

## PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW December 2, 2020

### ABRAHAM ANCER

---

**SHARON SHIN:** I would like to welcome in Abraham Ancer to the virtual interview room here at the Mayakoba Golf Classic presented by UNIFIN. Abraham is making his sixth straight start at the Mayakoba Golf Classic.

Abraham, if we can get some opening comments about your return to Mexico to compete at this event.

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** I just got done playing my nine hole pro-am this morning. Course is in great shape. A little bit wet, but it's always a little bit wet this time of year. The fairways look a little tighter. I think it's going to be a great challenge and I'm pumped. I love playing here, love the food, love the place, I could hang out here every single day and not ever get bored. It's always a pleasure to come here and play in front of my people. Obviously we're going to miss them this year, but I know they're rooting for us really, really hard.

**SHARON SHIN:** And several golfers from Mexico, including yourself, have been doing so well on the PGA TOUR recently. Can you talk about the recent growth of golf in Mexico, and the popularity?

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** It has been -- it has been really exciting. The last two years have been really good for Mexican golf and also Latin American golf. There's a lot of Latin guys, Mexican guys that are playing really good golf all over the map and it's been really cool. Watching Carlos win in Houston was huge, that got me pumped up. That was the week right before the Masters. I was watching him in the locker room, so I saw him win and it was really exciting. I got really nervous watching him, and motivated. Actually after that I practiced until dark, I was so pumped up, and ended up having a good Masters. I was up there for quite a while, except didn't play my best on Sunday, but other than that it was awesome.

I think Mexican golf, like I said, is growing, especially those instances. Hopefully next year we'll have way more Mexican players, Latin players on Tour.

**Q. Tell me, how did you get -- how did you fall in love with the game of golf? I don't really know your back-story there.**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Well, I grew up in Reynosa, Mexico. My dad just took me to the golf course since I was 2, 3 years old, even before that, and since then I just fell in love with the game. I've been playing tournaments since I was 6 years old and I really haven't stopped. It was very easy for me to get excited about it. I was out there practicing every single day. I never really had to be told, hey, you need to go practice. I was always wanting to be out

there and I just love, I love this sport. I love getting better and I feel like there's so much to get better at still. It's a never-ending journey.

**Q. Was there someone who was kind of an inspirational figure to you growing up?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Yeah, there were many guys. Obviously I grew up in the Tiger era. Tiger made this sport very exciting, very appealing and just cool to practice this game. And also somebody that I maybe wasn't my era but I looked a lot into was Seve, Seve Ballesteros was somebody that I loved how he played the game.

**Q. And do you remember first meeting Carlos or have a good story about how you guys became friendly?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Well, we actually played so much golf since we were little kids. We played all the national events in Mexico. I was from the northern region, so we didn't play together every month, but whenever we had the national events, we'll see each other there. Then after that, he went to college, I went to college and then we played some of the same events. We've always been playing in the same kind of events. I've had a great relationship him since we were little kids.

**Q. I wanted to ask about kind of thinking about Carlos and what impresses you about his game, if you can kind of talk about his game from your perspective as you've seen it evolve and progress to be a PGA TOUR winner.**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** He's been close so many times. He was really close to win last year here at Mayakoba, I think he finished second. He's been close so many times. He dominated on the Korn Ferry Tour when he played there, he won three times and went straight to the PGA TOUR and had a solid year. He knows how to win, he's been here before. He had maybe a year when he maybe changed equipment or something that he just lost a little bit of confidence and he went back to the Korn Ferry and grinded it out. I think that helped him a lot. He's a solid player, he doesn't really have any weaknesses. He hits the ball far, he can hit it high, low. I mean, the guy is good. You can't really go in a really good field and fake it on a golf course that I never played it but it looked really tough. The guy can play. We've played a lot of golf together and he never disappoints. It's awesome playing golf with him and against him.

**Q. What was the feeling when he made that putt on the last to win in Houston, as you were watching it when that putt dropped?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** I was pumped. I was there with at the locker room with Bryson actually. I was on my phone filming. I'm like, man, he's going to win. Bryson's like, don't jinx him. I said I'm not going to jinx him, he's going to make this putt. He hit that putt maybe a little bit harder than he would have though or would have wanted, but it went dead center and I was fist pumping, I was so pumped. I've never really been that excited or nervous watching anybody play. I was really, really excited, I was so pumped.

**Q. And then I wanted to ask, Carlos and you have had a similar track where you got to the PGA TOUR, then had to go back to the Korn Ferry Tour to get your card back. What do you think kind of you learned in your second stint on the KFT that benefited you in your career moving forward?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Yeah, I think for me that was huge. When I first won on the Korn Ferry and got my card right away, I wasn't ready. I got to the PGA TOUR and I quickly realized that I made huge mistakes trying to play golf like other golfers. I didn't play my game. I switched equipment, I did a bunch of things trying to play like the top guys in the world and that really hurt me. I mean, it went downhill quickly.

But I'm thankful I did that and I learned a lot of lessons really quickly. In those five short months I just played terrible golf. I learned so much, and right after that I was like, you know what, I'm going to go back to playing my game.

Went back to the Korn Ferry and played really, really solid that year and after that I haven't changed anything. I said I'm going to keep getting better at what I do. I haven't changed anything. Slowly getting better and every year I've been able to get a little bit better, and I think Carlos is doing the same thing. I know he went back to pretty much everything that he did, just everything and every year it's getting better and better.

**Q. When you look at the last year, really going back to Melbourne and the Presidents Cup as well, what stands out? You've had a lot of accomplishments. I'm curious what stands out in your mind.**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Yeah, that was a big week for me just as a mental and confidence of making putts when I needed to. It was just something really cool. And getting props from big-time players, legends, like my captain, it was really cool. You feel the nerves and you feel like every shot counts so much. Being able to make some putts, hit some good shots in key moments was something that now helps me when I go back and if I'm in a spot and need to pull something off, I go back and really think about how I felt and it has helped me tremendously moving forward from there.

**Q. Kind of specific to this year and your finishes at the American Express and Harbour Town, what do you learn in a situation like that that you feel like next time it might help push you over the finish line so to speak?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Those were some tournaments that I played really good the last round. I needed a little bit of help from the guys who won and they clutched up and made birdies coming in. I feel like I played good, solid, very good. And at the American Express, I shot 9 under, but I was coming from behind. At the RBC it was a little bit different; I was tied for the lead going in, shot 5, 6 under and I got beat. If I do the same in another tournament, more than likely I would have won, just kind of how it played out. I think I played really good those days, drawing back to those moments like the Presidents Cup, like I mentioned.

**Q. So the lesson would be what you just mentioned, to play your game and eventually it falls your way?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Yeah, I don't think I did anything different. Sometimes you're going to play bad the last round. I felt like I played really solid those two rounds, thinking about just sticking to my game and being really patient. I played good. Like I said, I just got beat, you know.

**Q. What did you learn about the experience of playing in the final group at a major championship?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** You know what, that was a very good experience. It was my first Masters and obviously you go in there and I was so pumped to be there on a golf course that I watched since I'm a little kid and look at all those shots. Seeing the patience that Dustin had, and he played really good. He didn't have his best start like he would have wanted, but he was really patient, he let the birdies come to him, not the other way around.

Me, I got a shot that really affected me, that putt on 2, I couldn't really shake it off. I missed a short birdie putt on 2 and then after that I didn't really quite feel that comfortable over my putter throughout the round. I put a little bit more pressure to my iron shots trying to hit it closer and just didn't really go my way. I didn't play terrible, but I just didn't feel good over the putts. I learned you're going to need the perfect putt, it's okay, you've got plenty of chances, especially if you do it in the first or second hole.

**Q. In answering one of Kevin's questions, you mentioned changing a lot of things with your game early on. Can you relate the story of what happened when you watched Rory on the range?**

**ABRAHAM ANCER:** Yes. So I was playing my first event ever on the PGA TOUR, I think it was in Napa. Yeah, it was in Napa, the Safeway. Rory -- I was hitting balls on the range, hitting 7-irons and it was kind of cold in the morning and Rory sets up next to me. I think it was the first time ever that he played that event. I was like, man, this is awesome.

He starts hitting these irons that just take off straight up in the air carrying 210 into the wind cold, like 5-irons. I was like, oh, my God, I can't do that. I started thinking I need to hit it higher and farther, so I started tinkering and that was a terrible idea, but I just didn't know better. I struggled for a long time, just missing cuts, just was trying different things and it wasn't really going my way.

So just playing my game and getting better at what I do. Like I said, it was a good thing that I got away from it. I had to learn quickly about all those mistakes, but I'm thankful that I did. After that I've just been playing my game, not really changing much, just getting better.