we don't get this figured out." Ended up striping one down 15 and got the driver turned around and I think I barely missed a fairway after that.

Yeah, just weeks like that, we read everything, we see it. They definitely depress us. The mentally strong are the ones that can get through that stuff. I said earlier, my coach calls me visually enhanced, but I'm mentally deficient I think in some ways.

But you've got to be mentally there to do what I did on the weekend, so pretty pleased.

Q. Was wondering, were you looking at the leaderboard every hole trying to keep it straight? I know you had a long look on 18 right before that birdie putt.

JIM HERMAN: Yeah. I like to know where I am, but I knew early in the round I didn't have to look much, I needed to get off to a good start. Birdieing 1 and 4 and eagling 5 definitely I felt got me back into a spot. I was 4 back going in, so getting 4 on the board pretty quickly in the round, I felt like I was definitely going to be in the area of the lead. But you knew that wasn't going to be enough, so you've just got to keep the head down, keep hitting fairways, keep giving yourself birdie chances, easy pars. I'm not the best scrambler, so I wanted to have as many good looks at birdie and less up-and-downs for par.

Yeah, you're definitely aware of it. Coming down the stretch, I thought I had a really good chance after I knocked it on 15 and I stuck it in there pretty close on 16. I thought I needed that putt on 16 and felt like I hit a good putt, but it was so darn quick, you just baby it down there and it breaks off pretty easily.

To stuff it in there on 17 was huge. I saw Billy might have put it in the bunker or shorted himself on 16, so we knew that going up, but I didn't know he made bogey until maybe on the green. Then obviously you see that and make the birdie on 17 and you've got a one-shot lead. I still didn't feel like that was going to be enough, I thought there was going to be a playoff. Wanted to give myself a chance. I didn't want to make bogey on 18. Obviously I knew that would not be good. Hit a really solid 5-iron and I thought I made the putt, just gave it some room to die left and it just hung out there.

Then when Billy had it, I definitely thought he was going to make that, that's just what you do. He put a good stroke on it and his broke off. It just wasn't a makeable putt, I guess, from that spot.

Q. Yesterday you said you thought you were wondering if you would get a call from President Trump. I'm wondering if you did or if he's contacted you since the victory?

JIM HERMAN: I spoke to Mickie Gallagher via text last night and he passed along the president's well wishes for me. I think he was with him or he had contact with him, but no phone call. You never know what can happen later tonight or tomorrow morning.

There's some rumors that he was definitely watching, some of the media had said he was watching. He's a big fan of mine, a big supporter of mine. I need to play golf with him a little bit more. I guess I've won my three events that I played with him within a week, two weeks, three weeks, something like that. We'll see, you never know.

Q. And also you mentioned after the round that you've won now with three different putting styles. Can you take me through those?

JIM HERMAN: Yeah. For those that struggle putting, you definitely experiment often. I thought maybe last summer when I putted so well at Barbasol, maybe I was on to something, it would be something that stuck. Then I was off the putter and out of that style by the end of the wraparound Fall start.

Yeah, I had the claw in 2016 at Shell Houston Open and a very conventional grip last summer at Barbasol, and then this weekend I just switched this week, new putter and new old putter from Bettinardi and cross-handed. I just got my ball started online where I wanted with the correct speed, so that's all you can want. I made a lot of putts this week. I think I had over 400-foot of putts.

Q. Did you putt cross-handed at the PGA?

JIM HERMAN: I did not. I was conventional and some claw. You know, it wasn't working last week. I felt like I didn't hit poor putts, but I wasn't making anything. My speed might have been a little off. My coach, Bill Davis, has always told me putt however you feel like, whatever's comfortable, whatever's rolling the ball the best for you. You know, he has his views on which would probably be best, but he always liked cross-handed for me, so maybe this one will stick.

Q. Jim, if Houston was life changing and Barbasol was validating, what was today?

JIM HERMAN: Very satisfying. I really don't even know yet. It's out of the blue, I'll definitely tell you that. I guess whenever you win, you never really truly expect it. I mean, there's the guys at the top, they're expected to win every week and they should expect that, they're that good. You know, we're all really darn good out here, but the mental game, it beats you down.

I'll have an answer for that. I really don't know that yet other than it's very, very satisfying to, you know, be in the mix after yesterday's round, put myself in a position to be near the lead and then come from behind and go low on a Sunday to get a win. You watch it on TV, I watch that on TV all the time watching the guys and now to be able to do it is pretty amazing.

Q. One more if you don't mind. There's always this talk about the difficulty with following a low round. What was the key for you to move on from yesterday's low one and put another one on the board today?

JIM HERMAN: Knowing that I wasn't tied for the lead or there's nothing to protect. I was pretty far back after 36 holes, 61 got me 4 back. You knew you had to go low, it wasn't going to be 4 or 5 wasn't going to be enough for me. I knew it was going to have to be, you know, 6, 7, 8, somewhere around there to have a chance. You never know how it's going to finish at the end. I had to get off to a good start or it's just going to be a, you know, all right, see if I could possibly squeak in with a second or third for the Playoffs next week. You know, the best way to wrap that up was winning obviously.

Q. Jim, did you plan to -- did somebody suggest that you switch the putting grip or back to that putter or was that all just your idea?

JIM HERMAN: No, just me. I was thinking about doing it on Sunday at PGA. I had it with

me, a different model, and was going to do it, but I didn't. I just stuck with what I was doing, conventional, at Harding Park.

But I got here and these greens are so perfect, you've got to be able to start the ball where you're looking with the correct speed, and cross-handed just gets the ball rolling a little bit better for me at the moment and just went with it. Like I said, my coach, Bill, he's never locked me into anything. When you're putting poorly, I don't mind changing. I've done everything but -- every method I think except anchoring and up the arm. You never know, those could probably be -- I guess anchoring I can't, but up the arm could be in my near future, you never know. I'll try to go with winning with four different putting strokes, I guess. Hopefully, this one can stick and I can roll the ball like I did this weekend. I was rolling the ball well Thursday and Friday. I had a couple three-putts on Friday just from trying to be aggressive and make a few putts and you run them by pretty easily here.

Q. What were you planning to do the next couple weeks?

JIM HERMAN: I was looking forward to getting home tonight or tomorrow. I'm having a few, three weeks off again. Kids are back in school, so it was just going to be dad again and try to figure out this thing, figure out this game of golf, try to get my head right and start back up at Safeway. That was the plan.

Obviously, things have changed. Still got to get my head right, got to be in there all the time. But yeah, I was just going home. Just have a rental car, I was driving halfway home tonight and I was going to finish it up tomorrow morning and be home before the kids got home from school. Obviously, it's going to change a little bit.

My son's probably not going to be too happy about that, but he'll forgive me since I'm bringing home the trophy. So I guess I'll be flying up to Boston now either tonight or tomorrow.

Q. When you make a long one like you did on 1 and then the bomb at 3, what does that do for your confidence?

JIM HERMAN: Well, it sure helps it. I mean, obviously the first hole, I was coming out of the fairway, I should have been maybe a little bit more aggressive, but I played a little conservative even though I had a gap wedge in and had it out to the right and just rolled in, I don't even know what the footage was, 20 feet or 25. Anytime you can get off to a good start like that it boosts your confidence, you feel like you're going to make everything.

Then stuck it in there really close on 4. Not much to do there. Then a bomb for eagle on 5 is just crazy. Just looking to two-putt, get it out of there, keep the momentum down and just to roll in an eagle is just amazing. It helps, it helps. Anytime you see a ball going in the hole with your putter, it builds your confidence. We've had too many rounds and holes where you lip out and it just adds to your frustration, so anytime you see them going in, confidence is up.

Q. This place is normally packed on Sunday. What was the vibe like out there today being in contention without any galleries?

JIM HERMAN: Yeah, obviously I played six events since the restart and didn't feel too much different other than coming down the stretch on the 18th hole, 9th hole, especially for me not being in the featured pairings or anything like that, so it really didn't feel too much different until, like I said, the galleries around the 18th hole. Sometimes it's difficult to see how well you hit a shot. That was weird coming up 18. I'm sure if I had a one-shot lead and the full gallery and I hit that shot on 18, I would have got quite the applause. I really didn't know, I couldn't see where it was, so it was definitely weird.

It's just something we all have to deal with. And we all look forward to having the fans back out here just cheering us on. We love playing, but we love playing for everybody, everybody watching at home and everybody that's here in the local communities. We look forward to whenever that might be.

JOHN BUSH: All right. Congratulations once again to our 2020 champion, Jim Herman.

JIM HERMAN: Thank you.