

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 17, 2020



DAVIS THOMPSON

MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome Davis Thompson into the virtual interview room here at the RSM Classic 2020.

Davis, this is your second start in the event. You finished tied for 23rd last year in your first start. I guess you won the Jones Cup by a huge number of shots earlier this year, seems like forever ago, but that earned you the exemption into this tournament. Just talk about playing well at Jones Cup to get in here and make another trip back.

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, in 2019 it was kind of a bitter taste, I lost in a playoff, but I was still fortunate to get into the event. But this year the Jones Cup seems like forever ago, but it was just a great week and kind of all parts of my game kind of clicked and was able to win and was thankful to be back and playing in this tournament.

MARK WILLIAMS: It obviously must be a great feeling to be back, but a lot of water's gone under the bridge and there's been a lot of things that have happened this year with you. One of those highlights would have been at the U.S. Open, getting to play there after qualifying and being in that event. Just talk about that a little bit and the experience you had there. It was just a month or so ago.

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, I learned a lot about myself as a golfer, just kind of I can compete with the best in the world, which is a really cool feeling to have. Just I learned a lot just about maturity levels, being a mature amateur as opposed to being a mature pro. So I'm just working on that right now and trying to prepare the best I can mentally for when I do turn pro.

MARK WILLIAMS: You mentioned about turning pro, Davis. When do you think that's going to happen for you?

DAVIS THOMPSON: My plan right now is to turn pro after our season finishes in June, early June, but you know, one thing we learned from last year is that anything's -- you just can't predict anything. That's the plan right now.

Q. You talked about the difference between a mature amateur and a mature pro. Can you kind of explain more on that, what you learned and what that difference is and maybe what you're working towards?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, just try not to let anything bother me. Playing with Brendon Todd, Harris English the first couple rounds. They kind of showed their emotions a little bit, but once that shot was over, they were on to the next one. I think I hit a lot of really good golf

shots that second round at the U.S. Open, but the margin for error's just so little out there. So I kind of let that get the best of me and that kind of led to some more bogeys. It was a great experience for me to learn how to deal with those mistakes and how to deal with just moving on and not really thinking about the previous shot.

Q. And then with COVID, are you up in Athens or are you living down here right now? What has this college season kind of been like?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, so I'm in Athens. We've had three tournaments this fall, all-conference only, which has been good. I'll go back to Athens in January. It has been weird just being basically all virtual classes in Athens.

Q. So have you been playing pretty regularly then with the Sea Island guys here and have you gotten a lot out of being able to spend social time with all the pros down here?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, they've been great to me, just encouraging and helping me out with things when I ask questions, just things like that.

Q. This stretch of finishing 23rd here and then winning the Jones Cup by so much, did that change the way you view yourself as a player at all or what you were capable of?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Not really. I knew I was able to do that, it was just kind of putting it all together and believing in myself. I mean, Jones Cup was just kind of one of those weeks where everything clicked for me and the final round I was able to kind of just run away with it, which is a good feeling. I mean, it gave me a lot of confidence in that I can do this for a really long time if I keep progressing like I am.

Q. And PGA TOUR University, do you check the rankings much at all, and what is that kind of carrot at the end of the season? I don't know, what is that, trying to stay in the top-5, is that something you look at, and what's it like knowing that you could possibly have Korn Ferry Tour status in June?

DAVIS THOMPSON: It's a great incentive to have. I wouldn't say I necessarily pay attention to the rankings, it's just kind of one of those things I see on Twitter when they come out with the rankings. I'm interested in it, but I'm really not trying to play for the ranking, I'm just trying to get better each and every day.

Q. I wanted to ask you, looks like you went to No. 1 in the world amateur golf ranking recently. Was that a goal? What are your thoughts on being at the top of that ranking?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, it was definitely a goal of mine this summer. I was in the top-10 and I just kind of told myself let's try to get to No. 1.

I mean, at the end of the day it's really cool that I'm No. 1 in the world, but I don't get any special trophies for that, so right now it's just trying to get better and try to win golf tournaments so I can kind of extend that.

Q. Who's your caddie this week at RSM?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Oh, one of my buddies from high school, Reynolds Carl. He played college golf, so he's going to caddie for me. He's one of my really good friends.

Q. Where did he play in college?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Well, he's a couple years older than me. He played golf at Central Alabama Community College and Texas-San Antonio for one year. Yeah, he's like a brother to me, and he caddied for me last year, so it's a good relationship.

Q. So last year at RSM, you mean?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yes, that's correct.

Q. Was there any thought about having your dad on the bag this week?

DAVIS THOMPSON: I mean, yeah, he's pretty busy this week being the tournament director. He's got a lot of responsibilities and I don't think he would -- he doesn't need any more stress by carrying my bag this week.

Q. And one final question if I could. You get into this with the Jones Cup win and I know you had a close call a couple years ago in the Jones Cup and you said after winning this year that was something you thought about, maybe motivated you a little bit. Is there something right now that's kind of motivating you, something you really want, something you're kind of working toward?

DAVIS THOMPSON: I mean, I think anytime you play in a golf tournament, you're trying to win, so I guess my motivation is to win. I know it's kind of very confident of me to say that as an amateur, but I feel confident in my game. I'm just trying to go out and commit to my routine and commit to every shot and try to make as many birdies as I can.

Q. How many times would you say you've played these courses?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Man, I don't know how to put a number on it. Probably, I would probably say probably 50 to 100 times. That number really increased during quarantine, just coming out here and playing pretty much every day and just practicing while I wasn't able to go back to Athens.

Q. And who's your most common playing partner or who's maybe the touring pro here who's helped you the most and what have they helped you with?

DAVIS THOMPSON: I would probably say Harris English has helped me the most. I think our personalities are kind of similar, so he kind of understands what I'm thinking and kind of what's going on. He's a guy that I played with him in the U.S. Open, I played a couple practice rounds with him as well and he was just really encouraging to me throughout the entire week, which really meant a lot.

MARK WILLIAMS: Davis, you said you have a lot of experience here and you play these golf courses a lot. What do you think your game will give you an advantage at these golf courses to really excel? Would it be off the tee or around the greens or on the greens? What would you consider to be the advantage that you might have over the rest of the field having played here so many times?

DAVIS THOMPSON: Yeah, I definitely think on the greens. Playing out here you just kind of become familiar with the greens and the speeds and how the grain affects it. You know, also I'm able to flight the ball really well if it gets windy. I haven't really looked at the forecast yet for Thursday through Sunday. I think I'm really exceptional at controlling the flight of my golf ball. If it's into the wind and I need to hit it low, I'm able to do that, so I think that kind of gives me an advantage.

MARK WILLIAMS: Sounds good. Doesn't look like we have any further questions, but we appreciate your time this week and have a great week here at home.

DAVIS THOMPSON: Thank you, appreciate it.