

PLAYER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCEMENT
September 14, 2021



PATRICK CANTLAY

JACK RYAN: We would like to welcome Patrick Cantlay here to our virtual press conference. Patrick, obviously our 2021 FedExCup champion and was announced today as the winner of the PGA TOUR Player of the Year Award.

So, Patrick, thanks again for joining and if we can just start with an opening comment from you on what an honor it is to win the Jack Nicklaus Award?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it is definitely. I think the fact that it's voted on by my fellow PGA Tour players, I think that means a lot to me and I'm very grateful and excited to be here. I think it wasn't something that I necessarily thought was on the radar middle of the year, but then I closed really well and played a lot of really nice golf towards the end. And like I said, I'm just really grateful and honored to accept the award.

Q. Congratulations, Pat. I feel like I've asked you this before and maybe I just haven't gotten a really good answer or anything: What was your irritation level leaving Olympia Fields last year, having missed out on the TOUR Championship, and was there any extra motivation to make sure that didn't happen again? If you don't have a good answer, just make up your best or something, I'm good with that. Thanks.

PATRICK CANTLAY: You know, with it being kind of a weird year and not being able to play some of the tournaments that I usually play and not being able to play necessarily as many events as I would have liked, I hadn't played very many in the fall that year and so I was maybe behind the 8-ball, and then I played a good round at the PLAYERS Championship and then it got canceled. So I didn't put too much stock in it, I just kind of thought to myself it was a weird year and I only missed out by a spot, so I didn't think much of it.

I didn't really change my game plan or anything this year, I just got to play a full year's schedule.

Q. Okay. And the other thing, you've talked so much about building on memories of big moments, big putts, big shots, et cetera. Is there any time where you can build on a bad memory and were any this year that stand out to you as being helpful in the long run? I'll hang up and listen.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think in general if you can pull something really helpful out of a bad memory, then yes, it can be useful. I think they serve as -- they can serve as really good lessons of what not to do if you do something out of the regular process and then get a bad result.

I have definitely tried to learn how to close golf tournaments and I think getting there and seeing what works and what doesn't and, you know, being able to only do the things that really help you, I think that was really big for me and I feel like I'm much better at closing golf tournaments than I was maybe a couple years ago.

Definitely some of the lessons I've learned have been from the tournaments that I didn't win and didn't close out. I think as I was saying the week of East Lake, the ability to stay very present and not get ahead of yourself and really block out all the noise and all the -- all the thought about anything other than the shot that you're going to hit right now. I think that really helped me at East Lake and I definitely pulled some lessons from tournaments where I didn't get it done to help me get it done this year.

Q. This is kind of based on what JT told us at East Lake a few years ago about setting goals and he showed us the goals on his phone. I was reading in the release that you're the only player this year who finished in the Top 30 of all the major strokes gained categories. I guess that would be micro. Do you have any goals going into a year you're trying to accomplish, and if so, did you accomplish those this year?

PATRICK CANTLAY: In general I wouldn't say I have goals like JT does. JT writes down and shares some of his biggest, loftiest goals. In general I try to keep my goals process oriented, so I think setting goals that you can achieve for a week of prep or setting goals that you can achieve for prep on that day is really helpful for me because it feels like I'm making little victories to get towards some of my bigger goals. My bigger goals are obvious, I'd like to win every tournament I tee it up in, I'd like to win the biggest tournaments of the year. I think that's what gets every pro golfer going is just winning golf tournaments.

So that's obvious, focusing in on the goals that maybe will help me achieve that but are maybe more building blocks, I think that's really helpful for me. So most of my goals are process oriented.

One of my goals in general as far as the process goes is work on your weaknesses and work on the things that will help you the most, so give you the biggest bang for your buck. A couple years ago, two, three years ago that was short game and I think now and moving forward at least for the little while I'd like to work on shots inside 150 I feel like is one of the areas of my game that I can improve and I'm looking forward to getting better in that area.

Q. And it seems like when we were leaving East Lake, it was still kind of a toss-up for Player of the Year between you and Jon Rahm it felt like. Was there any part of you that was maybe, I don't want to say anxious because I'm not sure where this is on your goal list, but when you did get the phone call from the Tour, were you, I don't want to say surprised but something along those lines?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'd say I was really excited and really grateful to my team for putting me in a position to succeed. I think I have a fantastic team and they do such a great job for

me all year, so getting an award like that definitely validates all their hard work and all my hard work. So I think that's one of the most satisfying parts of it all is just all the hard work that I know my team and I have put in is now paying off. To be voted on by the rest of the players and the fact that the award is given out that way, it just makes it mean that much more. So I'm just, I'm really grateful to everybody that helped make it happen and get me to where I am today.

Q. By any chance has Jack Nicklaus called you?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I have not talked to Jack, but I'm sure I'll see him at Bear's Club this winter and we can catch up.

Q. And could you just talk a little bit about how the last two days went up in Whistling Straits?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I thought they went really well. We got together and saw the golf course. I had never seen the golf course before and so I think it should be a really interesting golf course for match play. I think getting to hang a little bit with the guys and get into that team mindset, because we are so often in individual -- an individual mindset, getting together with the guys on the team I think was really cool. I'm looking forward to going back there in a week and competing.

Q. Patrick, let me offer my congratulations from the opposite side of the pond. Well done. Could I just ask you a little bit on the back of Doug's question, I hope this question's not too unfair, but if you have to single out one shot from that great season of yours that led to the Player of the Year, could you do that?

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, I don't think one shot really makes or breaks a season. I think it's very much all the little things you do all the time. So by the time you get to hitting that critical shot, it might be something you did on Thursday or Friday.

And I think also in a weird way, not thinking that some of those bigger shots that you might say are bigger and it's just another little building block in getting you to where you want to go is really important. So not putting any extra stress on yourself, oh, now is the time I need to, you know, pull out a really great shot. I obviously, you know, going forward will take a lot of those experiences and memories that I had from the last two weeks because I think drawing on those victories is really powerful moving forward.

Q. And could I just ask you on the back of Steve's question, looking now at the makeup of the European team that was finalized on Sunday night, what do you think of the makeup of the two teams? And if I may, how many players do you think you would know on that European team?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I would have to look at the list. I bet I know pretty much everybody on the European team. I would say both teams are kind of in that space. I mean, we play such a

global schedule and a lot of the European players play a lot of the same events that we do, so I don't think there will be any unfamiliarity between the two teams.

Like I said earlier, just spending time with the guys on the U.S. side the last two days, I'm really excited for that team golf environment. I think we rarely ever get that and that's what makes these team events so exciting, so I'm really happy to be a part of it and looking forward to how it all plays out.

Q. Just one last question. We saw this at the Solheim Cup down in Ohio, how much do you think the fact that there's going to be so many American spectators, probably 99 percent American spectators as opposed to just the one percent from Europeans, how do you think that may work in your favor?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Well, I haven't played a team event at home before and so I am looking forward to seeing what that's like. Maybe I'll be better suited to answer that question after the week's over, but I think it should be great. I imagine that the U.S. fans will be all charged up and I really hope that we can give them something to cheer about.

Q. Pat, I just had two more if you don't mind. You've had a lot of nice highlights this year. Do you ever watch yourself on TV, and when you do, what do you look at? What are you looking for, what stands out, and does anything make you uncomfortable?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't watch too much. I've obviously seen some shots or some holes that I've played for sure, but in general I won't watch myself too much.

I think it's a lot easier to watch if I'm going to watch a couple holes of a tournament I've won, but I just, I don't really have a good rest of the answer because maybe I haven't watched enough.

No, I mean, I am who I am and so if I watch on TV and I see myself do something, my tongue's sticking out or something, it's just I don't even really realize in the moment I'm doing it and so I'm maybe seeing it as other people are seeing it for the first time. I try to just embrace who I am and if my tongue sticks out a bunch, we'll see, I can have a competition with MJ.

Q. You've talked a lot about staying in the present and I'm just curious, when you get so locked in over a putt, over a shot and we see basically great concentration, are you unable to break out of that? I guess the question is, what's the biggest fist pump you've thrown? You don't lose it, which actually kind of sticks to your philosophy of staying present, but have you ever lost it?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'm sure I have. I really, to be perfectly honest, I really am just so focused on what I need to do that I almost, by the time I'm there picking the ball up out of the hole, I even forget that I'm supposed to have done a fist pump or anything like that. It's actually just really, if you're watching me out there, it's very authentic. I'm not adding any

extra or pulling any less out of my reaction. So if I do have a reaction, it's completely natural because sometimes I'll find myself and say, man, you really should have done something after a putt like that, but I was just so focused on trying to hit the best putt I could that I forgot about any type of celebration.

Q. Last one if you don't mind, what's more important to you, popularity or authenticity?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think you'd probably answer that one.

Q. I know, but I would like to hear it from you.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think being true to myself and being authentic is really important to me. I hope that I can always prioritize that and be myself.

Q. To follow up kind of on Fergie's question just now, would you consider changing, and I know you talked about social media at the TOUR Championship, but becoming more engaged on social media or is that something that you have no interest in?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I would say doing it in a way that's authentic to me is important. I think one of the cool things about social media is that you can kind of engage with it as you see fit. There's not -- it's not a one-size-fits-all platform. So as long as I can do it in a way that I feel like I'm being me, then I will, but if I feel like I can't, then I won't.

JACK RYAN: Patrick, those are all the questions we have. Thanks for your time today and congratulations again on being voted the PGA TOUR Player of the Year.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Thanks, Jack.