

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

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TIM O'NEAL



Q. We're now joined by Tim O'Neal at the Simmons Bank Championship, the winner of last week's Dominion Energy Charity Classic. What have the last five days been like for you?

TIM O'NEAL: Has it been five days? Yeah, it's been a whirlwind, still on cloud nine right now. Everything, yeah, it's been really nice to finally get the job done. It's been overwhelming with everything. Man, it feels good to win.

Q. How many texts and phone calls did you receive and were there any that really stood out to you?

TIM O'NEAL: Well, when I got done I probably had, I think I had like 378 text messages. A lot of the numbers I didn't recognize. You had guys like Tom Lehman and a lot of guys that play out here that I don't have their number, they reached out. You know, was good to see those texts from those guys.

Q. Been waiting on this all week. That man that just yelled at you was highly, highly complimentary of you, bring you to tears. Are you appreciating your, I won't say new-found success, but is that what it really is?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, I've been playing all my life to be able to get here. Was able, fortunate enough to make it through the Q-School two years ago. Finally have a win, it feels great. Just blessed to be able to be out here playing with these great golfers.

Q. A few weeks ago did you see it as a possibility that you could be holding some heavy hardware in a couple weeks? That's definitely a possibility?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, you know, you tee it up in every tournament thinking that you have a chance to win. I've been playing well, but just had to clean up some stuff, I wasn't very efficient. I was making a lot of birdies but giving 'em up, making bogeys. But to finally put it all together in a solid week, I knew if I could put together a solid week that I would have a good chance to win and last week I was able to do that.

Q. What do you see at Pleasant Valley that suits your eye?

TIM O'NEAL: Well, you have to drive it well here. The greens are really fast, they're good though. I think to play well here you have to -- you have to drive it well. Par 3s are really good. If you could drive it straight, if you can hit a lot of fairways and play the par 3s well, I think you have a really good chance.

Q. And lastly, we asked first time to Arkansas, you said no. So tell us about your experiences in Arkansas.

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, last time I was in Little Rock I was in college. I played at Jackson State and we played at Chenal. I think this was I want to say '95. I think we came back twice, in '95 and '96. That was my first time playing on Zoysia fairways. Chenal was a really good golf course, too. That's my only time I've ever been in Little Rock. Yeah, I always enjoyed playing here.

Q. You were on the range yesterday and you had a few of your fellow tour members come up and congratulate you. And your first response was?

TIM O'NEAL: Oh, thank you.

Q. (Inaudible)

TIM O'NEAL: Well, most of them are like it's about time. I guess a lot of people see stuff in me I didn't see in myself, but a lot of guys I guess they could see that I had the talent or whatever to win. So, it was good all those guys were thinking that or they thought that. To actually get it done was nice.

Q. What's that mean to you having your peers --

TIM O'NEAL: It means a lot. Like I said, I looked up to all these guys out here that I watched play and now I'm playing with them. For them to say that, it definitely means a lot.

Q. Have your feet hit the ground yet?

TIM O'NEAL: No, not yet. I hope they never do. Yeah, this has been a great feeling.

Q. Tim, obviously you and Jackson State, what's it mean to be a representative of a Historically Black College and University (inaudible)?

TIM O'NEAL: It means a lot because there are a lot of HBCU golfers out there that play and with me going to Jackson State, HBCU, and they see me out here playing and now I've won, hopefully that can inspire other guys that play at HBCUs. They see me doing it, they see someone like me, that they can also be inspired to do the same thing.

Q. My mother always talks about (inaudible). Do you feel like this is a perfect time (inaudible) to break out in your career?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah. Well, I guess anytime would have been a good time for me, but what happened the last week was perfect timing, yes. Everything happens for a reason, but it couldn't have come at a perfect time than last week, especially when I needed it.

Q. What do you think about the field (inaudible)?

TIM O'NEAL: Well, so we were 72 players last week and now we're 54, so it's gotten stronger, so it's going to be a tough week. Everyone that's here's good. I have to play some good golf this week.

Q. What's your mindset heading into (inaudible)?

TIM O'NEAL: Same thing. For me personally, I'm going to try to do the same thing, channel the same things that I did last week. Nothing out of the ordinary, just try to stay patient and not get ahead of myself.

Q. Obviously last week worked out for you obviously, but is there anything you want to focus on, something that you may have to adjust to have success?

TIM O'NEAL: No. Like I said, I think to play well here you're going to have to drive it well, you're going to have to be in the fairways. The greens are fast and I think being in the fairway is going to be a key part of playing well here.