

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
June 30, 2021

ALEX CEJKA



Q. Mr. Alex Cejka, making your first start here at the Dick's Sporting Goods Open, but you've had a couple years here during the B.C. Open days. Just your thoughts on being back to Endicott?

ALEX CEJKA: It's been a long time, I think 20 years probably, or 19. I still remembered a couple holes, that was good. All I remember, I played really well at the old B.C. Open back then, I think I finished second, so that brings good memories and good vibes. I'm hitting the ball pretty well. I'm a little bit jet-lagged from my Europe trip last week, but feeling good swing-wise, playing-wise, so I'm really looking forward to playing here.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your season so far? You went from writing letters, I think you wrote a letter to get a sponsor's exemption into this event, right, and then the tournament director mentioned it was like the Friday before you won your first major. Just talk a little bit about the whirlwind of a season.

ALEX CEJKA: Yes, the beginning I had to Monday qualify for two tournaments. I did it the hard way, played actually in my second Monday qualifier, played really good and finished second in the tournament. Then won the Tradition like two weeks later. That was obviously a big bonus. I knew I don't have to write letters anymore for invites.

Then won the Senior PGA a couple weeks later. I'm in a good position right now and I'm really looking forward for the rest of the season. We don't have that many tournaments left, but we still have two big tournaments coming up. First I see there's a warmup for the U.S. Senior Open. As I said, my game is good. I'm really looking forward to playing the next couple weeks and we'll see how it goes.

Q. A lot of guys have been talking about how great of condition the course is in. What's your take on it?

ALEX CEJKA: It's really good. I was actually surprised now in the pro-am how dried up after the rain yesterday. I was expecting actually a really soft golf course, but the greens are phenomenal, the fairways still are great. It's a tight golf course, so you've got to hit the fairways, especially with the par 5s where you can really take advantage, but you've got to hit the fairways. So it's tricky tee shots, really narrow, but if you drive it well this week, I think you can really play well here.

Q. How were you able to keep your game so sharp the last couple of years to the point where you got to turn 50 and were ready to go right away?

ALEX CEJKA: Yeah, I was lucky that I still had some status on the Korn Ferry Tour, on the PGA TOUR, so I played basically pretty much almost every week, every second week until I turned 50. I have some friends who lose a Tour card, they are 44, they're going to struggle the next five, six years. You know, you're not staying as sharp when you're off the game for six years. When I couldn't play PGA or Korn Ferry Tour, I went and played a little mini-tour out there in Arizona just to see where my game is. I think that helped me to play pretty much competition golf all the way until I turned 50.

Q. How do you describe the level of competition on the Korn Ferry Tour?

ALEX CEJKA: Korn Ferry Tour, the level is incredible. I think the players on the Korn Ferry Tour, obviously the top 25 make it to the PGA. There are so many great guys who easily can play on the PGA TOUR for many years, not only for one year and lose their card.

It's the game has changed the last couple of years, there's so many great players on any tour, it doesn't matter where you go. Yeah, it's just tough to be part of the PGA TOUR for those young kids. They give only 125 cards out, there's so many great players all over the world. I'm really rooting for Stephan Jaeger, who's leading the Korn Ferry rankings and he was so close to like finishing his third tournament to qualify immediately to the PGA TOUR, but he's a great player, great friend and I wish him all the best. As I said, great players everywhere.

Q. What impresses you about Stephan Jaeger?

ALEX CEJKA: He's a great ball-striker. We were both at the BMW over in Germany last week and I think on Tuesday he was hitting balls and I sit down next to him, we chatted for half an hour while he was hitting balls and he was like a machine. He's a grinder, he's a great player. He's got the right head for this game and his short game is incredible. So he's got the whole package basically.

Q. You're off to a great start so far this season. How has that prepared you going into this weekend?

ALEX CEJKA: Yeah, it's again, last months I played really well. I have a little hamstring problem, but it's in the back of the mind it's bugging me a little bit. I've been playing well. Obviously with the jet lag a little bit coming from Europe it's going to be a little bit tricky. Lucky we start on Friday and not on Thursday like a normal PGA TOUR event, so I hope a couple more nights or couple more days I can get adjusted better to the time. But I like it here. As I said, brings great memories. I'm playing well. The key is if I'm going to drive it well. The two majors I won I really drove it well, I drove it far and straight and this is what you need on this golf course.