

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**November 29, 2022**



**PAWAN MUNJAL**  
**TIGER WOODS**

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**JACK RYAN:** We'd like to welcome tournament host Tiger Woods and Hero MotoCorp CEO and chairman Dr. Pawan Munjal here to the interview room here at the Hero World Challenge.

Tiger, I'll start with you. Welcome back to Albany, Bahamas. So what are you most looking forward to this week?

**TIGER WOODS:** I'm looking forward to watching these guys play. The golf course is in amazing shape. I went out last night and took a look at it, and the golf course is running like it should. I think they'll probably get the greens a little bit faster come tournament days, but other than that, (indiscernible) to deal with this on the golf course.

So I mean, guys can't really -- you're going to see some low scores here. You can't really hang around making too many pars, you're going to get left behind. So this can be a nice birdie-fest and should be exciting for all the viewers.

**JACK RYAN:** And this was the first PGA TOUR-sanctioned event to benefit TGR Foundation. Over the years, what has this relationship with the tournament meant to the foundation?

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, we started this tournament back in, what, the 1999-2000 changing of the years and it's been our flagship event. It's been incredible to have the venues we've been to play in, the partners we've had over the years and now with Hero and then what Pawan has done for the event and elevating this event to what it is now, it's been obviously beneficial for our foundation. We were able to do more in our STEM programs because of it and we were able to help more kids around the country because of it.

**JACK RYAN:** And for Dr. Munjal, Hero MotoCorp is renowned for its association with global sports organizations. Speaking of the relationship with the tournament, what has the relationship meant for Hero?

**PAWAN MUNJAL:** It's been a wonderful relationship since the year 2014 when we started out in Orlando and then, of course, moved to Albany. The brand really has had an absolutely wonderful relationship with TGR and Tiger. Not just the brand, but the kind of work, excellent work that the foundation, TGR, is doing, we believe in that. And we also back home in India, with Hero WeCare, we do very similar work over there and the brand really has benefited from the association.



**Q. Tiger, first of all, just how are you feeling and then what went into the decision to withdraw this week?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, it was a tough decision just because I want to play. I like playing, I like competing, but unfortunately, I can hit the golf ball and hit whatever shot you want, I just can't walk. And so I've had a few setbacks during the year that I still was able to somehow play through, but this one I just can't. I just -- only time can heal this one and stay off my feet and get a lot of treatment done.

**Q. And was it a surprise to you going into this week that you weren't able to play, or, you know, when did you make this decision?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, as I was ramping up and had to walk more, the worse it got. So when you get plantar fasciitis, that's the -- the worst thing you can do is walk, and I was walking more and more and more, trying to get my legs ready for this event, and I just kept making it worse. So had to shut it down and unfortunately, be the host of the event and Ranger Rick out here. So I can do that.

**Q. Kind of what I was going to ask, but following on the health theme, Rory had some comments about COVID at St. Andrews, and I was just curious your recollection of that, if you know what I'm talking about. Were you actually ever tested?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, I got tested. I was always negative. I -- was I feeling under the weather, yes, wasn't feeling great the whole week, but I never got a positive test.

**Q. Okay. And then kind of in a broader sense, Tiger, if you can go back to a year ago sitting at this table, what's transpired since then? Your own health, your play, the Saudi league, the meeting, the reshaping of the PGA TOUR. If you were to go back a year ago and look into the future, what of those kind of surprises you the most or what didn't you see coming?**

**TIGER WOODS:** For -- personally for me, I was hoping to maybe play the British Open, ended up playing three majors, which is not too bad all things considered. I wasn't expecting to have a few more procedures because of playing, but that's just the way it goes.

As far as the golf ecosystem, I don't think any of us would have foreseen it being as complicated as it is and convoluted as it has become and the animosity from both sides. I don't think we would've seen that a year ago.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

**TIGER WOODS:** I see that there's an opportunity out there if both organizations put a stay on their litigation. But that's the problem, they've got to put a stay on it. And whether or not they do that or not, there's no willingness to negotiate if you have a litigation against you.

So if they both have a stay and then have a break and then they can meet and figure something out, then maybe there is something to be had.

But I think Greg has to go, first of all, and then obviously litigation against us and then our countersuit against them, those would then have to be at a stay as well. So then we can talk, we can all talk freely.

**Q. Tiger, along those same lines, the meeting in Delaware back in August that you and Rory went to, why do you think it was important for you to be in that meeting and what was your message to the other players?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, the message is that we can't compete dollar for dollar with the PIF, just we physically can't do that. But what we can do is talk about better opportunities for younger players getting onto the Tour, what it means to play the Tour, how important it is, how important it is to have a legacy, be able to win major championships.

As of right now, we don't know where the major championships stand on this. So if you're a Tour player, you already know that you're in the major championships, you're in the top 50, so, okay, that's a guaranteed, but the other players don't. They're taking a chance of never ever, ever getting a chance to play in major championships.

And so where does your legacy stand there? You know, I went on the tour and made a lot of money, but I never got to win any tournaments that are of value that would put me in the Hall of Fame and things of that nature.

So yes, there was a lot of talk of that and ways in which we can increase purses, reward players that are more visible than others that drive the Tour, reward them, and also give better access to the Tour at different ages and in different ways than we ever have in the past.

So it was a long meeting, a lot of different options were put about and we all had to think about it, sit back. Then we've had many subsequent meetings, FaceTime meetings trying to figure it out and make it better and also worked with the Tour to try and make it better as well.

**Q. Tiger, could you have played this week with a golf cart?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Say again?

**Q. Could you have played this week with a golf cart?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah.

**Q. But you won't? You won't play this week, but you would at the Father-Son?**



**TIGER WOODS:** I can't hear you.

**JACK RYAN:** He's saying you didn't want to play this week with a golf cart but you can at the Father-Son.

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, so the Father-Son is a sanctioned senior event, so they can all use golf carts.

**Q. Okay. And also, how have you justified this event getting Official World Golf Ranking points and would you be willing to relinquish that in the future?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Now can you -- I...

**JACK RYAN:** Okay. The question was, would you be willing to relinquish the World Ranking points in the future and, in Adam's words, how do you justify this event getting World Ranking points?

**TIGER WOODS:** Oh, yeah, we had World Ranking points with this event with Sun City as well. We had increased field sizes and the World Golf body said that you basically had to have the tournament running for -- I think it's three years and we'd already had it running for like 15 years, both events. And so both events were elevated to World Ranking points.

**Q. Have your doctors told you that the plantar fasciitis is related to the other injuries in the foot?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yes, it is.

**Q. And so does that impact your long-term prognosis for returning to competitive golf, playing, you know, 72 holes and walking over and over again?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, I can hit golf balls. It's the walking that just hurts. So that's just a -- something that -- when you've got plantar fasciitis, the only thing you can do is rest and try and stretch that out as best as possible, but it's rest. How do you rest when you're hosting a tournament? You know, it's hard.

So this will be a tough week. The Father-Son will be a very easy week, Charlie will just hit all the shots and I'll just get the putts out of the hole, so pretty easy there. But other than that, in the match we're playing in, we're flying in carts.

**Q. And I wanted to ask you about the Player Impact Program. You won it again this year, the Tour announced that last week. I think you've played nine competitive rounds over the last two years and won it both times. This program, when you see it come to fruition now, do you wish it was there when you were younger? Do you understand why it has to happen now? What are your kind of thoughts on the Player Impact Program?**



**TIGER WOODS:** No, it -- everything evolves. I mean, look at the FedEx iterations we've had. One of the years Vijay didn't even have to tee it up. He didn't even have to show up for the last tournament, our season-ending event, and he would've won the FedExCup.

So it -- we've had different iterations of the FedExCup and there's no difference with the PIP. I'm sure we'll have different iterations of that going forward as well. There is no perfect system. You want people who drive the Tour who are most visible, and the people that watch golf because of these certain players be rewarded for it. We haven't found the perfect model for that yet and hopefully we do sometime soon. We're still working on it.

**Q. Tiger, two quick things. First of all, you know, there is talk about the OWGR as it relates to LIV Golf and is it becoming irrelevant. They don't meet a lot of the criteria that have been set forward. Do you have an opinion about what you see for the OWGR going forward and the LIV argument?**

**TIGER WOODS:** What do I see going forward with --

**Q. With the OWGR. Is it relevant? Is it --**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, OWGR, it's a flawed system. That's something we all here recognize. The field at Dubai got less points than Sea Island and more of the top players were there in Dubai, so obviously there's a flawed system.

How do you fix it? You know, those are meetings we're going to have to have. We're going to have to have it with World Golf committee and as well as our -- the main tours that are involved in it somehow come up with a better system than is in place now.

I remember in my career when I had a big lead in my career, I didn't have to play a single tournament the next year and I still would be ranked No. 1. We changed that system then. So it has been changed in the past and I'm sure this will be changed hopefully soon.

**Q. Secondly, what is your goal for next year as far as how much you want to play and if you can play the schedule you want to, what does that look like and what is the goal? I'm assume you're not going just to show up.**

**TIGER WOODS:** The goal is to play just the major championships and maybe one or two more. That's it. I mean, that's -- physically that's all I can do. I told you that, guys, you know, the beginning of this year, too. I mean, that's -- I don't have much left in this leg, so gear up for the biggest ones and hopefully, you know, lightning catches in a bottle and I'm up there in contention with a chance to win and hopefully I remember how to do that. But again, giving myself a chance to get out there again.

I didn't -- as I said, I didn't expect to play three majors this year. We were hoping for just the British Open, but I was able to get two more in there, so that was a big positive.



**Q. Tiger, just linked to -- straight in front of you. Just linked to that point, I mean, you spoke at St. Andrews when we last saw you about the struggle to play in the majors this year, and we witnessed that a lot of the time. You must have worked incredibly hard to get to the point where you could almost play here. I know you can't play. Is there never a part of you that thinks, why keep going, why keep trying this, I've got nothing else to prove?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, I love competing. You know, I love the sport. I've been playing it for most -- well, basically all my life. And you know, actually, I've been a pro for more than half my life. So if you look at it in those terms, you know, I've been a part of this sport and I've loved it. It's just unfortunate I'm not able to do the things that I feel mentally I can do, the body just kind of rejects it.

When I was at home, I was shooting 4, 5, 6, 7 under par like it was nothing, but I was in a cart. Now you add in walking and that goes away. So I need to get to where I -- that point is where I can actually walk around and play that way, like all of you guys can. I just, I'm not able to do that right now.

**Q. Hey, Tiger, how are you?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah.

**Q. Just -- I have two questions unrelated, one of which is, years ago when Tim Finchem was the commissioner, if I'm not mistaken, you were trying to make some inroads, you know, for the top players who were drawing most of the eyeballs to the game to be compensated more, you know, because they were using your -- obviously, your likeness and image on, you know, every brochure, et cetera, back of any brochures. What changed for you with that? Because obviously that's part of the reason the group that went to LIV, like Phil, tried to shake the tree a little bit. I'm just kind of curious where that changed for you and why that wasn't a --**

**TIGER WOODS:** I think in order to compete -- I mean, it's always good to have competition in the sport. And obviously LIV has been -- has changed the ecosystem, you know, of our game.

I remember -- this is originally that the Akron event, the Bridgestone tournament was supposed to be the payment of players for playing on the teams. You're not going to get payment for being on the Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup team, but here's your payment for playing in Bridgestone. Obviously, that changed quickly.

But yes, there's been some ebb and flow, some give and take from players and the commissioners and their staff. I think this year more so than any other time that we've had the openness to be able to talk to our commissioner and say these are things that we want to get better on the Tour and here's a list of them, and priority, too.

Jay sat through a lot of these meetings, a lot of the conference calls, and with Rory and I talking to him too as well. I think we made some great changes, but how do we also replenish players that have left. That's obviously giving more opportunities for players that are coming into the game that are younger, collegiate or amateur, more access to it The game has gotten younger, period. I mean, guys are winning majors in their mid to early 20s. But also, we want to get younger kids coming in here and playing the game of golf and experiencing the Tour and experiencing what it's like to play in major championships and hopefully win them.

**Q. And just as a follow there, part of those changes you talked about, there's a lot more money coming in at tournaments from the Tour that weren't, you know, available, so to speak, before LIV came around. A guy, you know, like Mickelson, for example, obviously is the face of that, and he took a lot of criticism and he's taken most of the bullets for that, so to speak, and he was criticized heavily by players on Tour for it who now will be making a lot more money at tournaments because of him shaking that tree. Do you feel like to some degree they owe an apology for that or --**

**TIGER WOODS:** No, absolutely not, no. We took out an enormous loan during the pandemic in which that, if we had another year of the pandemic, our Tour would only be sustained for another year So we took out an enormous loan. It worked, it paid off in our benefit, hence we were able to use that money to make the increases that we've made.

**Q. Tiger, you've had a few months to reflect on making it to St. Andrews. When you look back now, what did that week mean to you and has it made you more determined maybe to go about one more time?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, I don't know. To be honest with you, I don't know if I'll be able to make it back one more time as a player in the tournament. You know, maybe I might -- I probably will go back and play it at some point with Charlie and have a great time, but I think it's, what, eight years away, I believe? That's a -- I don't know what this leg is going to look like in eight years. Hopefully it's still attached, but we'll see.

And I just don't want to go back and just say farewell, I want to win the damn thing. I mean, that's what I thought I could do this year. I was doing everything right and then all of a sudden it just -- my leg just wasn't working properly. So I had to miss the cut badly.

**Q. Hi, Tiger. In regards to the dynamics between the PGA TOUR and the -- and LIV Golf, what do you hope personally the endgame will be?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Between our two tours?

**Q. Correct.**

**TIGER WOODS:** We don't know. No one knows. Right now it's -- there's a lot of animosity,



especially from their leadership. And they want to be a validated tour with World Ranking points and they're buying up tours around the world and I don't know -- I don't know what their endgame is. It might be just being an official member of the golf ecosystem and being recognized with World Ranking points. I think that's what their intended goal is. You know, they've spent probably close to \$2 billion this year. Who's to say they can't spend \$4 or \$5 billion next year? You know, we just don't know. It's an endless pit of money.

But that doesn't necessarily create legacies either. You want to compare yourself to Hogan, you want to compare yourself to Snead, you want to compare yourself to Nicklaus, you can't do that over there, but you can on this tour.

**Q. Do you think these organizations can co-exist?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Right now as it is, not right now, not with their leadership, not with Greg there and his animosity towards the Tour itself. I don't see that happening.

As Rory said and I said it as well, I think Greg's got to leave and then we can eventually, hopefully, have a stay between the two lawsuits and figure something out.

But why would you change anything if you've got a lawsuit against you? They sued us first.

**Q. Tiger, two separate things. Had you seen improvement since St. Andrews in your leg progressing --**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yes.

**Q. -- over the last couple of months before this latest setback? And how much -- how much does this mean you've regressed?**

**TIGER WOODS:** It's going to take probably, you know, a month or two of rest. But also, it was the ramping-up process that did it. It's a balancing act, right? How hard do you push it to make progress while not pushing it too hard to go off the edge and you set yourself back two, three days. That's been the balancing act the whole year. And trying to do that, get ready for this event, I did a lot of beach walks trying to simulate the sand out here and my foot just did not like that very much.

**Q. And secondly, you know, you just referenced it with the litigation and until that's gone there's really nothing that can happen talking-wise with LIV, but if that did happen, you must have an idea of something that you think where they could work together, if you're even willing to talk. What would that be? How could these two entities co-exist?**

**TIGER WOODS:** As I said, I think it has to start with leadership on their side. Understanding that what is happening right now is not in the best -- it's not in the best fit or future for the whole game of golf. Now, what is the best way for our game to grow? It's not



this way. But granted, you need to have the two bodies come together. If one side has so much animosity, someone trying to destroy our tour, then how do you work with that?

**Q. Early on when you were talking about your year in golf, you mentioned a couple of procedures that you had this year. I'm not sure I was aware of those. What procedures do you have?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I had a couple surgeries, yes.

**Q. Can you elaborate?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Nope.

**Q. Can you say when?**

**TIGER WOODS:** In the past.

**Q. In the past.**

**TIGER WOODS:** This year.

**Q. Thank you, Bones.**

**TIGER WOODS:** You're welcome.

**Q. May sound odd, but what was the best shot you hit this year? It was a short menu, but surely there was something.**

**TIGER WOODS:** Officially best shot I hit all year? It's hard to say, I only played like three rounds. I know that the worst break I got this year, I hit a nice 4-iron right down the middle of the fairway on 1 at St. Andrews and it was in a divot, that was probably the worst break, yeah. We work backwards from there.

**Q. Tiger, good to see you again, of course, and thanks for your time this morning. You talked about Rory. Rory seems to be the unofficial sort of spokesperson for the PGA TOUR. I know you two guys get on pretty well. How much do you sort of admire him for the stance he's taken and particularly his comments in Dubai about my compatriot who should take the stage left, how do you sort of admire Rory for what he's saying about what's going on and things like that?**

**TIGER WOODS:** What Rory has said and done are what leaders do. Rory is a true leader out here on Tour. The fact that he's actually able to get the things he said out in the public eye, be so clear minded with it and so eloquent with it, meanwhile go out there and win golf tournaments on top of that, people have no idea how hard that is to do, to be able to separate those two things.



But he's been fantastic. He's a great leader in our calls we make and he's a great leader with all the players out here. Everyone respects him and they respect him because not just his ball-striking, his driving, but the person he is.

**Q. Quickly, with probably a month to go before the end of this year, in a sentence, how would you surmise what's taken place off the course this year with men's professional golf?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I'm sorry?

**Q. How would you surmise what's been taking place with men's professional golf this year, the sort of controversy, just the whole sort of thing that's gone on?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Well, I think this whole year, it's a year we didn't expect to have happen for, as I said, the animosity, the angst and then the players leaving and then the way they showed their disregard or disrespect to the Tour that helped them get to that point. I certainly, a lot of things I certainly don't like about it and there's certain players that are very up front with it and have declared it and I respect them for that.

But there's also a flip side to that, too, that I thought was a little bit on the tasteless side.

**Q. Tiger, you have usually (indiscernible) with your foundation and what you did with golf in the past. Do you think or you would be happy to add one to this with making a role of peacemaker, what would happen right now?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Yeah, I don't know whether it's going to be me, Rory or the Tour or other players being -- I wouldn't necessarily say a peacemaker, but I just think that there's a window, I think, of opportunity for us from both tours to figure this out shortly. But I think that window's closing just because the majors are coming up now and they're going to have their own criteria for the majors.

But if they can do it quickly before that, but again, that goes back to LIV and their lawsuit. They're suing us first and we countersued them, so they have to back off the table, they will back off the table and then we'll have a place to talk. But their leadership has to change as well. If that doesn't, then I think it's going to continue to go down the path that it's going right now.

**Q. Tiger, there was a time when most players would come and ask you about golf swing and other stuff. Is it -- do you find there's a difference? Because like I was talking to Arjun and he was telling me that he has spoken to you a lot about his golf swing because of his back injury. Have you found the players are now coming to you like a doctor Tiger Woods? Can you tell us if we have this injury, what can we do with our swing? Do you find that change?**

**TIGER WOODS:** It's very respectful. It is neat, yes. I've had a few players that have come over to the house and have wanted to work on some stuff in the backyard with me, and they have and they've made some positive strides, which I'm excited about, I helped them. It's nice to be able to be on that seat, but I would much rather be competing against them.

**Q. There are 206 bones in the body. Do you know each one of them by now?**

**TIGER WOODS:** I know each of the one that hurts, OK?

**Q. Two really, really quick questions, Tiger. In the heyday, 2001, 2002, were you ever approached about starting your own tour?**

**TIGER WOODS:** No, never.

**Q. And the second question is, is there ever a scenario in which you would take a golf cart during competition?**

**TIGER WOODS:** Take golf for what?

**Q. Take a golf cart on the PGA TOUR.**

**TIGER WOODS:** On the PGA TOUR, no. On the sanctioned events where it's allowed, yes, which is the Champions Tour, PNC, things of that nature.

My teammate was Casey Martin, OK, and what he did with the ADA, I voted against it. I think golf [sic] is an integral part of the game at our level and I will never take a golf cart until it's sanctioned. It's sanctioned on the Champions Tour and the PNC is part of that. As far as a regular event, no, I would never do that.

**JACK RYAN:** That's all the time we have. Thank you very much for your time, Tiger, and Dr. Munjal.