

WILL ZALATORIS

HALEY PETERSON: First start at the tournament as a Wake Forest alum. What's it like to be back in the area?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, it's great hearing all the Go Deacs, seeing Coach. I had dinner last night with Coach Dan Walters and obviously kind of a home game. I joke that I have essentially four home events on Tour between Pebble, the Nelson, Colonial and here, so this is a lot of fun. I think first time I played here was 2010 in the FootJoy Invitational, so a lot of good memories here.

HALEY PETERSON: And coming up on entering your first set of Playoffs. How's your game feeling? What are you looking to focus on for this week?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, it feels good. It was nice to kind of put it all together last week. I was just a hair off, didn't really score that well Thursday through Saturday. I hit one bad tee shot or hit a bad chip or something like that and it was nice to kind of put it all together on Sunday. Everything feels really good, so looking forward to obviously this pretty fun stretch of golf coming up.

Q. Will, is there something that you have defined as holding you back to get that first win or is it something that you realize just has to come?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I think it's something that just has to come. The part to me that kind of stands out is that I haven't really lost a tournament, I've kind of been very close and, if anything, it's been Thursday through Saturday, not really Sunday. So I think what I've been kind of joking that I'd pay a lot of money for about an inch and a half over the last year. I think we need to keep doing what we're doing. I'm putting up some nice rounds, just have to keep staying patient.

I think where I need to kind of keep the perspective is I got asked a lot at The Open Championship, hey, what would finishing second at The Open feel like to have the career grand slam of runner-ups and I said I haven't even played 10 majors yet, we're talking about me finishing second in all of them. So we kind of need to just stay patient and keep doing what we're doing.

Q. Along those lines, this course, obviously you've got to make a lot of birdies. Do you think that this is your week or do you not think ahead and just go hole by hole?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I just kind of take it hole by hole. I love this place, I know it really well. Quite frankly, I don't even really need a yardage book around this place, I know it that

well. It's a place that I'm very comfortable with. Like I said, I played here for practically half my life, so I love being here. Obviously it's a great environment for me, especially being right down the street from Wake Forest and I'm looking forward to a pretty good week.

I had a couple nice rounds last year and just kind of fell apart on the back nine on Sunday, but this year I'm pretty pleased with the stretch of golf that I played, especially over the last probably three months.

Q. Along the lines of this is really your second full season, what maybe have you learned maybe about obviously pro golf on the PGA Tour?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I think it's learning how to kind of manage the Monday through Wednesday a little bit better. It's easy when we've been as close as we've been over the last year and a half to kind of force things and over-practice, and I think this year I've done a pretty good job of just trying to get some rest on Monday, kind of reassess how the week went on Tuesday and get back to work on Wednesday. So making sure -- I'm going to play five in a row to end this year, or I guess this season, so making sure that I'm mentally and physically fresh is huge. I played way too much last year and was grinding way too hard Monday through Wednesday and put myself into an injury. I think that's kind of been the biggest learning lesson this year.

I think the level of comfort, too. The runs that I've had in majors, I've kind of gone from the Masters was extremely special. It was kind of the start, if you will, of me being one of the top guys out here to now feeling like I belong and I can win on any given week.

It's going to happen. It's going to happen soon. I know we've been working pretty hard, but we've learned a lot, especially with kind of the blueprint of my game, habits I get into when I play a lot of golf and how to fix them because it's -- I try to take extreme ownership of my game when I'm out there and when I start seeing things, I know how to fix them now, and that just comes with experience.

The other part, too, I guess, it's my 54th event probably on Tour, so I don't think I've played a single tournament more than three times. This is, like I said, having a level of comfort around this place that I know that well obviously helps, too.

Q. Do you and Cam have any contests about who wins first? Has that been talked about?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, you know, it's fun because we've actually played a lot together this year. I'd love for him and I to be -- we're both obviously very hopeful to play on the Presidents Cup team together and partner up. I'm rooting for him like crazy. I mean, I was screaming like it was me making the putt on 18 when he made that eagle on 18 at St. Andrews. It's been fun to watch.

We've been pushing each other to play better basically for really the last decade, so it's been

fun going through the ranks from junior golf, amateur golf, college golf and now professional golf. He's a great friend and it was fun last week playing with him and Davis Love Thursday, Friday. When Cam's on, it's clinical, so it's pretty fun to kind of be with someone that you've gone through all the ranks with.

Q. Is it reminiscent a little bit with Bill and Webb? They used to kind of compete against each other out here a few years ago. Obviously Webb's still competing pretty well, but do you see that kind of similarity with you guys coming out of Wake?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, definitely. The part that's so great about Wake, the alumni that have gone there, it's such a great fraternity. Some of my favorite parts of Wake have really come almost after I left because we do our pro-am every other year and we do a dinner and it's Curtis Strange, Lanny Wadkins, Jay Haas, Jerry Haas, Webb, Bill, Scott Hoch, Gary Hallberg. I mean, all these guys that have -- Billy Andrade is another one. The list goes on and on. It's really three, four, five guys a decade basically.

I remember when I was -- went to my first dinner with all those guys, I remember Coach Haas saying, hey, you're quiet tonight, and I told him, I don't need to talk, I need to listen. These are guys that have through the ranks of listening to major champions tell stories, talking about their college days and running through majors, Ryder Cups, President Cups, so it's a pretty cool fraternity to be a part of.

Q. You said you've adjusted how you approach Monday through Wednesday. Is there something similar you have to do Thursday and Friday to get off to a little bit better start?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, you know, I think part of it, part of it goes back to not playing as much -- not as many of these courses as I have before and now just being -- knowing them, knowing how certain putts break, being more comfortable on tee shots, taking maybe a little bit more aggressive lines. It's just being able to come to places like this where I've played so much is great because it's an event that I played -- or a course that I played since I was 13 years old. I think that's probably the biggest factor.

I would definitely like to be a little bit better on Thursdays. If you look traditionally over my career so far, when I've had really good Thursdays and Fridays, I've always contended. So I just need to be a little bit better coming out of the gates because I've had traditionally very good weekends. And part of that in my opinion is just knowing the golf course and knowing the conditions and getting a little bit more comfortable with where I'm at. Like I said, it's a big advantage for me this week considering I've played here probably, I don't know, 50, 75 times.

HALEY PETERSON: Unless there are any others, we will go ahead and conclude. Will, as always, thank you for taking the time and we wish you the best of luck this week.