

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**December 8, 2021**



**LEXI THOMPSON**  
**BUBBA WATSON**

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**DOUG MILNE:** Bubba and Lexi, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to the start of the 2021 QBE Shootout. We won't take much of your time at all, but certainly wanted to catch up to you, the winningest in the field this week, Lexi with your 11 and Bubba your 12 wins.

Bubba, start with you real quick. You haven't made a start out here since I think the Northern Trust, so just kind of bring us up to speed on the state of your game, what you're feeling and what you're confident with heading into the week.

**BUBBA WATSON:** I'm looking forward to it. I took some time off watching the kids. My son started playing tackle football, so being home, wanted to be a dad. Went and watched the ladies play in the Solheim Cup and realized I wasn't good enough, so I need to sit back and think about my career. No, it was a blast. It was awesome watching these ladies play, inspiring. Now watching my kids and now here we are. Started practicing a couple weeks ago, so looking forward to it. There might be some loose shots somewhere, but that's why I have a good partner.

**DOUG MILNE:** There you go. Lexi, just a few comments from you, similar question, just what are you most confident with, what parts of your game are you really hanging your hat on right now?

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, basically our season's done, we finished a few weeks ago here at the CME TOUR Championship. Kind of in my offseason right now, but I've been working extremely hard still on my game to be able to get here and be ready and play alongside Bubba.

I've never actually seen him play in person, so I'm just happy to be here and honored that I got the invite back. The course is amazing, so I just love playing here, and playing in a team event is always so much fun. My game's in a good spot, I've been working extremely hard, especially on my putting and my short game. So been putting in the hours, so we'll see the hard work pay off.

**DOUG MILNE:** One more question for each of y'all and then I'll turn it over to Steve who's down there. Y'all have played here a handful of times, obviously not with each other. Bubba I think you're making your seventh start, Lexi your fifth, just some comments on how fun the week is. Obviously very relaxed and laid back and just how much fun you guys have.

**BUBBA WATSON:** When you think about the charity dollars that have been raised, Greg

Norman and his team and now QBE, what they've put into this, when you think about the kids that we get to learn about each year, new kid, so it's amazing. It's an honor to be here. It's fun. The pro-am, two pro-ams but you get a cart so that makes it even better. But playing with a partner, having a person next to you to make you laugh, make you giggle even when you hit one in the water. I'll probably hit one in the water.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** That's fine, I'll make you giggle. I'm sure I will, too.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Exactly. No, that's what makes it fun. This is an offseason event that's a blast to play in and that's why I've played in it seven years, she's played in it five. It's a privilege to be here and try to help a great cause that Greg and his team have come up with.

**DOUG MILNE:** Lexi, you weren't here last year, but you're back for your fifth time now, so just some thoughts on being back.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Yeah, exactly what Bubba said, it's not only a fun event, we're playing as a team and raising some amazing charity dollars and that's always great to hear, just giving back. As athletes we just focus on what we do on the course, but giving back is so important. We're just happy to be a part of it and help out any way that we can. We have a lot of fun. I was so bummed last year that I wasn't able to play. It was the U.S. Women's Open this week last year, so I was bummed I couldn't play, but I couldn't skip the U.S. Women's Open, but I'm happy to be here this week and be alongside Bubba and we'll have a good time out there.

**DOUG MILNE:** Finally, we'll throw it over to Steve DiMeglio who's down there with you guys.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Is Steve here?

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I don't see him.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Anybody?

**DOUG MILNE:** Okay. We'll wrap it up real quick.

**Q. How did you guys become a team? How did this happen?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** They asked if we wanted to play together.

**Q. Who's they?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** The powers that be, Greg Norman and his team, whoever his team is.

**Q. And so what was your reaction when you were asked and what was your reaction when you were asked to play with him?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I was like yes. I mean, I can't say no, come on, it's Bubba Watson.

**BUBBA WATSON:** It was the same answer, but I didn't say Bubba Watson, I said Lexi. I actually grew up, when I got on Tour the first time, the Korn Ferry Tour, Nationwide Tour back then, Nick, her brother, that was my wife's favorite player. So having Nick on the bag, spent some time with him at the --

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Where is he?

**BUBBA WATSON:** He's probably at the pool now. He's not going to the range with you.

Having him on the bag and spending time with him at the Solheim Cup, it was good to catch up because I haven't seen him in a few years.

Yeah, just brings back memories. And now playing with her, watched her game, admired her game, watched her ability. Pretty special. To be able to see firsthand is going to be a treat.

**Q. Lexi, I was just curious, do you remember the first time you were able to outdrive one of your brothers and how that felt?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** It might happen this week, hold on a second.

**Q. When's the last time you were intimidated by playing with someone who's longer than you, if you ever were?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, first off, I don't think I've ever outdriven either of my brothers. They both hit it pretty long, especially Curtis, he hits it very long. Don't think I've outdriven, but growing up around two older brothers and their friends, I grew up always playing from the back tees trying to outdrive them. Not saying it ever happened, but that's kind of why I swing hard and just swing out of my shoes kind of. We both do. I don't really get intimidated playing with the guys because that's just how I grew up. It's a bit of a long course, but I love hitting my driver, so I'll take it around the golf course and see.

**Q. Last one, Bubba, who's your caddie this week and is he your caddie going forward?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** That's a good question. Gabe, what's your last name? Sauer? Gabe Sauer, he runs my driving range, gives lessons out of the driving ranges at the Pensacola Golf Center back home. I didn't have anybody, again because who wants to play -- caddie for a guy who hasn't played in a while? And I don't know my schedule, so I haven't really picked a guy yet, not that people are beating down my door to get on my bag. Gabe's filling in right now, so it's working out good. If he's as good as Teddy is, then we can finish at least second this week.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** No pressure.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Didn't they finish second last week?

Doug, is it okay if somebody else asks a question.

**DOUG MILNE:** Absolutely, I didn't know who was down there. Absolutely. That will be less you have to look at me.

**Q. What led to you going to the Solheim Cup? And Lexi, what was it like, you know, seeing somebody like that be there and be so supportive of women's golf?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** You want me to answer first? Let me hear her answer first.

**Q. Whatever you want to do.**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Go ahead, you go. No, go. Make it good though, okay?

**LEXI THOMPSON:** You're not looking at me.

No, it was amazing. It was very shocking to have Bubba Watson there, wasn't expecting. They said a surprise guest and I'm like, all right, wow, that's not who I expected. To have him there alongside us, supporting us, giving us advice whenever we needed it, it was truly amazing. We weren't expecting it at all, but just to have the support there that week, that week's so intense and to have somebody like Bubba out there supporting us and helping us out along the way, there's nothing like it. It meant the world to us, and the way he gives back to charities as well really helped us out.

**BUBBA WATSON:** For me it was something I've always wanted to do. It's one of those bucket list moments. Being with the Solheim family, a lifetime Ping guy, I've always thought about the Solheim Cup and then this year just worked out perfectly the way my schedule fell. I didn't make it to East Lake so I could go to Solheim Cup. I guess -- I hate to say this, but I guess I wish I would have missed the Solheim Cup because I would have been at East Lake, the way I played and everything.

It was the perfect storm. The ladies that were the vice captains and then the captain, Pat Hurst, people I knew, people I've known for a while, and so I called Pat and asked if I could come and hang out. And it was a little nerve racking at first. She was like yeah, come in the locker room. I was like, I don't know if I can come in the locker room, I'm not sure, I don't know what the rules are on this.

It was strange at first but I think the girls understood that I was there for a reason. I wasn't there for credit, I was there to support them. My wife played in the WNBA, she played four years pro basketball, and then I have a 7-year-old now who one day's going to want to do something; probably against the guys at some point, she's just that mean.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I love it.

**BUBBA WATSON:** So I have to support the girls. I mean, why would I not? I have a beautiful wife that I support, so why wouldn't I support the other ones? It was an amazing dream come true. And Pat and the ladies took me in and they let me be part of the team. I got to ride the bus, I got to do all the things that --

**LEXI THOMPSON:** He was on the 500 buses every morning. I was like, oh, my gosh.

**BUBBA WATSON:** I was there. I told them the first day I showed up, I told them the first day I showed, up, I said no matter what the internet says, by the end of the week you're going to realize I'm here for a reason, I'm here for y'all. And hopefully I showed that to them, I did everything I was asked and more. And my wife showed up and she helped and did everything she could possibly do to cheer on the ladies. Didn't go our way, but it was a blast to be a part of.

**Q. Tiger said he's playing next week. Just both of your thoughts on him coming back, particularly after what he went through in February?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, Tiger's amazing for the game. It's somebody who I've always looked up to growing up playing golf. Definitely wasn't expecting him to come back after what he went through, but not surprising at all with how hard he works and how determined of a person he is. But he's great for the game, he's grown it dramatically, so I'm happy he's coming back and looking forward to what he has in store.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, so after I saw his swings last week in the Bahamas, I texted him. I said, hey, are you going to play next week? He said, man, I don't know if I can get around but I'm trying, I'm working.

So it was interested to hear that he signed up and he's there. I'll be there and I'll be one of those people that follow him around, trying to see how he's doing, making sure everything's good. And then watching Charlie. My son actually asked if he could take his whole bag this year. I snuck a wedge and a putter last year and let him hit balls on the range with Charlie and Tiger right there, so this year he asked if he could take his whole bag. So I can't wait to see the whole family there, my whole family there just to give him a hug and embrace him.

**Q. Just your thoughts on you're on the list for the Saudi Arabia tournament and obviously a lot of players are just waiting to see what happens or what the Tour says. How are you approaching that part of it?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, it's one of those things where I love to travel and I wanted to travel somewhere else.

And Saudi Arabia, they're trying to change. They started with women's golf, started

supporting the women's golf and then they started supporting men's golf. There's women's tournaments already that they sponsor. Trying to grow the game. They're trying to change industry over there, bring golf, bring tourism to Saudi Arabia with the beautiful beaches that they already have.

It will be interesting to go over there and play, but also see the beauty of other parts of the world that God's created. I can't wait to get over there. Hopefully the Tour lets us go. Again, you know, the charity dollars is what's most important, so the more money I can get in my hands, the more I can give away. So it's an honor and a privilege if they let me go over there and play.

**Q. Having somebody like Greg be involved, obviously you've been around him at this event and I'm guessing plenty of other times, what does that add to it or bring to it?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Well, I don't know if he's involved in that tournament.

**Q. Yeah.**

**BUBBA WATSON:** I'm not sure if he's involved in that tournament or the Tour. It's like two different things that I know of it, it's two different things.

But year, anytime Greg Norman's involved, I mean, that's the guy I looked up to. There's so many guys I looked up to. That's one of the reasons we're here, right? Greg Norman has pushed this event, QBE. He's pushed it from the player side, but also from the charity side. That's why we're here supporting Greg and what he's committed to the game of golf.

But again, the tournament and the league is two different things, but yeah, Greg's going to try to do some great things if that league does happen.

**DOUG MILNE:** Bubba, Lexi, thank you guys for the time. Have a great week.