

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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JHONATTAN VEGAS

MODERATOR: Like to welcome Jhonny Vegas to the interview room here at the Wyndham Championship.

Jhonny, thanks for joining us. I was looking at some numbers and if I got it right, I know you're making your 16th start of the season and you've just played some really good golf. Sixteen of your last 18 rounds since Zurich have been sub pars, you've thrown in some 63s, some 64s.

Just some thoughts on how you feel like you're playing. Obviously you're coming off a big win in Minneapolis a couple weeks ago. With that said, just some thoughts on being here this week and how you're feeling.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, no, obviously super excited obviously coming from a win a couple of weeks ago, last start. Yeah, it's been a good trend the past I would say six to eight weeks where my game has definitely started to trend the right way.

It was a very, very slow start of the year coming back from shoulder surgery, which is never fun, especially you don't know exactly where you are when you start the season competitive-wise.

Took a little while to kind of get going, but I would say kind of mid June or so things started to feel a little bit better ball-striking wise, chipping, putting, just kind of the whole package started to kind of come together. Obviously kind of worked out pretty good last time in Minneapolis.

So coming in here, obviously super excited. It's a golf course that requires a lot of precision off the tee and into the greens and even around the greens. You know, I love where I'm at and excited to make a push to the end of the year.

Q. Jhonny, when you're coming down the stretch there in Minnesota, where does your mind go? Do you think of like past wins at all to draw encouragement or are you just super focused one shot at a time? When you're walking down the fairway, what kind of goes through your head?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, coming down the stretch there's definitely not a lot of time to think. I think if you start thinking a little too much, it can go the wrong way.

So there's not a lot of time to think, you just have to stay as present as you can and focus on the task in front of you, right? I feel like I did that really good in Minnesota, especially last



Sunday where I wasn't quite, you know, doing my best when it comes down to ball-striking and that control that I had the previous three days. Kind of keeping it nice and present and sticking to one shot at a time and trying to execute the best way I could really played out great and it helped me a ton.

Q. How did you celebrate?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know what, it was more of a family celebration. It wasn't about me, it was about the family kind of coming together, everything we've been through for the past few years with me and the recovery and all of that. So I actually enjoyed more watching my kids enjoy the moment, watching them really embrace it. Obviously they're old enough now where they understand kind of what's going on and they start to feel a little bit nervous because they start to understand what it means in the moment that we're living through. So I actually got to enjoy that, you know, more than what I was feeling or the joy of winning my fourth PGA TOUR event. It was a little more special because of that.

Q. Was there a point like going through the recovery process where the thought entered your mind like am I going to have to call it a career?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Not to that extent. I feel like I'm still young enough to not go that route, but there's definitely doubts, definitely doubts of are you going to be the same golfer that you were before you had surgery or before you got injured.

You know, like I said, especially I'll be 40 in 13 days, so things don't heal as quick as they used to when you were in your early 20s. So the mindset has to be a little bit stronger to kind of get through a lot of those tough moments.

Like I said, the goal has always been to be here, to perform, to do what I know what to do. Luckily, the mind stayed in that moment through the recovery process that has led me to here.

Q. What's your take on Olympic golf and kind of it seems like each time it's kind of building momentum?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It's awesome, man. It's awesome. It was a shame that I wasn't there this past week. I was there in Rio and Tokyo. We just get so caught up here with professional golf and money and all the benefits we have by playing the best tour in the world that we sometimes forget, you know, what golf is all about, right? You know, it's playing for everyone out there that is supporting you and wants to root for you. That's kind of what Olympic golf is, you're playing for your country, you're playing to give your country a medal, you're representing your colors.

Like I said, when you're playing for something bigger than yourself, you realize that golf is a lot bigger than this. That's kind of what a lot of guys are realizing. I saw what Rory was talking about at the end of last week that it kind of felt good to hear what he said. Like I said,



it's a whole different feeling. It's either those three or nothing and when you're playing for that, it just means so much more.

Q. (Question about Scottie Scheffler.)

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I watched the end of it. Obviously that guy's in a different stratosphere right now, he's living in a different space. What he's doing with a golf ball, it's kind of fun to watch, right?

I grew up watching Tiger and it's pretty similar to a lot of the stuff that Tiger did during all of those years. I'm happy for him because obviously good kid and all of his family and everything and what he does for the game of golf is always awesome.

Q. Did you meet him at all when he was at Texas?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I did, I did. Obviously there's a big gap in age there, but I did. Obviously talking to Coach Fields there at the university, he told me how special he was. Obviously I think he was the low am at the Masters and the U.S. Open, I know that. From an early age you could tell he was going to be a great player.

Q. So there is -- you're currently outside of the 50 bubble, but you're in the 70. How much of going into the Playoffs is on your mind this week or are you kind of just focusing on this event?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, no, obviously the win changed the whole focus for me. Obviously I was on a big major medical and was just trying -- tried to build up and get better as every week went on. Obviously this put me with a great chance to get into top 70, get into the Playoffs, and we don't know how much it means to be in the Playoffs, especially as you get closer to that top 50, which is the magic number right now. If you can get into those, I mean, it just makes the following year a lot easier.

So that's the No. 1 goal, to get there, to make a pretty good run at the end and trying to get there because I mean all of the benefits you get from the top 50.

Q. And then you played this course a few years before. What were your impressions of it?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know, I think it's a great golf course. Simple, that if you play good you're going to shoot some good rounds. It's a course that can give you nightmares, too, because the greens, especially the way they are, super fast, super undulated. If you're not hitting the fairways, you won't hit it close to the pins. If you miss around the wrong side -- it's a golf course where your game has to be sharp, you have to be mentally sharp, which I love.

Q. In terms of the Playoffs being a very real possibility, was that something like



before 3M did you think about like you might have a month off or do you just live such day to day that you didn't like --

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Obviously you think about all of it, right, the big picture, but at the end of the day you have to stay in the one week at a time.

I was definitely taking it one week at a time. I knew if I had to take a month off, it wouldn't be ideal for me because obviously with all the recovery stuff, you know, it would give me more time to prepare and get ready for the fall and all of that.

You know, I mean, like I said, that was there. Luckily, it's not there anymore and we can focus on this week and hopefully a pretty good run through the Playoffs. It's a good problem to have.

Q. There's a cool clip of Sahith Theegala kind of cheering for you at the end at the 3M when you won. I was wondering did you see that clip and what's your relationship --

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I remember him coming up to me as I'm going to the scorer's tent and congratulating, which like I said, that kid is amazing. That kid, we both practice at the same place in Houston, we live fairly close to each other so we get to see each other quite a lot when we're home. It's hard to find a nicer guy out here than him.

Like I said, that's kind of what golf is all about, that's kind of what the PGA TOUR is all about. There's such a good camaraderie out here that even though we're trying to beat each other every day, it's good to feel that camaraderie every time that you play. And he's definitely one of those guys that you're rooting for at the same time that you're trying to beat.

Q. With the injury and such, does your pre-tournament preparation, is it different than it was I guess when you were younger?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, definitely. You're trying to really put a lot more time into trying to get the shoulder as loose and as stable as possible. It takes a little bit of time pre-and post round recovery-wise.

You know, like I said, as you get older, I'm sure you heard this before, as you get older it just takes a little bit more time to get things ready and the recovery's not as good as it used to be. As I said, it's not that it's impossible, but it just takes a little bit more work, which is part of the journey.

Q. Do you think the average career in golf will get shorter over time?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I would say so, especially, like I said, you see some of these kids from such an early age getting to the PGA TOUR and as much as we love golf, being here week after week kind of drains you, kind of wears you out and golf doesn't get as fun as it was when you were a kid.



I would say my rookie year, I was 26 and I think I was mature enough to just kind of take everything and enjoy the process. Been here for 14 years, 14 seasons now, this is my 14th year, that you still get to enjoy that. If you get here at 20, at 40, 20 years doing it, it's harder. So I'm assuming it's going to start to come down a little bit, but you never know. Technology has changed everything and who knows what we'll do in the future.

Q. Coach Fields from Texas, what's he meant to you kind of in just your career and kind of supporting you and just from along the way?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, Coach Fields is kind of one of those pillars that you find in your life, right? It's a guy that obviously gave me a tremendous opportunity to play golf there, such a good program, and everything it meant to play for that school, right? Being around Ben Crenshaw, being around Tom Kite, being around Justin Leonard, some of those guys that have been the greats in this game, to have access to that on a consistent basis was important. Obviously all the tools that the school gives you to be successful. Like I said, I think going there was probably the best decision I've made so far in my life. He just created such a good opportunity for me to be successful in life.

MODERATOR: Jhonny, thank you. We always appreciate your time.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Thank you, guys.

