

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 17, 2020



DAVIS LOVE III

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome 21-time PGA TOUR winner and RSM Classic tournament host Davis Love III.

Davis, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Always good to see you whether it's in person or virtually as such.

Just a few comments on the week, being here and how excited you are kind of from obviously a business end of things as I know you're not playing this year, but just kind of bring us up to speed on the week so far.

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I'm trying to figure out what it means to actually host rather than play and host. It's a strange year. We've had friends coming in town the last few days and you think, "Oh, well, I'll just have all the guys over for dinner," and you go, "No, I can't do that."

"Well, I'll meet them at the restaurant." Well, no, can't do that.

Then all our friends from RSM that are not here, it's just overwhelming to think about. We just had our Tour Bible study canceled tonight. It was going to be one of the first ones we had all year and it canceled because of contact tracing.

So I give Jay Monahan just an unbelievable amount of credit and all of the Tour staff for making this happen. Go all the way back to Hilton Head and Colonial when we started, to think how far we've come and how many tournaments we've played. Sure, every week we might get a few positive tests, but it's just been amazing that we're pulling this off week after week. We saw a couple tournaments actually have fans. We're having a pro-am this week. We're going to raise some money for charity. So we're just blessed that we're having the tournament. We're excited that guys are rolling into town.

It's neat that it's after the Masters. It was a strange Masters and it's strange that we're taking the courtesy cars from the Masters and trading them in here for a BMW. It's completely different.

But as a player, I've been out there playing major championships and regular tournaments and Champions Tour events, it's been a strange year for the players, but it's even more strange as a host.

DOUG MILNE: I know you've been kind of fighting the neck a little bit. If you can just kind of bring us up to speed about your health and how you're feeling with the neck.

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm feeling actually pretty good. I felt so good about two weeks ago that I actually tried to hit some balls and then got scolded from the therapist that I was actually out hitting balls. Randy Myers, my trainer, was standing there watching, so I can blame him. But I felt to be able to play the RSM, I had to try it. It didn't work and I went right back into therapy. I just need another week or two and unfortunately I haven't played since I withdrew during the tournament out at Pebble , the PURE Insurance tournament, and it was really bothering me. It has steadily gotten better. If I follow protocols, I get better. I'm not supposed to play golf or hunt or fish or drive bulldozers. I've generally --

DOUG MILNE: What else is there?

DAVIS LOVE III: I've generally been good and it is getting better. It's disappointing not to play, but I knew even a month ago I wasn't going to be competitive even if I did play. So I'm doing the right thing.

The main goal for me personally is to get ready for next year. Try to add what I can this week, do what I can to entertain our friends and our sponsors that are here inside the ropes and then do what I can. I've already gotten guys dinner reservations and just got some guys some barbecue sauce from Southern Soul that were desperate because it's closed today. So I'm doing the big things to get this tournament moving.

DOUG MILNE: Well, I've got just one last question and we'll open it up for questions from those within this chat. My last question is, just the Birdies Fore Love, we've got Sungjae heading in with the lead, final week. How pleased are you with the whole program this season?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's just incredible. The Birdies Fore Love is just -- is the biggest probably program that RSM has supported us on, taken over and made it bigger and better. We were running -- it's very small here locally and they took it internationally really in all their offices. That's the most exciting part of the week now for me is when RSM, here in about an hour, when they present the check of what their company has raised for Birdies Fore Love. And the money flows through our foundation, but it goes back to all those communities that raise the money at their offices all across the country.

So we're excited about that. They do just an incredible job, little things and big, things making this tournament happen. With Sea Island and RSM, we could not ask for better partners, especially in the last six to eight months. They have not backed down one bit. They've increased their activation. They can't bring their guests, but they have not slowed down one bit on doing everything they can to raise money for charity and to make this tournament a success.

Q. You touched on something I want to ask you about, getting through this season. It's apparent that you're going to be able to get through the calendar year, or the Tour is, and unlike the NBA, which put their players in a bubble, and baseball, the NFL kind

of did that to a certain extent. This depended on an awful lot of personal responsibility from players, from caddies, from volunteers, from PGA TOUR staff members, which seems like a massive undertaking. Can you speak to how everybody from the commissioner on down to a hole marshal performed during this pandemic in making this possible from, like I said, personal responsibility from thousands of people literally?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's amazing. You could play -- I don't know how many teams can come into one area and be in a bubble and have a playoff series or a few games, but our game changes every week; we go to a new city, new rules, new challenges. It just gets harder and harder, not easier and easier.

My wife, Robin, back in the summer said, "I want you to call Jay Monahan and tell him what a great job he's doing." We should all be thankful for leadership and then all the way down to our tournament volunteers. When I walk in our tournament office, I have to be reminded to put my mask on because they're doing such a great job at making our tournament run. If our volunteers didn't buy in, get tested, follow protocols, it's twice, three times as much work for our volunteers now. Everything is more difficult to put on these tournaments. So it really is amazing.

And you can tell from the players. If the players were doing what they normally do, hanging out, going out to restaurants, in hotels hanging out together, if we did our normal routine, this whole thing would have been shut down. If the caddies hadn't bought in, Tour staff hadn't bought in to following the rules, you're right, it would have been shut down a long time ago.

Who knows what it's going to take to get through these next couple months, but we're going to have to keep this up. I'm already hearing tournaments on the west coast are going to be in the same boat we're in now, maybe no fans in some states. It's still going to take a little while, but it's been an amazing undertaking. I know it's costing charity and the Tour a lot of money, but it's just amazing we kept it going.

Q. Given that you stepped aside from doing television because you wanted to focus more on playing, how frustrating has this recent setback been for you?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm being very careful not to complain about 2020 because so many people had a rough year. Needless to say, this year has not gone as planned for me and for the Love family, but I continue to realize how blessed we are and thankful for everything that we can, you know, have a great week still this week. That as I was talking to Gary, we're still going to have our tournament, we're still going to give money to charity, all our family is healthy and happy.

But yeah, at every turn things have not worked out well for us this year, but it was a hard decision to withdraw from this tournament, you know. Playing in the pro-am tomorrow, you know, is a big part of it. Being around the players and competing with them and showing -- I remember Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus playing really past when they should be playing,

but it was the right thing to do. They needed to be playing in their tournament and be visible to the players and to the fans. So I wanted to do that, but I just knew, one, it wasn't good for my body, and two, it wasn't good for my scorecard to try to play.

It's been disappointing all around, but we're having a lot of fun with a lot of things this week and excited about putting the tournament on, and now I'm seeing more on the inside how things work and what's going on. Hopefully, I find some way to contribute this week other than on the golf course.

Q. Can you give an update on your house and what your plans are moving forward with that?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, again, we've been really blessed. We bought a great house I guess in April and everybody asks, "Are you settled in your house?" I say, "No, we're settling." We're coming to grips with everything and I'm proud of my wife, Robin. She's done an incredible job. I know a lot of people would have just crawled into a hole and not come out, but she's been very strong and resilient and we're hanging in there.

But we do, we have a great house. The grandkids show up and come running down the hall like nothing ever changed. They love just being around their grandmother and hanging out with her. I keep telling her, "Wherever you are is where the fun's going to be, it doesn't matter what house we're in."

It's been great. We're having to make a lot of decisions we never thought we would have to make and replace things we never thought we would have to replace. But again, we're very blessed and we're trying to -- we've seen the bad side of things a lot in our lives and now we're trying to really help other people that are in the same situation, so it's really helped us refocus our goals.

We're as happy as we can be right now. I think she would agree that our marriage is in the best place it's probably ever been and that's great to say after 35 years.

Q. No plans to rebuild, though?

DAVIS LOVE III: I say that Robin Love should build a house, but guess who's going to make that decision? Whenever she wants to build a house, we're going to build a house. We've gone from one extreme to the other in this process. And our good friend Larry Moody, who's been the PGA TOUR chaplain for over 40 years, told me just the other day, he said, "You're going to have to go through a full year. You haven't gone through Thanksgiving and Christmas and Robin's birthday on New Years. Give it time, things are going to change."

But again, we're lucky that we can make that decision where we want. And if Robin wants to build her a new house, I'll try to stay out of it and let her make all the decisions and build her a new house. We're very comfortable where we are right now and that's the main thing.

Q. And one more if I could. You've seen a lot of good young talent from all over the world. I'm wondering what you think of South Korea's Sungjae Im. I think you got a pretty good chance of looking at him at the Presidents Cup last year. I don't know if you played with him personally, but what do you see in his game that you like?

DAVIS LOVE III: I haven't played with him and I said last night in an interview, who would you want to play this week, it was kind of down to him or Davis Thompson in my mind. Like who have I not played with that's playing great? I haven't played with Davis maybe in, I don't know, it's been a long, long time.

Yeah, it's incredible how many of those guys are playing very, very well. Guys that I really don't know, just watched them play. Again, that's why I wanted to play this week, get in the mix with guys like that and watch their games. There's probably 20 players like that that are going to be chasing Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka and the guys that are at the top right now and trying to run them down. It will be fun to watch them this week.

Q. I wanted to ask you about a different player and get your perspective on what Bryson is doing and where you think this may be headed. We've always known distance is an advantage. Why do you think what he's doing is a positive trend, if you will?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I think when I came out, I was the longest by far for a while until Daly showed up. Daly was the longest for a while, and then the next generation had a whole bunch of them that were long.

I think Bryson, he's the hardest worker at hitting it long and straight that we've ever had, so give him credit. I just worked on hitting it a long way when I was a kid; I never figured out the straight part.

With technology, Bryson's the best at using technology. He's the hardest worker. He's probably -- if you look at Brooks and Rory and Tiger, you can argue who's working the hardest in the gym, but for 24/7 there's probably nobody working harder than Bryson, so you've got to give him credit.

Now, what can the game do to stop 20 guys from doing that? I've talked to two guys this week that are already experimenting with long drivers. My son's on the "I'm losing weight, then I'm going to get bigger," and his clubhead speed's going up every week. Guys are saying, "Wait a minute, I'm missing something."

So there's a lot of guys. Jim Furyk four, five years ago came to me and said, "Can I have Bob Rotella's number? I need to do something different, these guys are beating me."

So it's no different than any other technology or hard work, just Bryson's working hard at it. I would really like for Augusta National, the PGA TOUR, the R&A, the USGA to get together on the coefficient of restitution or the jump face.

Dru Love in the qualifier on Thursday broke his driver because he's swinging so fast, its face is bending and it cracked. If we made them really thick, everybody would be playing at the same level of jump. Bryson gets more spring than anybody because he's making it go faster than anybody. So I would like to take a look at that.

But last week was really, really exciting. I don't think anybody should reign Dustin Johnson in because he hits it farther than 95 percent of the people in the world, and why is he playing so well? Putting. Why is Bryson playing so well? Putting. Go back and look at Bryson's stats for the year. The weeks he putted great, he either won or finished in the top-10. Long driving is not the answer. You can go ask Dustin, what's the biggest difference in your game the last five years? Wedges and putting. He's not going to say, "I hit it 20 yards farther than I used to."

So anyway, I love what Bryson's doing. A lot of things he's doing physically I need to do to protect my neck and my body, so I'm keeping an eye on him. I bought a Flightscope, so Bryson's a big influence on me already.

Q. Do you remember a time on the Tour where just one player started a trend that so many guys so quickly started following like Bryson has seemingly done?

DAVIS LOVE III: You know, the fitness thing hasn't really been one guy, but obviously Gary Player's the most famous for the only one working out way back.

I would say Tiger really put a generation on notice that you can be really fit and strong and big and still win every tournament. I think Tiger really has changed the attitude. Randy Myers has been preaching that for years, but Tiger's really the first one that dominated the game as a big, strong, muscular, fit guy. Look at Brooks is following that lead and now Bryson. Guys are realizing that they can not only get big and strong, but also be fast and flexible. I think Tiger really set the bar for the fitness side.

For me, it was Tom Kite with Bob Rotella. Bob Rotella made a huge difference in Tom Kite. I think Tom Kite made it acceptable for the next generation that hey, sports psychology is a real thing and we're going to have to join in on it.

Q. Davis, just wanted to get your thoughts on the field this week and any special setup, any changes to the course layout we should know about?

DAVIS LOVE III: No, no changes to the course. It's in unbelievable shape considering how many people have played golf this summer and early fall. I've never seen so many people. It was all members for a while and then I guess in June the resort really opened back up and it's just been nonstop golf. Berry Collett, our greens superintendent, has done an unbelievable job. We had a lot of rain leading up to this week, it's probably a little damper than he wants or the agronomy staff wants. No, no changes.

The field is just awesome. We knew once the Masters went the week before us and the Road to Dubai stuff was not going to be a factor, we had a tough time with exemptions this year because we had so many guys that wanted a spot that they weren't Tour members.

So yeah, our strength of field has never been better and our galleries will never be this low again. It's unfortunate that our friends, neighbors and fans that have come every year can't come watch this great field. Tommy Fleetwood's staying in our friend's house right here on the golf course. Lee Westwood, Jason Day, right on down the list, we have a great field of guys. We've got the Kuchars and the Snedekers and the Zach Johnsons and the Kevin Kisners and the Charles Howells that have always played here because they love it here. Now we've got a whole new crop of guys that I'm sure are shocked that -- Boyd Summerhays came up to me yesterday and goes, "Wow, this place is really, really nice." I go, "Yeah."

Once you come here, you're hooked. Hopefully we've hooked Tommy Fleetwood and guys like that that they haven't really understood what this tournament and this place is all about and get them back again.

Q. Can you give a little color on what your expanded hosting duties, what that might entail?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes. We unfortunately lost a volunteer that can't get across the Canadian border and she always made the snack mix for the office staff, so Robin and I have about 25, 30 boxes of Chex cereal at our house. She's made two giant batches already. Car pooling the granddaughters, really, really important stuff that I've got to do. G-Mac didn't know where to go to dinner last night, so I'm getting all that kind of stuff organized.

A little bit more media stuff. Hopefully we get a lot of publicity this week. And Melanie's been saying, "Well, I know Davis doesn't have anything to do, he can do that radio interview on Thursday morning, I don't have to worry about his tee time."

Caught up with Matt Adams this morning and going to catch up with some other friends on their shows and just do whatever I can. If somebody goes down, I'm ready. I've already -- I was scheduled to pick the range and Randy Myers won't let me do it because he says the cart bounces around too much and it will hurt my neck. So I'm looking for a job.

Q. Where did you send G-Mac?

DAVIS LOVE III: He went to Crabdaddy's last night.

DOUG MILNE: All right. Well, Davis, I believe --

DAVIS LOVE III: I believe he froze.