

DAVIS LOVE III

Q. We are now joined by World Golf Hall of Fame member Davis Love III here at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic, your first start of the 2025 season.

Just to start, how great is it to be back out here on the Champions Tour?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's nice to be back. I mainly came to see all my friends, I haven't seen them in so long. I figured I'd play maybe five tournaments in the last 15 or 16 months, so I've been missing out on seeing everybody and missing out on the competition and obviously missing out on playing. So I'm ready to get going again. I'm very rusty but happy to be back.

Q. Kind of walk us through the process of the whole heart surgery and how that came about.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, over 10 years ago a couple of my doctor friends said, Did anybody ever tell you you had a heart murmur? I said, No, never heard of that before. They said, Well, we'll have to look into this.

Turned out they found out that I had a leaky valve, which is a great plug for early detection on things. We had been watching it for 10 years and finally about six months ago they said, Now it's time to start thinking about fixing it.

It didn't sneak up on me but reality hit back last September that I was going to have to have a big surgery and take care of it. So we planned it well ahead and I was prepared for it mentally. I wasn't prepared physically for the comeback. The valve replacement was pretty simple, it was the opening in my chest and getting to it and bouncing back from that is the hard part. I keep saying it's like I fell off my bike and broke all my ribs, it's going to take a while to heal that up especially when you want to turn and swing and hit.

They tell you don't drive for a month, but a driver -- you can't drive your car, truck for a month, you know you're in serious rehab.

Patience was the main thing I had to have. But I started hitting balls in April and it seems to get better every day and faster every day. Hopefully by Sunday I've got some clubhead speed.

Q. But there wasn't any weakness or anything, it was just like --

DAVIS LOVE III: I never felt really anything the whole time they were telling me I had a heart problem. So I was blessed to catch it early and to have the surgery before anything



happened bad.

You know, it was a big surgery, but it was a well planned, well thought out. The team at Mayo Jacksonville has been keeping tabs on it for, like I said, 10 years. They did a great job with strategy.

Obviously they harped on me about my diet for 10 years, and exercise and all those things that I didn't do everything they told me to do, but I kept it going. You don't want to do it at 50 years old, you would rather wait as long as you can and we timed it just right.

Q. It's not like you're a fat guy who's out of shape, you walk every day, you're like in good shape.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, we had a friend last year a little bit younger than me just cleaning up his yard had a heart attack and passed away. That could have been me very easily if I wasn't planning ahead for it. Like I had no symptoms, I never felt bad. I never had anything other than a little bit of high blood pressure. So I could have walked right into a tragedy and they prevented that, so I feel very blessed.

Now they're saying I've got 10 or 15 years on this valve and then I can get a new one. I'm going to get the most I can out of this one and hopefully get a retread down the road sometime.

Q. You talked about being patient. Is that -- are you by nature a patient guy or is it tough to be patient?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm not very patient at all. They told me I could start putting in March and my daughter told me, Well, you're scooping horse stalls already, I think that's harder than putting. Why don't you go putt?

I'm not very patient, but I've had a lot of surgeries in the last 10 years. I've done a lot of rehab with some great therapists so I kind of know what I'm doing, I know how to pace myself, things I can do.

I literally on the way home from the hospital stopped in the gym at Sea Island with Randy Myers. We didn't really do anything except walk around in circles, but it started the day I got home from surgery to let's do something. Walking obviously for a heart patient is one of the main things, so we did a lot of walking, started with legs and worked our way up to what we were allowed to do. I just knew that the only way I was ever going to play golf again is to start the rehab right away and give myself something to look forward to, which was going for a walk with Randy Myers.

Q. A lot of people look forward to that, right?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes.



Q. Was there any reluctance when you first got started, mentally or can I really do this?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I had been doing rehab to get ready to start swinging. Really, it's just letting the bones heal. Like you break your arm, when you get out of the cast it's pretty much healed up. I had to wait until the bones healed up before I could really start swinging a golf club.

But then once I did -- the rehab set me up for it, I was doing things in the gym that were harder than hitting golf balls before I started hitting golf balls. I think we had a good plan. We've got a great team down there that helps a lot of PGA TOUR players. When I'm in therapy or when I'm in there with Randy Myers, we're seeing every other patient's a Tour player. So good team and good planning and not hard work but a lot of consistent work to get there.

Q. And this week, did you pick this week because of this place or --

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, picked this week, one, because Mitsubishi's been so good to the Tour and so good to me over the years in inviting me to Hawaii and keeping this tournament going. I always love playing Sugarloaf as a Tour player so it's nice to come back. Honestly, it is close to home and it's a place that I like. I felt like it was a good week to get started.

And looking ahead in the schedule, there's a lot of things that I want to do in May or June that if I don't start now, I'm not going to be ready for some bigger tournaments down the road.

Q. That's what I was going to ask you, what's the goals as you go forward?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, everybody's asking me that. What's next, I don't know. I've got to get through this week and then see how I recover. And the biggest thing about rehab is you push yourself and then take a break, push yourself and then take a break. So every three or four days I've been taking a day off of golf. I'm not going to get one the next four days, so we'll see what Monday morning brings.

It's different. Inside the ropes hitting golf balls is different than just playing a round at home. I tried to push myself the last few rounds to really play like I was in a tournament and hit it like I was in a tournament and I've recovered well from those. So we'll see next Monday, then pick another tournament.

Q. You said you missed friends, seeing friends out here. Is that one of the big things to get back amongst your pals?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, Billy Andrade called me on my birthday. He goes, Man, I hope we see you soon and not just on FaceTime. It really hit me that I really haven't seen guys.



Freddie called me about my heart, but I haven't seen him in such a long, long time.

I miss being around. I haven't been here but an hour or so but I've already seen so many people. I keep in touch with Jimmy Gabrielson and the guys on the Tour and some of my friends like Verplank and Andrade and those guys.

There's no substitute for coming and playing, and as Fred Couples again said, the four hours inside the ropes are worth everything else. So to get out here inside the ropes and play with my friends, there's nothing better.

Q. Mother Nature has always been a little complicated with Georgia weather in the summer, so I'm curious how you plan on preparing for what we see ahead in the weather the next couple of days?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I had another surgery and came here to play and said, Whoa, great, I can ride a cart everywhere. Then it was cart paths only and it ruined me, I ended up not making it through the week.

I'm hoping that for my golf ball rolling down the fairways that it doesn't get too wet because I'm hitting it kind of short. But that's what we deal with, you're used to weather. I've got plenty of rain gear and umbrellas, and hopefully the weatherman's wrong.

