

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**May 5, 2021**

**MAX HOMA**



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**AMANDA HERRINGTON:** We'll go ahead and get started. A much anticipated virtual press conference from defending champion Max Homa here at the Wells Fargo Championship.

Max, it's been two years since you won this tournament. What is it like to come back to defend at a tournament that it's been that long?

**MAX HOMA:** Yeah, I've never done it ever anyways, so it was much anticipated. I remember going to my media day last year week before the Arnold Palmer Invitational and I remember that was the first time I heard a whiff of this COVID thing that I had no idea about, and two and a half weeks later the world shuts down. So it just feels like time has both moved really quickly and really slowly since then. So I'm excited to finally be back here to get to do what I've always looked forward to doing in my career, getting to defend and have some memories come back up as you return to a place where you've had success. I think your first win is obviously typically the most memorable, so getting to play a practice round and enjoy all those emotions has been really fun for me.

**AMANDA HERRINGTON:** What specifically can you recall from that Sunday two years ago being back here?

**MAX HOMA:** The weather delay. I think I was talking to Joe yesterday about it. Of all the things I was wondering what would hit me the most as far as a memory goes, I realized that I had a serious deja vu when I walked into the locker room and just sitting at my locker as I waited to hit a six-foot putt for par to what I thought would be essentially kind of a grasp on one hand onto that trophy. So that's what really hit me.

So when I come back here and it was raining yesterday, we kind of remembered sitting in that locker room and trying my absolute best not to throw up all over myself.

Yeah. Also, we walked up 18 to the green yesterday in our practice round and that was really cool because that was the -- that was probably the most emotional moment I had when I knew I had won the golf tournament. Joe, you know, kind of let me have a little moment. We got to embrace on that green, too. We were talking about where we made the last putt from and all that. It was just fun. It doesn't mean anything two years later as far as this week goes, but it does -- it's cool to get to go through all those memories and just relive a week that was obviously life changing for me.

**AMANDA HERRINGTON:** Absolutely. And looking at where we are now, another great finish last week at the Valspar Championship, a T-6. Now that you've had a chance to come out of Sunday, what do you take away from last week's performance?

**MAX HOMA:** Yeah, I think last week was one of the most all-around good weeks of golf I've had as far as my game goes. I felt like I putted really well. I felt like my short game was really good, my iron game was really good and I drove it great. So it's fun -- it doesn't happen often like that, but it's fun when you have a week like that and it all clicks. I didn't have a great Sunday, but I felt like it was one of those Sundays where I played quite well. I just got the little things were off as far as maybe course management and wind and the stuff you can't really control as much.

So it's nice to come into the following week to a course I love with the physical parts of my game feeling really, really good, knowing that those are the days that are going to happen here and there. It's unfortunate it happened on Sunday, but had it happened on Thursday, I wouldn't have batted an eye. You would have kind of just taken it in stride.

So as far as the game goes it's obviously in a really good spot and that's -- that's the nice thing about when you're playing professional golf, you're traveling all over. When your game seems to be maintaining week to week, it's nice because you know you don't need to do a whole lot of work as you get to a new venue.

**Q. Hey, Max. I was rereading your transcript from when you won two years ago and you said, reflecting on the couple years where you struggled, that you were tough. What do you mean? Give me your best example of what you mean by you're tough.**

**MAX HOMA:** I think my best example -- well, I think in 2017, as that season kind of ended and I made \$18,008 in two cuts and I think only one Sunday, I think that a lot of people would have either quit playing golf or gone into a serious hole with not their game, like mentally, I think. My game was obviously already in the hole.

So I just feel like that, you know, you can't control a lot in your job really. I can't come out here and all of a sudden figure out how to hit a driver like Rory McIlroy. I can't figure out how to have a putting stroke like Tiger right away. These things aren't all controllable, but one thing you can control is your mental stability and your toughness out here, and I feel like that's what I kind of went to. This is the one thing I can really hone in on.

So when I would have these bad moments, I felt like I was really good at still going to practice after a bad day or a bad week and not taking what was happening in a tournament and letting it, you know, roll over into the next week of preparation. I think when you added all those things up at the end of a year or a couple years, you start to have success like I did here in 2019. So it's just kind of the understanding that if you're really tough, you're not going to waste days or hours sulking in what you're doing, you're going to just kind of keep dusting yourself off and get back to work.

**Q. How far away did you feel you were to being a top-50 player in the world?**

**MAX HOMA:** That's a great question. Honestly, at the same time that I felt really, really far

from that, I didn't feel as far. I think that's more a testament to where my head was at. I had great success in college, and I know that's a really long time ago, and I also had some pretty good success early on in my professional career. So I knew that my head understood what being like very good at golf was like. So I felt like in that regard, if I could find my game, I felt like the other pieces were all there. The hard part was my game felt so bad. Even weeks where I'd hit the ball better, I'd chip and putt it poorly, that I felt like I was quite far away.

But in this game I think everybody knows that sometimes it just takes a little bit to click and you get going, so you just need to be ready mentally for when that does happen. Like I said, probably not the greatest answer in the world, but I felt really far physically, but I didn't feel that far mentally. I felt like I hadn't lost my edge.

**Q. Hey, Max, congratulations on the good play lately. Just was wondering, some of these guys are superstitious and a lot of people, superstition kind of is the name of the game in baseball, for sure, but sometimes in golf as well. Do you go back -- when you go back to a place where you've won, will you go back to all the same restaurants? Will you stay in the same hotel? Will you try to do everything exactly the same? How far will you take it? And what's the hot spot to eat this week?**

**MAX HOMA:** Well, I did go back to a restaurant I went to last time, but that was just because I really like it. It's called Cowfish. So it's more that I enjoy that restaurant. I'm not superstitious like that. I'm staying at a different hotel.

The Wells Fargo is one of the greatest tournaments I think everyone agrees that we play in and they put me up in a hotel this year, or set me up for a hotel this year that's fantastic.

No, I don't believe in all of that. You know, if I did, my wife is here with me this year and she wasn't two years ago, so I'm not sure how I would tell her that she was not allowed to come because it would be against the superstition.

Yeah, I'm glad I'm not like all the baseball players who need to put their socks on the same way every day or rub their hat the same way. I just try to do what I want to do as I please.

**AMANDA HERRINGTON:** All right. We do have one other virtual question this time. You obviously know your tee time. Can you give us a preview of what you're looking forward to in your featured group this week?

**MAX HOMA:** Yeah, it will be awesome. Webb Simpson is obviously a hometown favorite here. His house, I think, is behind the seventh tee. He's one of the nicest people. Him and his caddie, one of the nicest people going.

And getting to play with Jon Rahm's a pleasure. He lives by me in Arizona. I think anybody who's ever watched him hit a golf ball knows that he is one of the most talented people in the world and maybe one of the greatest pairs of hands that's probably ever touched a golf club.

I feel very fortunate to be able to play with them and compete against them. It's a blast being out here on the PGA TOUR playing against the best players in the world. When you get a group like that, people who have had immense success, and for Jon, immense success already for as young as he is, it's a joy. So I look forward to getting to walk around with them for 36 holes and kind of size up my game against some of the best players.

**Q. Max, when you -- after you won, did you find it hard to build on that? And then second part of the question is, did you expect for so much success so quickly after you made the coaching change?**

**MAX HOMA:** Yeah, after I -- I don't think it was hard to build on it. I think the only difficult part really that I can think of is once you win once, I feel like now you know -- since you know you can win, it does add some bit of expectation. I think sometimes having the unknown of are you good enough to win or not is in an odd way freeing, in a weird way freeing because you kind of just go play and see what happens.

When you're -- when you've won, right after you think, okay, well, if I did that, I should be able to do that again. When you come up short or when you miss a cut, it feels like you're so far away from what your potential, what you should be doing. So obviously winning, there's way more benefits to that. Now I know I don't need to play perfectly to win, so it's a bit -- I feel a bit more comfortable there. But there is a bit of pressure to continue winning, and it's only kind of your own pressure. But I just knew that, hey, I went out there and didn't play -- I putted probably my best, but I didn't play my best by any means, so why am I all of a sudden 65th place struggling to even shoot under par.

It feels like now you're going backward because once you win, unless you keep winning every week like Tiger, it feels like you're kind of going backwards.

Yeah, after switching coaches to Mark Blackburn. I was shocked how fast everything's clicked. Now, I will say it was a huge benefit having -- I only played one event or two events basically, the Masters and Mayakoba, and then we had a month and a half off to really prep all that, so I played really well at Mayakoba, which was good, but having that month and a half in the offseason to practice and hone in on what we've been working on, what we were going to work on, I think that helped a lot.

Yeah, anytime you make a big change in your swing, or in this case it wasn't big, but you make some sort of change in your swing, you're not really sure how it's going to feel and how quickly you're going to be able to adapt to it. Obviously we found something that fits me pretty well and it's been a joy. It's a treat sometimes when it starts to feel like you didn't have to go through, you know, a crazy amount of hours of frustration to find some success. I feel like it came quite quickly.

**Q. How have you changed your goals now that you've already got an early win under your belt? Has that affected you at all?**

**MAX HOMA:** No, I've never really been somebody with goals like that like to win, to win a major. That's never been my goals. Ryder Cup is kind of the newest one, I guess, if I had to say I have one because it's such a big goal.

And every year my goal is to make the TOUR Championship. I haven't done it yet, but I feel even if you have, making the TOUR Championship is a big accomplishment, means you're finishing in the Top 30 with some of the best players in the world.

My goals typically for my whole life has just been to get a little better every day. It sounds kind of silly, but I always worried that if I did have a goal to win this year and I won, where do you go after that. So when my goals are how they are now is just to keep improving and make sure I'm doing everything every day to get better. I win a tournament at Riviera and I go straight into the next week knowing that that's great, but I want to still be a more complete player after the win at Riviera. I want to be a better chipper, putter, ball-striker, whatever it is. I want to keep progressing, so I always try to make my goals a bit more along those lines.

**AMANDA HERRINGTON:** All right. Any last questions for Max? All right, Max. Thank you so much for your time today and good luck this week.

**MAX HOMA:** Thank you, guys. Have a good one.