

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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RYAN GERARD



MODERATOR: Like to welcome Ryan Gerard here to the 2025 Wyndham Championship.

Ryan, this is your first start since winning the Barracuda Championship a couple weeks ago. I guess just to open with, what have you been up to? How long did it take for the win to sink in?

RYAN GERARD: Thanks, Preston. Yeah, it's been a cool kind of week-ish to celebrate and kind of let it all sink in. First week off in a while, so slept a lot, ate a lot of good food, played some golf with some friends.

Excited to be back here competing in as close to where I grew up as the PGA TOUR gets on the schedule. I'm really pumped to be here.

As a PGA TOUR winner, it didn't really sink in for at least 12 or so hours. Kind of felt it Monday kind of when I started going through some text messages and talked to a couple people on the phone, just kind of rewatched some of the highlights from the round, it started getting a little bit more real. It was really kind of almost surreal in a sense. It's kind of something I've been dreaming of my entire life. For it to kind of all happen, it was special.

But I'm excited to hopefully keep it going and I don't want to be just a one-time winner, so we're going to keep the pedal down and try and make sure that we take care of business this week but in the future as well.

MODERATOR: Then Raleigh native, played at University of North Carolina, how special is this week playing in your home state?

RYAN GERARD: Oh, I mean it's really special. I remember being here in 2011 when Webb won his first event. He was a Raleigh guy. He was kind of the guy. If you're from Raleigh or just North Carolina in general growing up, seeing him kind of put on a show for everybody, just being an absolute class act on and off the golf course, he's kind of the blueprint for what you want to do if you grow up in North Carolina.

Just being here that week was special. Getting to play some junior events out here was really, really awesome. To come back and play the PGA TOUR event, this is as close to my hometown as I'm going to get playing on the PGA TOUR and I'm really excited to be here. There's going to be a lot of people out supporting but also just it just kind of has a special place in the heart.

Q. So kind of you started the year in the Korn Ferry Tour category and got to play in a



few more Signature Events and in a good spot for the top 50. How big is it as a Tour player to be in the top-50 and have that Signature Event access?

RYAN GERARD: It means a lot just the way everything's structured currently, you are losing opportunities if you're not inside that top-50. It makes your job a lot easier from a standpoint of setting your schedule, kind of being able to plan ahead, pick which weeks you want to play, how you're going to break things up. Just things like that become way easier from a logistical standpoint.

But from a pure competition standpoint, they're difficult fields. They're the best of the best players on the PGA TOUR and you get to compete with them week in and week out, which I think is what everyone out here strives to do is you want to play against the best competition and beat the best players.

But it does give you an opportunity to play more events than guys that aren't in the Signature Events over the course of the season. Gives you a little bit of a leg up on trying to get in the Signature Events in the next year and keep your card and do the things that you need to do as a professional.

Q. I was kind of curious, you played two years ago as a special temporary member and played pretty much a full season, but is there anything that this year has felt like -- in what ways have you felt more comfortable this year, but then on the flip side, are there any ways that you did still feel like a rookie or was that pretty much all taken care of two years ago?

RYAN GERARD: Two years ago was really, really great and my learning curve as a professional, I kind of just got thrown into the deep end early on in the -- like February, kind of early on in the season. It was just kind of go figure it out, try and make it happen.

And seeing courses for the first time, not really having an offseason to prepare for it, just kind of go in and trying to play golf and see what happens, it was all kind of foreign but in a good way.

I learned a lot about myself, I learned about how to travel, how to deal with human interactions, how to deal with all the noise that kind of goes around PGA Tour events. I think it's allowed me to be more prepared this year, especially seeing some of the courses for the second time but just being more comfortable in my skin, walking around property, seeing guys that you look up to, seen on TV for years and years and years and kind of think of them as peers instead of like these just almost like TV figures that are now existing like in your dining sphere, whatever.

But it's been great to be out here for a full season from start to finish and kind of have the full experience, go through the grind and just really enjoy every second of it.

Q. You mentioned texts. How many did you get do you think and did any one stand



out?

RYAN GERARD: I probably got 500, 600 texts, and I still haven't even made it through all like the social media messages that people have sent me. I apologize, I'll get to them eventually. It's just I need a little bit of a break.

But Coach Roy Williams, he's been great to me. He texts me a lot. Sometimes like when I play bad, sometimes when I play good, but I know he's always rooting for me. He's been in my corner for years and years and years. He gives me a lot of really good kind of like wisdom about, you know, it's not always about the first time you get there, it's not always about the second time, it's about perseverance, trusting yourself, and continue doing what you're doing because you're on the right path.

He's been great to me. It's always nice when that message pops up. And he always signs it "Coach Roy Williams," like I don't know who it is. No, he's been great to me and everyone in Carolina, but the golf team, everyone that he comes across. He's truly the best of the best.

Q. And I guess you also got some encouragement from a former teammate before Barracuda. Can you talk about that text and how close did you come to going to --

RYAN GERARD: Well, he decided to just walk in and crash the press conference here, but yeah, Ben, Ben Griffin has been awesome. He's been a great friend for probably 15, 16 years now. I think we played a junior event at UNC Finley golf course. I might have been 9 or 10, he might have been 12, so it's been a while.

But just kind of knowing that I have someone who's accomplished great things in my corner kind of like looking out for me. Gave me a hard time in college but that's what you're supposed to do, you're supposed to keep the freshmen in check.

When you get out here and you have like one of your best friends playing practice rounds with you all the time and kind of rooting for you, it was awesome seeing him win multiple times early this year, and inspirational.

You know, I can't let him get too far ahead of me in the win column so we've got to rein it in here a little bit. Just to see what he's done all season has been awesome and I hope he continues doing it, and if he continues doing it, I'm going to keep on his heels pushing him.

Q. Has the biggest change or adjustment been something technical like in your game or has it been just something within yourself?

RYAN GERARD: I think the biggest -- the biggest thing is definitely mental. It's a comfortability standpoint, but also it comes from, you know, seeing things, experiencing things, learning how you feel when you get under pressure, learning how you feel when you're trying to close out a golf tournament. The more times you put yourself in that situation, the more that you can grow as a person in that spot.



I feel like my game's got even better from a technical, from a pure consistency standpoint. I'm a lot more consistent of a player than I was two years ago.

But I think when you get to that like contention Sunday afternoon trying to close out a golf tournament, it takes a lot of both experience but just kind of like belief and you just got to go out there and really trust what you have because it's you and your caddie and the golf ball and everything, everyone else kind of bleeds away, and it's lonely and there's a lot going on.

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, Ben Griffin here, PGA TOUR Comms intern. First and foremost, great answer to two questions ago. I know you're probably super nervous here in the media center for the first time leading into a PGA TOUR event.

Just wanted to ask if there's anyone you could like credit towards your Barracuda Championship, first PGA TOUR victory?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I'm actually sweating up here I'm so nervous. Maybe it's 100 degrees outside, but it also might be --

Q. It's very comfortable in here right now.

RYAN GERARD: I'm getting the light reflection off your sunglasses into my face.

So there is someone that told me to play the Barracuda instead of going to The Open Championship and I'd like to credit him a great deal. He'll remain nameless on account of anonymity and protecting the field and stuff like that, I think that's the way he'd want it to be. But if he's so inclined, I will treat him to dinner on a Wednesday night of his choosing. So, you know --

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, that leads perfect into this next question. I guess just about preparing for golf tournament, I think my caddie has something. He's going to ask you a question.

ALEX RITTHAMEL: I heard about a tradition that started earlier this year, on Wednesdays you might do it with somebody. Can you talk about that?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, yeah. There's a guy named Alex, he's very redheaded, so he's hard to miss when you see him on property.

But no, Ben's caddie and I, we've been doing, we call it Steak Wednesday. But it started, I mean, it started at the beginning of the season basically. He was staying at my house for the Cognizant and started kind of eating steak on Wednesdays. Ever since that event, either Ben or I has basically finished top-10 every week that we've done it, so we kind of kept it going just out of superstition.

And then we did it in Dallas and he won. I think we did it in New Orleans, too, and he won.



So, you know, I think I'd like a little credit for making Alex well fed.

BEN GRIFFIN: Who pays for those dinners typically?

RYAN GERARD: So the pay structure is if I make more money than Alex in the given week, I pay, but if Alex makes more money than me, which unfortunately has happened twice now in a given week, he gets to pay.

So thank you for a couple free meals because you played so well.

But I think I was a little bit bummed at Memorial this year when you didn't close the deal because I made like \$4,000 more than him that week, so then I was on the hook for dinner the next week. Yeah, you know, try and win Memorial next year.

Q. You mentioned the win by Webb Simpson back in 2011. What did that do for you as a young guy seeing the Raleigh guy Webb win here on this stage? How did that help you as a young guy?

RYAN GERARD: It was awesome, it was really cool. He's been kind of the guy in North Carolina golf for a long time. You know, obviously a lot of really good players before him and after him. When Grayson came out here and started doing awesome things, it was fantastic to see, but Webb was kind of that guy when I was 9, 10, 11, 12 years old. I remember sneaking out of my room to watch him try and close out that U.S. Open at Olympic Club, stuff like that.

He's been the guy kind of that I've looked up to. I know a lot of other guys kind of in the Raleigh area have looked up to. But for him to get it here and then to win again a couple weeks later to really kickstart his career, everyone that kind of was around North Carolina golf, that was as cool as it got for all of us. Just to see him have awesome success for the last 15 years has been fantastic.

Q. What's that relationship like with Webb now?

RYAN GERARD: We're decent friends. I wouldn't say we're best friends, but we're decent friends. He's always gone out of his way to be nice to me, he's always gone out of his way to talk to me.

We played a practice round at Duke for the U.S. Open qualifier last year and I gave him just enough pointers to help him sneak through that qualifier and play that U.S. Open at Pinehurst. He unfortunately beat me by one, so maybe I'll be less nice next time.

No, he's been fantastic. He's one of the nicest guys in every sense of the word, to fans, other players, board. I mean, he's wearing a lot of hats right now, he's juggling a lot. He's a dad to a lot of kids, too.



He's got 10,000 things on his plate, but we really appreciate him being out here and taking the time to say nice things to the young guys and really kind of doing a lot for North Carolina but just young guys in general. He likes to make sure you feel comfortable around him and give you some wise words of wisdom here and there.

Q. Ryan, two Carolina related questions. No. 1, how often in weeks where you don't win do you hear from Roy?

RYAN GERARD: I mean, I hear from him almost at least once or twice a month.

Q. OK.

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, even if it's, hey, you know, keep going, Dean Smith made it to four Final Fours before he won a championship, or hey, man, I'm seeing a lot of great things, I love the way you're playing. Like just, you know, just do you, trust yourself, stuff like that. He's been awesome.

And he's been a great part of UNC athletics for a very long time but specific to the golf team, he's been awesome to the golf team at UNC in general. Our host event that we play in Wilmington at Eagle Point is called the Williams Cup, it's for Coach and Wanda and they make sure that they're there, they take the time.

He goes out of his way to be nice to everyone. I've never seen him not remember someone's name. He's truly like in a class of his own. Just for him to be -- I know that he's in my corner is awesome, but for him to make sure that I know he's in my corner is really special.

And he does that for a lot of people. He does it for his former players, he does it for other golfers. He's truly fantastic.

Q. And then you spent so much time playing with Ben just around Raleigh and then obviously around the triangle and at North Carolina. What did you think when he decided to walk away from the game?

RYAN GERARD: Well, he decided to move into my apartment building so we were kind of giving him a hard time about that.

I think when you get into a spot where golf is really difficult, it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel sometimes. I think anyone that's played this game at a competitive level has gone through rough patches. Just knowing that it means something to you when you walk away and you want it, and when you're given a second opportunity, to make sure you take advantage of it, I think that's truly the measure of how badly someone wants it and how hard he worked to get here.

Because it wasn't just handed to him. I mean, he worked really, really hard to get back to a



spot where he felt that he could compete. I saw it almost every day in North Carolina in the summer when it's 100 degrees outside and everyone's sweating. He was out there more often than the entire UNC golf team practicing, putting in effort, traveling, playing mini tour events, getting ready for Q-School.

He had some awesome people step up and financially put themselves behind him and put him in a spot where he could go out there and compete. But it wasn't just a fluke. Like he wanted it from the first moment that I met him, and he got to a point where I feel like it got difficult and there were a lot of decisions that he had to make.

But for him to go out and earn it, really, really dig his heels in and make sure that he wasn't going to let anyone stand in the way of him and his dream when he got his second opportunity, second chances are rare and when you get them you want to take advantage of them as you can.

Q. You're in a great position with the FedExCup. Can you talk about have you ever thought about playing East Lake and getting that far?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, you know, coming off the Korn Ferry Tour from last year, I knew I wasn't going to have a ton of starts and you've got to play your way into more opportunities. As the season's progressed, I've played my way into those opportunities and the goalposts have kind of shifted from keeping your card to making the Playoffs to top-50 Signature Events to now I think getting to East Lake would be an amazing goal.

There's a lot that comes with it, but I think the biggest thing is when you play at the highest level, you want to keep playing at the highest level. You want to play against the best players in the world and see how it stacks up and you want to be there. So the only way to really get to the pinnacle is to beat the best.

I think East Lake would be an amazing end to the season. I still have work to do to get there. We're going to go out and do our best these next few weeks and try and take care of business. There's no starting strokes this year, so it would be kind of cool for someone to just squeak in and give themselves a chance at that event.

Q. A little offbeat, but have you seen the clip of Ben Griffin chipping in to win the high school state title as a freshman?

RYAN GERARD: Yes, I've seen it. It's been a while since I've seen it, but yes, I have seen it.

Q. He doesn't react, and he talked earlier about how he thought he was so cool not to react. I guess what's your reaction to that? Did you ever have an air like that of not wanting to react to a good shot?

RYAN GERARD: I think sometimes you want to just kind of stay in your own little bubble



and you don't want to show emotion because you don't want other people to kind of react to it. You know, sometimes it's you don't want to give someone else that you're playing against an in, feel like they are getting an edge on you in some way.

But I think the biggest thing is you just want to be authentic to yourself in those moments. When it means something, like you just kind of naturally react how you would. I don't think anyone really rehearses fist pumps or celebrations or whatnot, it all just kind of happens organically.

And I think that's kind of the beauty of sports, you can tell when it really means something to someone. They accomplished something that they put a lot of time and effort in and that raw emotion comes pouring out of people, and everyone has a different way of expressing themselves. To see different people do it in certain ways, you can tell how much it means to them and I think that's what separates sports from some other things is you can truly see how much it means to someone to accomplish something that they've worked their whole life for.

Q. What was going through your kind of I guess body as you were walking up to the final green at Barracuda?

RYAN GERARD: Well, I wanted to make sure that I didn't four-putt so I got in the hole. But I think it was just kind of everything was a blur. I kind of felt like I was walking up to something that I'd only dreamed of. Kind of like approaching kind of like a goal that I didn't know if I was going to ever attain and I wanted to make sure that that first putt I hit close enough to where I could figure it out.

But once I hit the first putt, I kind of was trying to not look around too much, trying to not let it overwhelm me because I knew it meant something. It's something that you work your entire life for. You never want to get ahead of yourself. You never want to feel like you put the cart before the horse and you let it slip away from you.

But walking up knowing that you were going to win a PGA TOUR event and I've spent hours and hours and hours on driving ranges and putting greens and golf courses and on airplanes since I was 5, 6 years old with a goal to win, kind of seeing all those moments kind of flash before you to end up culminating in a really special goal with a lot of people that have helped me along the way, it was pretty special

MODERATOR: Thank you for the time, Ryan. Best of luck this week.

RYAN GERARD: Appreciate it.

