

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
January 25, 2022



PATRICK REED

DOUG MILNE: Like to welcome the defending champion of the Farmers Insurance Open, Patrick Reed.

Patrick, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Coming off that convincing five-stroke win last year at 14 under here, just some thoughts on being back. I believe you had a top-10 even the year before that, sixth place maybe in 2020, so obviously a place that suits you and your game well. Just some thoughts on being back here at Torrey Pines.

PATRICK REED: It's awesome being back. Anytime you can defend, it's amazing to be back on site. I love this golf course. It's one of those golf courses where you really have to think your way around this place. It's not just set up and hit driver and just attack. You actually have to have a pretty good game plan going into this place. I feel like I do better at harder golf courses and places you have to think around because it gets me more involved and more engaged in the golf shots.

DOUG MILNE: And you're making your eighth start of this season highlighted by the runner-up finish in Bermuda. I saw you last week, didn't get a chance to talk to you. What are some of the things you've been working on and some of the things you're coming in confident with as far as your game goes?

PATRICK REED: Confidence is actually pretty high. I got a lot of work done earlier this week as well as during the offseason or short offseason that we had. In December I was able to get a lot of work done with Sean Hogan and Dave Leadbetter to really just kind of dial in not only what we're doing on the golf swing but really get the clarity about my game, about certain golf shots, about how the swing's supposed to be.

I feel like with golf, the more you can understand what you're trying to do and feel these things, the easier it is to kind of fix things on the fly, because let's be honest, with golf you're obviously always trying to hit the best golf shot, but at the end of the day it's who can play their misses better and who can manage their off swings the best in order to have a chance to win on Sundays.

Q. Patrick, what's your schedule been like this week with this early start? Do you feel like -- I mean, you're coming from the desert. Do you feel like a rush at all to kind of get ready here? I know you're familiar with the course, but --

PATRICK REED: Right. Actually, it's actually been nice. Last week I feel like I did a lot of things well, but I had two holes that really just absolutely destroyed me and unfortunately one of those was the 72nd hole of the tournament. With having the tournament start so

quickly on that turnaround, it allowed me to really just kind of forget about last week. With Coach being here, I'm able to really just kind of get my mind really set on what we're trying to do this week and focus on a place that really, when you look at both courses, North and South, it's right out in front of you. There's not really that much quirkiness going around or not a ton of I'd say course knowledge you need. It's you have to hit fairways, you have to hit greens, and you hit solid putts, putts are going to go in. I think with having a short turnaround like that, you're able to really get locked in this week. I kind of tend to overprepare during tournament weeks and that being said, having one less day to do that just means hopefully I'll be more fresh come Saturday and Sunday.

Q. I wanted to ask you about coming off of the entire season last year. You had the win early, went through your illness, there was all the Ryder Cup talk, all that. When you look back on last year, what's the takeaway? Like what's the feeling about both the ups and downs of it?

PATRICK REED: I really think the biggest thing is anytime you can win on the PGA TOUR throughout a year, it's a good year. Obviously to be a little bit more consistent, have more chances to win than one, that's what turns it into a great year. I felt like last year was a good year for me. I didn't feel it was my best, but really allowed me to sit down and kind of reflect on the things I did well.

There's also things I need to change and I feel like making that swing change and working with David Leadbetter and really locking on that golf swing is something I need to do for the long term and I feel like it's going to pay dividends later on.

With that being said, I feel like the kind of ups and downs throughout the season last year, the inconsistencies really drove that decision and really cemented that decision. With that being said, I'm really looking forward to this year, especially coming on right now where I start feeling a little bit more comfortable with things that we're working on. With that being said, just the confidence is through the roof because of that. You're at home, you have Coach there, you're hitting some really good golf shots and quality golf shots. Whenever you do that it just seems to give you that extra momentum you need going into tournament weeks.

Q. Your illness was serious. How long did it take you to kind of feel normal again and feel like you were strong enough to compete on a golf course rather than just be there?

PATRICK REED: So I would say there's a difference between, for us, being strong enough to play than being 100 percent. I felt strong enough to play, strongish enough to play at East Lake, but right now I'd say I'm at 90 percent. I'm not quite fully 100 percent yet. Speed's not 100 percent there and just kind of I would say strength and endurance is getting there. It's one of those things that it's been a long process, a long run.

But with the amazing team that I have at home on my side, I wouldn't even think I would be

even close to where I am now without them. They've pushed me pretty hard and know when I can fully throttle it or when I kind of need to dial back to not just golf wise, but just stay healthy and get across that hump because it was a brutal run there when I got sick. At the same time, I feel like we've done everything that we can in order to continue moving forward.

Q. Can you speak to what kind of fear you might have felt when you were at your most ill? I mean, I don't know what kind of mindset you have with illnesses and things like that.

PATRICK REED: Really, I've never been in the hospital really before that because of illness or anything, knock on some wood.

Really, I felt really bad. Obviously when I was in the hospital and then when the doctor told me that hey, there's a good chance you might not survive this and you might not see your family again, when you hear that you go from feeling really bad to a really dark place mentally.

The only thing I could do is really rely on the team that we had at the hospital to not only get me through, but also mentally just try to keep on pushing. You want to see your kids again, watch them grow up. I think that was the first time I felt like really kind of almost beaten. I've always been really mentally strong, nothing really phases me and that was the first time I'm sitting there and there's a lot of things going through your mind. You just don't know what's going to happen. I mean, I think everyone has kind of had a fear of drowning before, but I felt like I was literally drowning out of water, you know, in just air, and feeling like I'm just struggling.

To be here, to be able to play golf and to be back hanging out with the kids and everything is a blessing for me. Really made me sit back and realize you can't take life for granted, you have to enjoy every moment because you just never know. Something could happen and you could be gone in a matter of a blink.

Q. First of all, trying to build on your confidence factor here, earlier this morning we heard from both Jon Rahm and also J.T., who were saying you're just the short game miracle worker of the year, so you've got a lot of respect from your colleagues on this. Tell me, what is it that makes you so good with the short game? Where do you get your inspiration from? What is it? Give us some clues, please.

PATRICK REED: Growing up, when I was growing up and when I was a young, a young child, I was watching Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson. That was when they were out there playing in their prime. And watching Phil, obviously his short game, hitting those big flops, you're always out there wanting to hit the flop shops. And watching Tiger, not just the way he chips but the way he putts, I grew up watching those things and really trying to copy a lot of what they're doing because, I can tell you this much, as a kid, I wasn't the straightest hitter in the world. I was having to chip out a lot, having to get up and down from everywhere, so had a lot of practice growing up.

Really, once I saw that and I started playing a lot of golf myself, you realize how important short game is and think like it's over 60 percent of your shots happen from 130 yards in, so that's where I was -- I decided to try to perfect and really work on that.

Now I feel like with working with David Leadbetter and Sean I'm able to use my full swing as a weapon rather than always using it as a crutch to be like, all right, what's going to happen on the full swing and then rely on short game. Now I'm able to feel a lot more confidence with full swing and when that happens I'm able to attack more flags because I have that confidence to get up and down when I'm short-sided or kind of take on those unnecessary risks when I have to attack a golf hole.

Q. Patrick, last year was not a normal Farmers Insurance Open, it was a unique weekend for you. On one hand you win going away by five strokes pretty convincingly. Still a ton of discussion about the Saturday and the embedded ball situation. How do you think that will or should be remembered last year?

PATRICK REED: It should be remembered as a victory. At the end of the day the rules officials said we did nothing wrong. When you have rules officials that come out and say that as well as you sit there and they're able to go by the book and go by the rules and you don't do anything wrong with that and there's no real discussion about it, go out there and play the best I can and do everything I'm supposed to and win the golf tournament.

Q. Earlier today guys like Jon Rahm and Justin Thomas were asked about you and the little bit our questions, my question, not theirs just to give you fair context, but sometimes a little bit of the noise around your game and just how successful it is. both of them said there's nobody on Tour we would want to have a wedge or putter in their hand, so your game is very respected at the uppermost level of the other players. Some of the perspective you talked about with Todd's question, how do you kind of go through hoping to put distance between those discussions about your game and the other stuff around your game over the years?

PATRICK REED: Really, I mean, the only thing I can do is keep on moving forward, keep trying to get the best I can on the golf course and handle myself how I feel like I'm supposed to off the golf course, whether it's with my peers, whether it's at home, whether it's out on the road or anything like that. As long as I feel like I'm doing the right things, all of it will take care of itself.

Q. You having said that, do you feel that there's this big disconnect between how you conduct your life and your golf game for that matter and what some may perceive as a difference between how you feel about it?

PATRICK REED: Well, I definitely feel like everyone who has actually got to know me compared to what they read is completely different. Really, at the end of the day I can't control really what's been written, I can only control what I do and how my interactions are

with people, with fans, with people who get to know me and things like that.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the Ryder Cup. Did you watch it? If so, what was that experience like given your success in it before?

PATRICK REED: Honestly, I watched a little bit of it, of course, but really whenever I didn't make the team, of course as a player you're always disappointed because that's what we try to do, we compete to try to make those teams and try to represent your country. Really, the biggest thing at that point was try to make sure I stay healthy and really working with the doctors and my family and everything at home to make sure that we kept on improving health wise to get ready for the season rather than sit there and go the wrong way with health. Just because I was out of the hospital, there's a long road for us to take in order to get the lungs back, being healthy enough to be able to work out, to be able to walk and sustain playing golf and practicing. At that point my mind was more focused on trying to get healthy for everyone else rather than really dwelling on whatever happened Ryder Cup or dwelling on things that happened throughout the year. It was more about trying to get back to 100 percent to be out here playing with these guys.

Q. Did Steve ask you if you were physically ready to play? Was that a part of the conversation?

PATRICK REED: Oh, yeah, for sure. He asked me, asked me how I was doing when I first saw him at East Lake and I kept in touch with him throughout East Lake to let him know how I felt as well as just making sure that he knew that I was good to go.

Q. So you were good to go in your mind? It's not like you bowed out?

PATRICK REED: No, no, I definitely felt like I was definitely healthy enough to play and to help the team. I didn't feel like I would be a hinder or anything like that. I felt like physically I would have been fine, ready to go.

Q. Patrick, quick question, going forward, looking ahead, I know you plan to play in Switzerland. Also I remember after you won the American Express or whatever it was called back in the day in the desert you said you wanted to be an international player. What is your schedule looking like for the rest of this year and is that something that's still part of your objectives and your agenda?

PATRICK REED: For sure, I definitely plan on continuing to be a member on both tours and being a worldwide player. I'm playing next week at Saudi and then after that I'll basically be here in the States throughout the Masters, kind of getting ready for Augusta as well as supporting the PGA TOUR and being out here playing as much as I can.

Really, after Augusta I haven't really sat down and figured out my schedule yet. This year we've kind of done it kind of in quarters rather than sit there and try to plan out the entire year because you never know if what happens with COVID, what happens health wise,

anything like that. You have to have the schedule, allow it to be fluid rather than sit there and most years just have it concrete and locked down.

DOUG MILNE: One question, I may be going out on a limb here, no slight to the other players with families out here, but I always like to ask you about Team Reed, obviously very significant, pivotal to your success out here. Kids are still young so it's not quite the cats in the cradle syndrome yet, but just talk about how significant to you and your game they are, so much so that you are Team Reed.

PATRICK REED: My team's huge, especially family. With the work that my team and family do behind the scenes really allow me to be out here playing. Without the things and sacrifices that Justine has made for us as well as with talking to the little ones all the time and seeing them on FaceTime is unbelievable. Thank God we have FaceTime because it would be brutal for all the guys out here not being able to see their families, not being able to see their kids grow up.

I just feel like with all the hard work that they do that they really don't get recognized for because at the end of the day it's our name on the scoreboard. Without them and without a really sound foundation that you have, you wouldn't be out here. Golf is just as much mental as it is physical out here with having an amazing team and a great family. At the end of the day it would be a lot harder.

DOUG MILNE: Very good. Well, Patrick, best of luck this week and we appreciate your time as always.

PATRICK REED: Thank you.