

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
November 21, 2021



TALOR GOOCH (-22)

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Talor Gooch into our virtual interview room, the winner of the 2021 RSM Classic. His first PGA TOUR victory (inaudible) atop the FedExCup standings.

Talor, congratulations on stepping into the winner's circle. If we can get some comments.

TALOR GOOCH: I mean, first time winning on PGA TOUR, to finish the season off, like this fall season like I just did, it's a dream come true. I thought about these types of interviews my whole life sitting in the showers, giving my winning speech, my winning interview, so it's an absolute dream come true.

JOHN BUSH: As I mentioned, you move to the top of the FedExCup standings. Talk a little bit about what this does now for your season and also in terms of changing your goals.

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, I mean, firstly, it's going to get me into some tournaments I wasn't into prior to this week. I want to get to Atlanta, I want to get to the TOUR Championship and this puts me a little bit ahead of the ballgame for that journey. The goal is to win the TOUR Championship and you can't do that unless you (inaudible), so we're off on a good foot.

JOHN BUSH: Speaking of journey, just sort of take us through your journey. Qualifying tournament, just in terms of getting here to the PGA TOUR and now winning.

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, I turned pro in 2014 and I didn't get through Q-School until 2016 and so I had a couple years let's just say lean years where there's a lot of doubt that would creep in. I had to learn how to believe in myself in some tough times. I was able to get through Q-School and get to the Web.com, which is now the Korn Ferry Tour, in 2017. Then got my card after one year and just started my fifth season on Tour. It's been a journey for sure and I wouldn't have it any other way, though.

Q. Want to know, you're talking about you haven't been in this position before on Sundays, but your two playing partners didn't go away. They were playing pretty well. Mackenzie was still out there making birdies, and then about the time you were making the turn, Tyler was putting for a 59.

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah.

Q. I wondered how much leaderboard watching did you do and how much were you aware of what was going on around you, and did that affect what you were doing out there?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, I mean, you're always aware, at least I am. I always kind of keep an eye on things, but it doesn't change what you're doing. I knew from the beginning of the day, I kind of had 20 in my mind. I was like if I can get to 20, that's going to make the rest of the field have to do something good. So you kind of have that number in mind, but as I proved, you almost put limitations on yourself if you start thinking about scoreboards and start thinking about scores and whatnot. You're aware of the leaderboard, but it doesn't really affect what you're doing until the last couple holes if things start getting tight. So you're aware of what's going on, but it doesn't really change your game plan.

Q. Hey, Talor. I just noticed that this happens to be your first full tournament in your 30s and I know it's just a number, but as an introspective guy, I'm wondering last week when you turned 30, did you have any thoughts about that? And then just maybe some thoughts too on a pretty good way to start a decade.

TALOR GOOCH: Apparently when you turn 30 you just have an abundance of wisdom that comes to you. I played very wise golf this week.

No, we had a tough week on the weekend last week and my birthday was on Sunday. We were hopeful, we had talked about wanting to get a win in before I turned 30, but the golf gods like to make you chuckle on occasion, so they wanted to wait until the week after. It is my mom's birthday today, so it's a nice little birthday present for her.

Q. The other question for you, the obvious one, you kind of would expect some nerves out there. From the outside looking in you seemed extremely calm, but just curious what was going on inside your head?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, if you don't have nerves, you've got something wrong with you. Everybody handles nerves and pressure differently and through time I've figured out a way to channel those thoughts and those feelings and those nerves into a good way. I try to be as calm, cool and collected as I can and I know that my golf will benefit the calmer, cooler and more collected I can stay.

I wish I could be like Tiger and throw in fist pumps around everywhere, but I learned through experience that I can't handle those highs and then come back down and hit a golf shot very well after that, so I have to kind of stay calm. Even though on the outside it may look calm, there's definitely some water churning on the inside. Like I said, everybody's got nerves and you just have to learn how to handle it.

Q. Quickly, it just so happened on the last two days that anytime someone got close to you, seemed like you responded with a birdie. That may be just coincidence, but I was curious if you were aware of that, like if you watch the scoreboard and say someone's within two and that had any effect, do you think?

TALOR GOOCH: Like I said, you're aware of what's going on a little bit. A couple times in

the last couple days, like you said, there's a couple times where a guy might have gone in within one or two shots of me and I did kind of notice that we were able to respond well. I don't think that's planned, but you just do your best to do your best. Usually when you win by a few shots on the PGA TOUR, you've got a lot of good stuff going your way and this week it just happened to be in those spots where it seemed like things might be getting a little bit tight.

Q. Just curious, how did your winner's speech go? Was it anything like how you envisioned it in the shower all those times?

TALOR GOOCH: Well, I've given about 30 different speeches I feel like now, so collectively I've kind of touched base on everything I've wanted to, I think.

It's like I told Davis whenever I walked up, I was like, "Dude, I watched you within THE PLAYERS Championship. For me to win at your tournament, that's special." So my speech might not have gone exactly verbatim how I envisioned it, but I've envisioned it a thousand different ways, so I'm just grateful to be able to give a winner's speech.

Q. And you mentioned yesterday being kind of down to your last dollars. How did you fund your career when you got out here?

TALOR GOOCH: So out of school I signed a deal with Callaway that they helped me get going. I made a few bucks here and there on mini tours and PGA TOUR Canada, Mackenzie Tour. I was making enough money to stay afloat. Like I said, it was dwindling down to the bare minimum towards the end of 2016, but I was able to make a few bucks on the mini tours to help keep me alive.

Q. And what is the status of the buddies' trip that would seem to conflict with Maui?

TALOR GOOCH: Well, I have my phone in my back pocket, my phone's buzzing away. I'm sure a few of those buzzes are coming from my buddies. We were chatting last night and they had all basically said, hey, we're hoping to move this buddies' trip to a different time. They will be one of the first people I respond to and tell them, all right, we've got to figure out a plan B now.

Q. Maui maybe?

TALOR GOOCH: Hey, get them out to Maui, let's make it happen.

Q. You said you had to learn how to believe in yourself. How did you do it? Was it advice from someone, something you read, or how did you just go about doing that?

TALOR GOOCH: Since I was 13 years old and until recently I had the same swing coach. His name is Steve Ball. We worked as much on the mental side of things as we did on the mechanics and physical side of things. He taught me from an early age how critical it is to

pre-shot routines and believing and confidence and getting negative thoughts out of your mind and whatnot. For me, it's been a journey since I was 13.

We all have a little bit of cockiness in us at some point, but like I talk about there's a difference between confidence and belief. Confidence will come and go, but belief is everlasting. So you have to, on the PGA TOUR, to be a staple, you have to have belief in yourself. And it's something that comes from within, but also comes from experience in time and proving to yourself that you can do it. So it's been a journey to build the self belief.

Q. Being around athletes between your dad, J.T., Sam Bradford, like what influences all those athletes had in just this journey of professional golf to get to here?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, I think I kind of embody what they all do from how they conduct themselves, how they handle themselves, never get too high, never get too low, you never want your opponent, you know, another competitor to see you down, to see negative body language. That's been a takeaway from my dad, all these great athletes that I've been fortunate to spend time with is don't get down, don't let anyone see you're down. You can get a little frustrated, but get right back up and dust yourself off and get going.

Q. And how do you think growing up at Joseph Conrad influenced you?

TALOR GOOCH: Oh, man, days like today playing in the wind, it's a great golf course, but let's just say the conditions are not PGA TOUR conducive. So I love when we play weeks where the conditions aren't perfect and you get some unfortunate lies and you might get a little bad bounce here or there or whatever it may be. Growing up not a country club kid, it just built a different kind of toughness in you than kids who grew up at country clubs with nice greens and pro Vs on the range and all that. I'm super grateful for everything that we have here on the Tour and I think that gratitude pays dividends on days like today.

Q. Can you pinpoint when you felt like you learned to control your emotions on the golf course anyway?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, so funny story. Back in high school I used to play a lot of racquetball with my dad. He would whip my butt. My dad is 63, so 10 years ago, 12 years ago, 14 years ago he was not -- he still wasn't a young man. He wasn't an old man, but he wasn't a young man, but he was still whipping my butt. So I didn't take it very well. I broke a couple rackets, I had to go pay for those rackets and I quickly learned whenever I didn't get so ticked off at myself that I was able to compete with him a little bit better and a little bit better. The times where I would get too upset, too mad, it just shut me down.

So it wasn't even because -- it wasn't from golf that I learned how to control my emotions, it was literally racquetball, playing with my dad. If it wasn't for my dad whipping my butt in racquetball, I don't know if I ever would have learned how to manage my emotions and frustrations, which is a huge key on the golf course.

Q. Very relatable story. And then how difficult was it to make the coach change?

TALOR GOOCH: You know, it was something that -- it was just really difficult. I still talk to Steve and we stay in touch. He's been almost like a second father to me, so he's going to be one of the people I call almost immediately at the end of the day.

It was something I had been thinking about for a while of who would be the best guy to make that transition to. I wasn't looking for an overhaul by any means and I wasn't looking for a very mechanical, technical coach. I'm very much a feel player and so I wanted someone who was not going to complicate the game, someone who was going to keep it simple and kind of let me be an athlete on the golf course.

Boyd Summerhays, who I started working with, he fit the mold for that, so it worked out very well and it was a pretty seamless transition.

Q. Ever been to Augusta?

TALOR GOOCH: I have. We played Augusta State's tournament back my freshman and sophomore year when I was at Oklahoma State. So we played the tournament Saturday and Sunday and then go to the practice round on Monday. So I have not played the course, but I have been. I vowed to not play the golf course until I was going to be actually playing there for the tournament. I'm excited for that.

JOHN BUSH: Congratulations once again to Talor Gooch. Thank you all for joining us.

TALOR GOOCH: Thank you, guys.