

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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MAX HOMA



JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome two-time Wells Fargo Championship winner Max Homa into the interview room.

Max, welcome back. If we can get some comments on being back here at Quail Hollow where you won the first of your two titles at this event.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's cool, this place has a lot of great memories for me. Even though we didn't win here last year, it's cool that we were here for the Presidents Cup, so also some great memories.

I love this golf course, the tournament is run really well, everything about this place is first class. I love coming to Charlotte. Charlotte's probably my favorite city we go to outside of the California ones. The golf course is tremendous and it's in really good shape, so I love coming here. I think it's a treat for all of us to get to come and -- they've had majors here, obviously Presidents Cup last year and then the Wells Fargo, just feels like I'm glad it got elevated because it feels like an elevated event. Now to have that distinguished honor, if you want to say that, it just feels right. It's cool being here.

JOHN BUSH: Not only looking for your third win at this event, but also your third win of the season. Just talk a little bit about the state of your game coming into the week.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's good. I didn't play great at Augusta, swing was feeling pretty bad. Then carried that nicely into Hilton Head and played bad. Played really well in New Orleans, swung it much better, went home and kind of continued that trend.

You know, putts will fall, law of averages. My game feels really good. Coming to a place that I have good memories and feel the course sets up nicely for me. It feels like I'll be able to kind of transfer what I've been doing the last couple weeks at home and in a team event to a big individual golf tournament.

JOHN BUSH: And I was going to ask, was getting out of the funk just a little bit, was the team event a good event for you to do that and maybe just change gears just a little bit?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it was great. I know we didn't score great, but we played well. Both of us had our golf balls were afraid of the dark for a couple days. But it was so much fun, it was a nice way to feel a bit looser and feel more comfortable with kind of what I was working on.

Yeah, it's just that event is awesome just because it's obviously highly competitive, but it's so



unique. Getting to walk around with one of my friends and you feel a different kind of pressure, you don't want to let them down, especially alternate shot day. I was thinking about it at Hilton Head when I was swinging so poorly, I was thinking, man, I just don't want Collin to have to hit where I'd be leaving it if I was swinging it like this. So it was nice and motivating to get some work in the weekend I missed the cut and feel ready. So it was a nice kind of slump buster in a way to feel like I was having fun again and the grind of everyday professional golf kind of went out the window for a week.

Q. Max, just safe to say this would be a place where you feel like everything can get back on track, just good memories with the Presidents Cup and with your previous wins?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, the golf course suits me really well. I know the place quite well obviously getting to play here every year, and missing last year but still getting to play a ton of rounds. I'm just comfortable on this course. I feel like I know the greens well and there's no surprises out here.

Big golf course that seems to suit -- just suit what makes me comfortable off the tee. Yeah, like I said, I think anybody you go into a golf tournament and you're not swinging well, you could go to your favorite place in the world and you're going to feel uncomfortable. It helps that I feel quite good about where my swing's at, too, but pair that with a golf course I can walk around knowing I've done well at makes things a lot easier.

Q. You've spoken about how important playing in like the Presidents Cup was for you. Just getting back on site, did any of those memories from the Presidents Cup kind of come back to you?

MAX HOMA: Oh, yeah. I mean, I played the front nine today and 9 was our 18th hole. It was cool and weird remembering making that putt on Friday to win our match. Just like picture how different it looked, but trying to kind of soak in that memory a little bit standing there.

Yeah, this place has -- I have a lot of really cool memories here and those being so recent, it was fun to kind of just think about some of the places we hit cool shots from and watched Tony hit great shots from, and Billy. That's the cool part about golf, when you get to play a place where you have something like that and you get to relive it in a way in your head on site, those trips down memory lane are fun.

Q. And then just one more, Giannis went viral earlier this week talking about failure and kind of his view on it. I was just wondering if you saw that moment and kind of your take on what he said and if you agree or disagree?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it was an awesome sound bite. I think the interesting part to that is I thought about it a lot, you can easily say that they fail because they did not win the championship. Everyone comes here to win a golf tournament, but I think the point is no one



but yourself decides if you failed.

Like I could -- there's a potential that I could win a golf tournament and feel like I failed if I didn't meet a goal I was looking for mentally or something. I just think the point in sports is it's not up to the fans, it's not up to the media, it's not up to anybody other than myself if I fail. There's days I've had good days and felt like I've failed because my goal was to go out there and be super positive and maybe I wandered off of that. But Kobe Bryant said a very similar thing that Giannis said, that there's no failing in sports as long as you kind of keep pushing and getting better if that is your goal.

I found it quite interesting that someone as great as Giannis said that because it puts things into perspective. It's very difficult to win a championship in anything. He's a tremendous basketball player and to hear him feel kind of similarly looking at it in the macro, he didn't fail to him, I would assume, because he felt like he put in a lot of work that will help them the next year and him personally.

But if he doesn't feel like he failed, then he didn't fail. I think that's the important part for everybody, whatever you're trying to do, so I thought it was great that he said that.

Q. Max, we're halfway through basically the PGA TOUR season and through the elevated events. How has the schedule changed for you? Have you felt a little bit more gassed compared to years past and what does the rest of the schedule kind of look like based on how much you've played so far?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I don't really feel too gassed. It feels like a very --

(Car alarm.)

MAX HOMA: That's great.

It feels like a similar schedule I would have had anyways. I don't typically play Hilton Head, but that didn't change too much. The rest of my year will look pretty similar.

Yeah, it feels -- we play golf, so it's not that -- it's more mentally draining than anything, but I would feel the same. The fact that I know there's a light at the end of the tunnel where we're going to have an offseason this year, I would say that's the only times I feel gassed is probably the back end of the fall. It's not even physically, you're just kind of over playing golf every week. That's kind of the tricky part, which is always funny because people on my home course, that's all they want to do is play golf, but at a point it just starts to get mundane. So the fact that I know we'll have a break for a little bit where we can decide if we're going to play a strenuous schedule or take some time off, I think that helps. Yeah, I mean, I don't think this has been too taxing.

Q. Max, can you kind of compare and contrast how you felt getting your first victory here after what you went through to get to the winner's circle versus winning in the



Presidents Cup and having such an incredible experience here last fall?

MAX HOMA: I think although it feels like more eyeballs, more pressure in a way in that team event, I think it's easier to kind of say -- and I would hope I could -- I wish I could have done this just without the results, I guess, but something I've been working on that would stick out for this answer is like whether I play well this week or not does not determine if I'm a good golfer, and whether I won at Wells Fargo the first time in '19 didn't determine if I was a good golfer, and if I played the Presidents Cup and went 0-5 does not say that I'm a bad golfer.

But yeah, there was a part of that when I won in '19 that I could tell myself yeah, you are a good golfer. That's what felt a lot different. I felt like I walked around the Presidents Cup knowing I qualified for that team for a reason. I wasn't -- you know, I wasn't as worried about proving myself.

That weekend in '19, played with Rory Saturday, Dufner Sunday in the last two groups both days, one day the final one. You just feel like if things go sideways, does this mean I'm just not good enough? You like struggle with that first win kind of nerves. At the Presidents Cup you're just nervous because it's a big moment, but I don't think that you look at it with that looming over your head.

All the young guys out here and guys who probably are looking for their first win, there's just something extra special about when it does happen for you that until you feel that feeling, you -- I questioned, I don't know how old I was, 28, 29 when I finally won, but I just questioned if you ever will do it and if you're good enough to actually get across that finish line.

So once you do it one time, I feel like it eases your mind forever really. You know you can and you've just got to show up and put in the work. Some weeks are going to be great and it's all going to click, but some weeks you're just not going to get it done.

Golf's a fickle game like that. I played incredible this year at Genesis and didn't win. I probably played better that week than I did at the '19 Wells Fargo, but I happened to finish in first. It's like you learn those things as you get some wins under your belt, but that first one's tricky because there's just so much you're kind of wrestling with in your head.

Q. What was it like being one of the favorites this year at a major? What did you learn about that experience?

MAX HOMA: I don't think I learned anything from that. The beauty of just playing all these golf tournaments, non-majors, is you go into -- it's not you're going to the Masters one week as the favorite and the week prior nobody thought you had a chance. I guess you just kind of get used to that a little bit.

I went into the Masters struggling with my golf swing so that was no fun, so I learned how to



grind through a cut really on a big golf course without having it.

As far as the pressure of being a favorite, I mean, that's just something that's -- that's put on from the outside world. On the inside we all know. I think everybody who showed up at Augusta thought if they played great, they could win the golf tournament, so you need to go out and play great. So I didn't really feel like I picked up much but I think a lot of that is because we get kind of practice week in and week out with that kind of like pressure that's I guess asserted onto us.

Q. Max, given that you had so much success here and those good memories walking down memory lane, does that give you an extra boost of confidence coming in this week?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I think just the most confidence I get is just from knowing how I'll feel on certain shots. There's something to be said about waking up in the morning and looking at a wind direction and saying I know what I'm going to hit on every hole. Then getting over some putts and having good history on a lot of them, I think that helps a lot.

The memories are just fun, it makes you kind of be thankful that they happened. The golf course itself, knowing that you made putts on certain holes and you've had success there, you feel comfortable. And being comfortable under the gun, I just think it loosens you up just enough to feel like you're playing offense and that's what I'm looking forward to doing this week.

Yeah, having good history just means that when you're on certain tee boxes, greens, fairways, whatever, you can say, hey, remember that one time I did this? That was great. Why can you not do that again?

Q. Max, similar question, just wanted to know why do you love golf?

MAX HOMA: That's a funny question.

What's funny is I think when I was a kid I truly loved golf. I'm not so sure I love golf anymore, but I love competing and getting better so much, so golf provides the platform for that.

People ask that in a different way a lot, but like golf is a job now. But when I'm home and I think about like last week, like I practiced so much and one of the members at Whisper Rock asked me like on Sunday, he said you need to take a day off. I told him, I was like it's not the golf that I miss, but I want to keep getting better at something and this is the thing I'm the best at, so this is what I'm going to work at.

I love that golf gives me an avenue to be obsessive over something and dedicate myself towards something. I would say now, that.

Back when I was a kid, I loved golf because as it was a way to hang out with my friends and



try to make an eagle or a birdie and then wig out for a few weeks. Now we've done so much in the game that sadly an amazing 7-iron doesn't make me as happy as it used to, which is sad.

But I don't know, I would be obsessed with something else if I didn't have this. And I'm thankful I have this because I have direction, so I do love that about what golf is giving me at the moment.

Q. Just playing off that real quickly, is there anything in golf, whether it's a course or a moment, that still has a sense of romance to you or is it so completely a job now that that doesn't exist anymore?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, there's a lot of -- I could list a million moments of romance. The first one that comes to mind would probably be just walking up 18 here in '19 knowing that we had got the job done, getting to have that walk, but I have a lot. Yeah, it's not that I don't love golf at all, but you know, it's not an unconditional love.

Yeah, golf has brought me so many awesome memories and moments I'm very grateful for, this place especially. There are a lot of romantic moments in this game.

Q. What I was going to ask originally, it intrigued me when you talked about the offense versus defense mindset under the gun. Sounds like it's probably a subtle difference between it, but I would be curious to hear you talk more about that and the difference.

MAX HOMA: For example, I go to Augusta I guess I'll use as an example, or Hilton Head. Now, my game doesn't feel good and I haven't had success, great success on either. I've only played Hilton Head once prior to this year and Augusta I played a few times and never finished better -- I had my best finish this year at 43rd so that says enough.

So you're not feeling good about your golf swing and you're just seeing a lot of where the ball should not go. I feel like when I play courses like this or Riviera, a place I've had a lot of success, I see -- I just see the shot for what it is, it's just a golf shot.

That comfort makes you feel like you are committing to things more and you're trying to do something well instead of trying not to do something poorly. I think it's a subtle difference that all of us go through. When we're on the right side of that, that's typically when you see people hit a lot of great shots. If you go on the range you'll see people hit plenty of good ones, more good ones than bad, but when you're struggling and you know what's kind of in there, it's kind of hard to feel -- like you stand up on a hole and you see trouble around you. When you're swinging well, it just feels like it washes away and you only really see what could go right. So that would be maybe the best way I could explain that one.

Q. Max, your journey to this point has been pretty unique and you've always been very open and honest about what that's been like for you in some of the ups and



downs. I'm wondering what you've learned about the relationship between your golf game and your mental health and how you found some ways off the course to help find success and flex that muscle.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's pretty remarkable, every year I think all of us, maybe not Jon, but everybody seems to have like a lull. Every time I go to my physical, my golf swing, my putting stroke, whatever, as much as those are probably an issue, you're always, as they say, a lot closer to being back to playing great golf physically than you think you are and every time I seem to forget that. It starts kind of between the ears and it's going to be a lot easier if I can flex that muscle, as you said.

So listening to books on tape, I listened to three last week and it just rejogged the memory of hey, I'm going to be X, Y and Z, positive, all the cliché ones. When I'm aware, it seems like, of how I'm going to approach the day with my like happiness meter, that seems to be when I at least free myself up the most to play aggressively or on offense and feel comfy.

I mean, using all these old questions you guys just asked, like love golf more, like those things, but when you're struggling and it's easy to get into like, ah, it feels like a death march and I know I'm not going to hit a good shot here and this, that or whatever, you're already not swinging it great some of those weeks so that's not going to help you. Might be realistic, but it's not going to help you.

Just been trying to keep up with that on a more consistent basis. Reading, thinking, driving and just kind of like instead of going back through a bad week and saying what shots did you hit bad, try to get back in your own head and say, all right, what were you thinking at those times, how did you feel and do you think like that helped at all, do you think that reaction helped at all. Almost always it's no, so at least control what you can control and let the good shots come after that.

Q. Technically everybody out here, it's their job, but is there someone who you look at and go, man, I wish I still loved the game the way this player does?

MAX HOMA: Well, no, because I think people, like Joe always tells me, he's like, Max loves golf. And I don't think he's wrong so it just depends how. But like if I was breaking down -- someone asked me just like in passing "do you love golf," I'd say yes, but in this room I'd like to give you guys a more detailed reason.

Yeah, I love hitting golf balls, I love all of that, I love that because I like getting better. If there's somebody out there, I mean Peter Malnati comes off like he loves golf and life more than anybody I've seen and that's pretty awesome.

But I think everybody or a lot of guys out here, you could look down the range and say, oh, he seems to like love golf. I just don't want to answer for somebody because maybe they feel similarly to how I do. I love so much of this game and I'm obsessed with it, but when I compare it to like loving other things, it's just different.



This game, this game beats you over the head so much, it's an abusive relationship. I give it everything I possibly have and then I have days and weeks where I just feel like it hates me.

It's quite similar to like the very beginning of parenthood when your kid's like a month old and he's just screaming at you and you're just loving it so much and it's not giving you anything back except literally poop. That would be how I would put golf sometimes.

But I wouldn't trade my job for anything in the world, so I feel very thankful. I think that like boyish love I had when I was a kid is different now and I understand it for what it is a bit more.

Yeah, it's the funny part about playing a sport as your job, it's a game, but we unfortunately complicate it so much that we consider it work at times. I think when we play our best is when we look at it as a game a bit. It's a constant, constant battle.

JOHN BUSH: Max, hang in there.

MAX HOMA: Thank you.

JOHN BUSH: Thanks for your time.

MAX HOMA: Thanks.

