

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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TONY FINAU

MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Tony Finau into the interview room. He's making his ninth career start at the Texas Children's Houston Open. He's our 2022 champion and most recently finished runner-up in 2024.

Tony, welcome back. If we can get some comments on being here at Memorial Park again.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, thank you. Got great memories here specifically from '22 winning, even though it was in the fall, same golf course and same area. So I love being here in Houston. Like you said, I'm making my ninth start, that's crazy to say. I don't know a lot of tournaments where I can say I've played that many times. Really nice to be back especially at a place that you've won and have a pretty good track record. I like this golf course, I like the area and look forward to this week.

MODERATOR: Obviously Stephan won last year, you, Scottie and a host of others finished second. What do you remember about 2024 here?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, that was an exciting tournament, exciting finish. I think maybe 10 guys had a chance to win the golf tournament with six, seven holes left and I just happened to be one of them.

I had a great opportunity on 16 to make birdie, I missed a short putt and it ended up costing me the tournament. It's one of those things it was -- I remember at the time it was kind of a hard pill to swallow because I knew I ended up birdieing 17 and 18, but the putt on 16 was kind of the determining factor for me to not at least post a 12 under I believe was the final winning score and I finished at 11.

A lot of guys had a chance, which makes for an exciting finish. I think this is the type of golf course that will -- you'll continue to have those types of finishes and maybe have a bunch of great players have a chance to win.

MODERATOR: Eight starts this season, T-5 at the Genesis is your best finish of the year. Just comment on your season up to this point.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I've played well in most of the elevated events. Haven't played great in some of the other tournaments I've played. As we lead up to this week, I'm starting to see golf courses that I really like and that starts here at Memorial Park.

Again, I've had I think some good success here and look forward to having that form this week and carrying on throughout the season.



Q. What is one of the big reasons why you think you've had so much success here, especially the last two years?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, you know, I like -- I like the look of the golf course. I think as a golfer, a lot of us are very visual players and there's certain golf courses that just look good to our eyes compared to others. I would say this is one that for me to me looks pretty good to our eyes so I'm able to play it I think consistently, at least over the last couple years.

And then having won somewhere, I think that gives you the extra confidence that you need to know that you've done it on this golf course before and no matter your form, this is a place that you've won and obviously you should play well at.

Q. The difference in playing in the fall compared to playing in the spring like last year, what is kind of the biggest thing that stood out to you or what do you remember most to how it played last year compared to when you won in '22?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, in '22 in the fall it wasn't overseeded bermuda, so it was actually a lot firmer. This time of the year it's a little bit softer overseeded bermuda and so a little bit different conditions, so the golf course actually plays a little bit longer I would say this time of the year.

Yes, those are some of the differences. I don't think the grass is as hard to chip off of this time of year because it's not like true bermuda. Those are some of the things I think that make the golf course different. But overall, I think it plays a little bit longer this time of the year, which is a good thing for me.

Q. You've had the one week that you filled in on TGL. Just wondering if you tuned in at all to the first round of the championship match last night or how much you followed it this year?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I've been watching quite a bit of it, I think a lot more than I anticipated I would watch especially since I played. I really enjoyed my time there just to fill in for the one week for LA Golf Club. I saw yesterday Atlanta won and they've got another rematch tonight. I think it's a best-of-three series. So I'll probably be tuned in to check that out.

A lot of those guys are some of my friends and fun to see them compete on that stage. And having been there, it's a special place, special venue. Like it exceeded my expectations even having watched it, being there in person and experiencing it was -- was a lot better than I would have ever anticipated. So for that reason, I definitely continue to watch and follow.

Q. There's already been a lot of talk asking whether people have talked with Rory or whatnot about growth of the league next year. Is that something that if it was to grow or something, would you definitely be interested in playing more full time?



TONY FINAU: Yeah, I haven't -- I honestly haven't heard anything about it growing. I think a lot of us guys on the West Coast would entertain it if they moved the SoFi Center west. It would be a lot easier for me. It's no secret I travel with my family and my kids. They're very important to me, so being with them as often as possible is a priority for me and that's only possible I think if they moved the SoFi Center out west. I can't say with assurity that I would entertain it if it was still in West Palm, but I did enjoy my time for the one week that I was there.

Q. As your kids are getting into golf and becoming more competitive at that level, what's it like being dad and coach? What's kind of the in between of being such a knowledgeable player and there to help them?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I love being able to coach my son. I love that he loves the game of golf. He's 13 and starting to get a work ethic about him, which I really enjoy. I try to preach to him no matter how much talent you have, you've got to work at it if you want to be any good.

So having some experience in the game I think is helpful, but at the end of the day, my kid, my son wants to follow in my footsteps and I just hope that I don't butcher his chances of success and just get in the way.

I'm trying to be a father at the same time as trying to be one of the best golfers in the world and it's definitely a juggling act, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I really enjoy that one of my sons likes to play and I enjoy trying to be his father and his coach.

Q. Tony, the Astros are kicking off their season this week. I know you're comfortable inside the ropes, but how about throwing out a first pitch?

TONY FINAU: This will be my first first pitch I'll be throwing out on Friday, so I look forward to it. I haven't held a baseball in years, so maybe I should practice over the next couple days.

My goal is to not throw it in the dirt. That's pretty much all my friends have told me if you throw it in the dirt, you'll never hear the end of it, so I'm going high and hard. We'll give it a shot on Friday. I'm really looking forward to that and happy the Astros asked me to do that.

Q. Tony, I'm curious if some of the guys throughout the year came and asked you about this course seeing it -- have you pitched it at all, because the field seems to be growing every year?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, you know, like I can't say anybody's asked me about the course, but anybody that -- I can't recall anybody asking me about the course, but anybody that asks me about my schedule, I always make sure they know I'm playing Houston and it's a good golf course.



I feel like this week, and I don't think that there's a better prep golf course leading up to the Masters than Memorial Park. It's a big golf course. I think they try to set it up where it's similar to Augusta National maybe to have guys play. I know that was the case many years ago when it was at other golf courses.

But I don't think that there's a better course to prepare for something like Augusta National than here. I think you're going to continue to get great players because of the golf course and I think all the guys have to do is play once to see for themselves that this is -- I think it's a world class golf course and it just happens to be public, which is something that I resonate with as well, and I just think it's a great venue and you'll continue to get great players that come here because of that.

Q. Now, you said you like the area. Things you like about Houston? Everybody says the food, but I'm curious to what you like about it.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, yeah, the food is great here in Houston. The weather's usually pretty good this time of year. This year it's going to be hot, which I don't mind. We've had to deal -- we mostly had really good weather, but being back in Utah this past winter has been pretty cold, so I'm looking forward to some warmer weather. Everything. I think the crowds are great, the people are great and you can't beat the food and the golf course, so I'll take all of it.

MODERATOR: All right. Tony, thank you for your time.

