

## PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW

October 31, 2023

KEITH MITCHELL



**JACK RYAN:** We would like to welcome Keith Mitchell into the interview room here at the World Wide Technology Championship.

Keith, you just came off playing nine holes this afternoon. Obviously here for the first time at this venue. Just an opening comment on the golf course and your excitement to be here.

**KEITH MITCHELL:** First of all, really excited to be here for the World Wide Technology here in Cabo. Weather looks perfect this week. My first Tiger Woods golf course that I've ever played. There's a couple holes that have a lot of risk-reward. A couple par 5s, the back of the greens are serious trouble, so you've got -- if you have a good number, you can maybe hit it to the back flag and get a chance for eagle, but if not, you've got to play conservative and try to get up and down from the front of the green, so it adds a lot of risk-reward.

**JACK RYAN:** First time the PGA TOUR is playing a golf course designed by Tiger Woods. I know you just had a chance to see him out there. Thoughts on the importance of the Tour coming to a course designed by Tiger, and any grade you're giving him on the back nine so far?

**KEITH MITCHELL:** We all know we can judge him on his golf, the best if not the best ever to play golf. So we're going to see if he's -- his golf course architecture can hold up as well. The first few -- I guess the back nine I played today, there's a lot of options. I know Tiger likes options. It gives you a lot to think about going into greens, whether if you want to use the slope or go straight at the hole, whether you want to play conservative and have an easy up-and-down or try to push it to the back of a green or to a tough flag and try to make birdie. It gives you a lot of options.

If conditions were going to be different this year, maybe if the wind picks up, you might sway one option more than the other but that's what's great about having it. So excited to see how it plays out coming down the stretch with some pressure and some tough pins.

**JACK RYAN:** Coming into the week 68th in the FedExCup standings, I know you obviously finished in the top-5 last year at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and Genesis Invitational and you have a high appreciation for those golf courses and those tournaments. How important is it for you to play well the next few weeks and have an opportunity to play in those tournaments?

**KEITH MITCHELL:** AT&T Pebble Beach is probably one of my favorite events of the year not only because I felt like I've had some success there on the course, but just the week in



general is a lot of fun. A lot of great relationships I've made at that tournament. Having the amateurs and celebrities there really brings a lot of different perspective to our game, which I feel like is a good one that week.

And then Riviera, I hadn't played in a while but obviously had a great run this year. Played a lot better than I anticipated, to say the least, just because I hadn't played that golf course in probably four or five years. It's always been one of my favorites. It really is probably one of the best courses we play all season.

And then really having this week at the World Wide Technology Championship and then the RSM at my home track in a couple weeks, those two are going to be big for me because two good weeks will guarantee my spot in those two tournaments.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

**KEITH MITCHELL:** Playing on the Latinoamerica Tour for a year was probably the best thing that could have happened to me and my game just because there is always an obstacle that week, whether it was a language barrier, different grasses, golf courses you've never seen before, range setup to hotel logistics, like things were not -- coming out of college where you have a team and a coach and everything's kind of done for you, it was completely opposite. You're in foreign countries by yourself on your own.

That really gave me a great perspective as a professional golfer that it is an individual sport and you're on your own. Finding a way to play well no matter your circumstances, good or bad, is something that I learned quickly on the Latinoamerica Tour.

You know, a lot of it is the language barrier as well as the travel. Just traveling on your own long distances, places you've never been and you're unfamiliar with instead of starting out at the top wherever you -- everything's just handed to you as a Tour player in terms of the logistics for the tournament week, I think that was probably the greatest thing I learned playing the Latinoamerica Tour.

And the difference I would say is being able to overcome the unknowns as a professional golfer that come your way. That taught me better than just about -- just experience, like that experience taught me better than any one thing a player could have told me before.

**Q. Next year the PGA TOUR Latinoamerica and PGA TOUR Canada will form the PGA TOUR Americas, the new tour. So having experience in Latinoamerica, I know you didn't get to play in Canada, talk to me about that new tour and the talent pool from those two strong tours coming together into one tour and preparing guys to move up to the Korn Ferry Tour.**

**KEITH MITCHELL:** Like I said, for me it was really impossible to put the value on what that tour gave to me as not only a player, but as a person. I think that playing four-round tournaments with two-day cuts prepares you better for the Korn Ferry Tour and the PGA



TOUR than any other style of golf. And the fact that it's accumulation of points over a set amount of tournaments, which is exactly like the PGA TOUR is, so it just prepares you for what's ahead quicker, faster and gives you the experience.

And the travel. It's no joke traveling as a professional golfer, like you're all over the place. Learning to be able to handle that, whether it's with your body, the time zone, sleep, et cetera, all that goes into being a professional golfer, and when you get thrown to traveling international weekly, I think it just speeds up that learning curve.

**JACK RYAN:** How about on this golf course, you mentioned the wide fairways earlier. I think you said you prefer golf courses where the fairways are tighter, I think because you're a great driver of the golf ball and maybe you can separate yourself more on that. Can you explain that a little more?

**KEITH MITCHELL:** It's a complete personal advantage I would like to think I have by tighter fairways, longer golf courses.

But again, I don't think that makes it a better golf course, I think that's just a personal bias to me. It plays to my strengths. This golf course, there's not really any rough, it's fairway and then hazard, or fairway and desert really. So the fairways are wider, but if you're too far offline, then you can't play.

So a lot of golf courses they might have tight fairways, but you'll never lose your ball. You'll always find it, you might have a shot. Here, if you're not in the wider fairway, you're either dropping or hitting another tee shot. I think it's a fair balance of a wide fairway, but then very penal if you miss it.

**JACK RYAN:** I think those are all the questions we have. Thank you, Keith, for your time and best of luck this week.

