

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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JIM FURYK



MODERATOR: Welcome to the third Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS. Just what does that mean having this tournament on the Champions Tour and just the support?

JIM FURYK: Oh, it's special. I think what -- I think what's special, I don't want to put words in Tabitha's mouth, either, but just the support from the community, from friends even all around the country that come to Jacksonville to help with the event, that have helped it grow throughout the years. Not only the last three years, but kind of the first 10 leading up to kind of transforming into a PGA TOUR Champions event. I think we're blessed.

And I guess a lot of support from the Tour as well just having Commissioner Monahan and Miller Brady kind of give us the stamp of approval and let us go out there and find Constellation and Timuquana Country Club. It's been wonderful.

Kind of the week really kicks off with the Monday pro-am, but having the concert last night and sold-out crowd at Daily's Place, which was pretty cool. Just kind of the events just keep going this week.

It seems like a big mountain to climb, but it goes so fast and flies by. We have a lot of fun with it. It's a labor of love and I'm really proud of Tab and also our team led by Adam Renfro. We have a very small team, but they work really hard all year. This is kind of the week that they get to showcase what they're capable of.

So we're proud of it, but I'm really proud of them and all the hard work. I see what goes into it kind of behind the scenes and I get to stand up here in front of the mic and talk about it and I really don't deserve any of the credit. They do all the hard work and I get to talk about it.

Q. Jim, you know about running this tournament as a 54-hole event. Now what do you think you've learned the most over the past couple years with this given the product, given the fans, the experience?

JIM FURYK: One of the -- I guess one of the things I think that's pretty cool about the Tour is they hold annual meetings amongst all the events. So Adam, some of the folks that work for us, even Tabitha, they've gone to a lot of these meetings. First they were here at HQ, second year they were in Phoenix. The events share a lot of ideas; here's what we're doing, here's what seemed to work, our title sponsor, we've done this and it's really been fantastic.

I travel when I look at all the hospitality and the tents and I'm looking at things I've never looked at through my career, build-outs. And the tournaments kind of share that, too. We

kind of -- Tab and I like to say we've been out here on Tour for almost 30 years and we've pulled bits and pieces of our favorite events that we really liked and tried to incorporate them into this event.

So learning curve, I guess, you know, I think the concert's a big learning curve. We see golf tournaments. Running a concert to me is like it scares the death out of me, but Tabitha has big goals and big dreams and she tackles it. So I think we've learned a lot about running concerts and a little bit about the music industry, scratching the surface.

The golf tournament itself really is just trying to wrap up having fun. The golf is a part of it, it's the vehicle. Some of it gets folks here, but others, we have the watch party for the Jags on Sunday morning. We really just try to make the golf tournament fun, whether that's the food end of it, the chefs that are invited, whether that's the music end with the concert here. We have Sister Hazel on the back lawn Thursday night for our guests, a cocktail here and there possibly. It's really just about bringing people out.

We have the big screen TVs out there with football all weekend. It's just trying to get people here to enjoy -- you know, THE PLAYERS does a lot of the same thing as well, but it's just trying to get people here to enjoy themselves and have a great time. We want them to watch golf, but if they want to sit there and watch Florida or Florida State or Georgia on the big screen on Saturday or the Jaguars on Sunday, that's awesome. We want them to have a great time and have fun and do it here. We're trying to create a destination.

Q. You mentioned how you want fans to have fun, but the community aspect, raising over a million dollars every year for the Jacksonville-based charities, what does that mean for you?

JIM FURYK: That's the goal. The whole goal for a successful week here is to raise money for charity. Tabitha was told year one that starting a new event's difficult, that if you break even the first year, you've done a good job. She went, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a second, we were running a two-day tournament that was making four to five hundred thousand dollars. We're going to now run a seven-day event, we're setting our goals a little higher.

She set that goal the first year at a million dollars and I think now we've been able to raise almost \$2.5 million over the last two years.

Really, I think what makes it easy for the fans, what makes it easy for this community to kind of rally behind the event, what makes it easy for our corporate sponsors, for a company like Constellation or Circle K, you just go down the list of our founding friends, is that we're raising money for charity. We're trying to help northeast Florida and a lot of great charities here in the Jacksonville area. That's the rallying point. That's why we get all the support, because these folks that support us and the companies that support us are doing the same within their corporations and they see all the good work.

Jacksonville's near and dear to all of us, so when you start seeing a little bit of the need, you

start working with some of these charities, you realize there's a much greater need out there. That's kind of what this event's allowed us to do. We were raising four or five hundred thousand dollars and that's nothing to scoff at, it was wonderful, but we kind of had a ceiling. We didn't have a way to really grow and get bigger. We wanted to help more folks and more of these wonderful charities we have in town.

So kind of this platform of having a Champions Tour event has allowed us to grow, raise more money and it gives us ways to even grow in the future. So that's something we're very interested in in trying to make an impact here in Jacksonville.

Q. Jim, can you talk about last night in particular, you with the canine unit? Looked like you were having a little bit of fun there.

JIM FURYK: The dogs were amazing. Just talking to the JSO and talking to the officers, learning a little bit more.

What I really enjoyed about it was just learning about -- you know, asked the officer if the dog comes home with you, you live together, that's your partner, and he said absolutely. Then he told me about the family life, like he's great with my wife and kids, he turns into a different dog and he rolls over and wants petted on the belly. He said we put on the uniform and we hop in the car, it's time to go to work.

I'm getting chills thinking about it right now. The bond between the officers and the canines was quite amazing, the training that they go through. So to have Circle K kind of -- Rex was the dog on show last night, but bulletproof vest for the canines, bulletproof vests for our officers.

And really just hats off to them. We think, I guess, our daily life is a lot better, a lot safer because of the hard work that they go through and they put their lives in danger every day.

Q. Jim, I could quote all the Steve Stricker stats, six wins, three majors. Is there an easy --

JIM FURYK: Blah, blah, blah, blah. (Laughing.)

Q. Is there an easy explanation for the roll he's been on since last year, I think starting in South Dakota?

JIM FURYK: I think one of them, I think that would be best asked for Steve. He's still very driven, he still works very hard on his game, he's kept himself in great shape, he has no weaknesses, he has some power, he has a lot of accuracy, good iron player, good short game. His strength is that he doesn't have any weaknesses.

I think Strick being a Ryder Cup captain and a Presidents Cup captain pretty late in his career, if I'm correct probably over the age of 50 on both of those, that's a lot of hard work.

That's time that he spent playing the PGA TOUR to keep in touch with some of those younger players.

So he was over 50, still playing a lot on the PGA TOUR, maybe not playing as much out here. I think that probably kept his game sharp playing against younger, powerful players.

But now he's out here more full time, he's not playing the Tour as much anymore. I think dedicating yourself to this tour probably helped him as well in that his game is sharp, he's getting to know the golf courses better and he starts getting in a little bit more of a rhythm with the three-day events. He's definitely dominated the last couple years as far as the amount of wins he's had compared to everyone else, he's been the dominant player and the guy everyone's chasing. No one's really been that close, to be honest with you.

Q. You've been a captain for about everything lately --

JIM FURYK: Yeah.

Q. -- and you're going to do it two more times.

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's been a nice run. I guess I wasn't in Charlotte last year, but having the Ryder Cup, being a vice captain for Zach and then having the Presidents Cup next year in Montreal will be a lot of fun.

And then we also have the World Champions Cup coming up in December. So I know Ernie and Darren and I are really excited. I think the event has a lot of promise and the ability to grow. The first one's interesting, right? I think everyone wants to see how it goes and get a good feel for it.

The Ryder Cup was pretty inspirational for me just to see, you know, both sides, 12 players from each side. They played so hard, hearts out. I saw some great golf.

But it also let me know how much I miss it. I love those events. I think the last one I played on I was probably 44, 45 years old, and then you realize your time's come and you move on, you're not going to make those teams anymore and you start captaining them.

It keeps me in touch, but I miss the competition. So the World Champions Cup gives us a chance to kind of do it again. And very unique. Having three separate teams playing an event at the same time, that doesn't happen very often in sports when you think about it. It's going to be a cool opportunity for all of us.

And I think we're all appreciative over 50. We have a wonderful tour out here on the Champions Tour. We still get to go out and compete and have some fun and there just aren't many sports where you have that opportunity when you're over 50. The fact we can get back at it and have a Ryder Cup event, Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup-like event, I can wear the flag on my sleeve and, you know, represent our country, it's pretty cool.

Q. Jim, you came back at Ally after some time off. How are you feeling?

JIM FURYK: I'm not anywhere near 100 percent. I thought when I came back to Ally I would be closer to ready than I probably was. Obviously Ally's on my hat, I was going to make every effort I could to get there. I thought I was going to be a little better.

I've taken some events off. I missed St. Louis, I missed PURE, which is an event I've won in the past, events I'd like to play, but I just know I'm not 100 percent. And walking some of those golf courses, kind of finding out I don't think it's the walking as much as maybe I thought it was. It is, it adds to it, but it's really just swinging the golf club is really bothering me right now. I'm OK, I'll get through the week no problem and it's not like I'm in crippling pain or anything like that. I'm just not able to swing a golf club the way I want to.

That's something that I really need to address this offseason. And it's not fun to play poorly and it's not fun to really not feel 100 percent, so it's something I'm going to work on this offseason so I can hopefully hit the ground running next January, February, March, whenever that is, and kind of go out and play a nice full season and feel good about it.

Q. Do you know what it is?

JIM FURYK: I have a couple herniated disks in my lower back that are bothering me, and I've got some weakness in my right leg that I'm kind of addressing, so trying to figure it out.