

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 4, 2022

WEBB SIMPSON



DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Webb Simpson to the interview room here at the Wells Fargo Championship.

Webb, quite frankly, it wouldn't be a Wells Fargo Championship without a Webb Simpson press conference. I think we're still below the Mason Dixon line, so this still kind of qualifies. On the way in you said this your first time here, so why don't we just start with that and just kind of get your thoughts on the course and what you've seen of it so far.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. Well, this is one of the rare places where all players really love this golf course. Typically you'll get answers all over the board when you ask how's the golf course, but everyone I asked who's played here said they loved it. It's tough, it's long and yeah, I've been very impressed. The golf course condition is awesome. Unfortunately, we got some rain. I hope somehow we don't get a ton this weekend, but it looks inevitable. Yeah, this is a really big golf course, a hard golf course, but I've been impressed. Yeah, I'm excited to see how it shakes out.

DOUG MILNE: And just some thoughts on your game. Ten or 11 starts this season, only two missed cuts. Just kind of assess how you're feeling coming into the week.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it's been a bit of a year, I guess couple years with COVID and multiple injuries. I went 10, 11 years with no injuries at all and I hurt my neck back in February, I hurt my neck the year before at the Wells Fargo, so it's been a bit up and down.

I feel like Paul and I, when we get out here we're kind of playing catch-up both in the FedExCup, working on my golf swing. So has not been the year I wanted so far, but that's why I love this sport and this tour, because they've got a lot of golf left.

And I pay attention to guys who win tournaments. Seems like once a month we have a Tour winner who's been on a bad run and so I feel like I always want to be ready. If this is the week I turn it around, I want to be ready and believe I can compete on Sunday.

Q. Webb, of course you've had the injuries and now you have a big stretch of golf coming up this summer with three majors in the next 10 weeks. Given that you hadn't been hurt before and now you have, are you looking at changing your schedule and playing less often or are you fully healthy and full go?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I'm fully healthy. You know, the MRI showed pretty good -- a pretty good sized herniation between C-5 and C-6, but they also thought with the proper kind of therapy that I've been doing the last three months -- I'm getting kind of tired of it but it's

working, so I'll keep doing it -- they think I can play the rest of my career without hurting my neck again, but I've got to take really good care of it.

So I'm playing catch-up. In the sense of my contracts, I've got to play a certain amount of events. I'm behind the eight ball in the FedExCup. So I'm feeling this push to want to play as much as I can, but also got to remember my best golf typically comes when I've had plenty of rest as well. So I'm walking that fine line of I have to play to improve my FedEx number, but I don't want to burn myself out come right before the Playoffs.

Q. And is it more time you have to spend getting ready for the round now?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. Before it would take me 20 minutes in the gym and now I told Paul this morning on the range, it's about triple. It's an hour before every day, my traction therapy, loosening it up. I might not need to do an hour's worth, but it's working and it's kept me injury free for the last couple of months I guess, I guess it's been about a month and a half, so I'm just going to keep doing it to be safe.

Q. Webb, I wonder, it's been a bit since you won your major, but did you notice in the weeks and years after that a difference in the questions that you were asked, that you had a stature as a major winner that you might be asked more about the sport more broadly than just your game itself?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think so. Tiger, Jack, they've put so much emphasis on majors and the importance of them, and obviously you guys put a lot of emphasis on them as they should have emphasis on them.

Yeah, I think I remember Martin Kaymer won Whistling Straits and I remember he said he got kind of in a bad rut of golf after because he felt like he had to be this different person, he's a major champion now. And this was after I had kind of realized that and he was getting kind of back to Martin Kaymer matter golf.

I took that to heart. I didn't want to change who I was, I didn't want to change the golfer I was. I happened to win a tournament against the same guys, it's still 72 holes. I just kind of told myself that. Yeah, there was maybe more questions around the game of golf for me after that, but I think that's just part of it.

Q. Rory is a guy that gets asked those questions a lot. I wonder from the outside how do you see him process those? He kind of seems like a spokesman for the sport at times.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, he's proven himself on the golf course, I think he's proven himself off the golf course. He's a leader I think for us in a lot of ways. Very articulate. And he's been a global player for a long time, so I think his opinions matter. Him being on the board now, I think he brings a lot to the table. He's certainly a guy who I think has been fun to listen to because he's not just going to give you the right answers, he's going to give you

what he thinks. That's really good I think for a leader for us players to have that.

Q. Webb, you mentioned you and other players, how much they've enjoyed this course. With that in mind, kind of what's the appetite among the players to come back to the D.C. area to play on a regular basis, especially because it hadn't been the case for decades until Tiger's tournament left?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I have a lot of good memories here. My first major was at Congressional in 2011. It's a great area. We're used to being here in July when it's about 100 degrees. I'm sure we'll be missing that temperature come Saturday.

Yeah, it's a great area, there's so much to do, so much history obviously. You know, I miss Tiger's tournament being in D.C. I hope we get another event in this area every year. I think we will. It's nice to be back.

Q. Webb, we've seen some wild finishes on the PGA Tour. Just wondering what's the wildest last 60 minutes or so of a golf tournament that you've been involved in where everything's kind of flip flopped around in the last hour or so?

WEBB SIMPSON: What comes to mind is the Phoenix Open. I hit in the water on 15. I'm already one back and Tony hits it down the middle. At that point I'm thinking I'm probably out of it, but I kind of hung in there and I happened to birdie 17, 18. You know, personally, that's probably the biggest flip. It's the only time I've ever gone from thinking tournament's probably over to me winning. I remember thinking on the 18th green like, wow, I can't believe that just happened. And Tony's a good friend, he's a world-class player and I happened to be able to birdie two holes coming in.

Yeah, it's a funny sport and I think that's a good reminder for me and any player, like you can't really be done until it's really done because anything can happen. Guys will bogey the last hole, double the last hole. Especially like my home club, Quail Hollow, is one of the hardest finishes on Tour. I think if you're four back with three to go, you're still in it. Yeah, that's the one that comes to mind.

Q. We had a few guys come forward publicly now about their commitment to filing a release for the LIV Golf, the first event. As we move closer to the events in the U.S., as somebody's who's on the PAC, A, what do you expect would happen should there be players who apply for releases for those North American events, and B, where does this ultimately lead to?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, great question. I think I'm basing what I know off what the Tour has said up to this point. I know they're looking at the situation from all angles and I know their stance going back to Wells Fargo last year was the penalty was suspension. I don't think they defined how long, I don't know if they know that yet.

But I understand they've got to protect their product, their tour, their players. And I know it's

tricky for everyone. Some guys see this as an opportunity to play in a different environment, but I'm committed to the PGA Tour and I'm not really wrapped up in it, I'm not really worried about it. I've got enough to worry about being, I think I'm 131 on the FedExCup. I've got a lot of work to do.

So yeah, I'm paying attention. Obviously I'm in the know as much as the other PAC members, but yeah, it's a tough situation.

Q. Not to put a crystal ball in your hand, but do you think there would be suspensions issued?

WEBB SIMPSON: For the first event or for --

Q. Probably more so the U.S.-based ones.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I think it's hard because RBC is a sponsor of mine. I've been with them I think four years now. They've been very, very loyal to the PGA Tour. They've given us a lot of opportunity between RBC Heritage and RBC Canadian Open. They have a great event at a great golf course this year, St. George's. It's a 45-minute flight to the U.S. Open. So I think I'm a little biased because I love their partnership both with me and the PGA Tour.

So I do think if guys with PGA Tour cards go play in London when there's an opportunity to play for whatever it is, \$8 million, and RBC, I think that's -- I don't think it looks great for someone who maybe has played their entire career on the PGA TOUR, but it's going to happen. This has all been in theory for the last bunch of years. We're a few weeks away from guys are going to do it, we'll see how it all shakes out.

Q. Webb, I asked you about the difference in commutes on the way in here, five minutes you said at Quail Hollow versus 20 this week. What's it like not being at Quail Hollow this week and is it that much of a disadvantage, that extra 15 minutes?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it was 20 minutes this morning versus two. But it's funny, Quail's my home club, but in the tournament it plays a lot different than most of the year. People have often thought like I should always be one of the favorites there because it's my home club, and I know it a little bit better than other guys, but I'm hitting it in spots in the tournament that I never hit it all year round. So I feel like I'm learning Quail Hollow every year like the other guys are.

It's got a lot of the same feels as being in Charlotte. I did notice on the first and 10th tees they have the same tees as Quail, so maybe they borrowed like thousands of tees from the Quail shop. No, it's good to be here. I've missed it being at Quail this year, it's always nice to see everybody getting ready, but this will be a good test for us.

DOUG MILNE: Webb, we appreciate your time and have a great week.