

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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TIM O'NEAL



MODERATOR: We would like to welcome our defending champion, Tim O'Neal, to the Dominion Energy Charity Classic.

Tim, welcome back. If we can get some comments on being here and defending this week.

TIM O'NEAL: Well, the year's gone by really fast. I can't believe it's been a year already, but definitely looking forward to coming back to a place where I definitely loved my first win on the Champions Tour. So yeah, I'm excited. Weather's going to be nice this week. Ready to go.

MODERATOR: Yeah, take us back to last year. What are your recollections?

TIM O'NEAL: Everything happened so fast, I don't know. Just making birdie on the last hole and having to wait for Ricardo to finish issue, and Cookie coming over and talking to me saying I finally got the win. It was a big relief off my back to say I'm a Champions Tour winner now, so that was awesome. Definitely changed my life to get my first win out here.

MODERATOR: What is it about this golf course that you like so much?

TIM O'NEAL: I like everything. It's in great shape. It was in great shape last year. I just like how the holes flow. It just fits my eye, the holes.

Q. You said it changed your life. In what ways has that manifested itself this season just even mentally, emotionally, just in your own confidence?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, just mentally, just been more confident knowing that I can win. I always had the belief that I could win but knowing that I could win and actually getting it done has helped me this year, and trying to get another one.

Q. How much have you seen, and I know especially around this area, the rise in the game in the HBCUs, how much have you heard from people who are now saying, hey, I saw you win and I'm more determined than ever to do well in this sport or even take it up in the first place? I don't want to use the word "inspiration" but how much have people kind of given you that feeling?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, I mean, I went to an HBCU at Jackson State. For all the other HBCU kids that are playing golf, they see me out here. And hopefully some kids have reached out to me, they're at HBCUs and they pick my brain about things. Seeing me out here playing on the Champions Tour, just to inspire them that if I can do it, they can do it, too. That definitely

means a lot to me because I worked hard when I was in school, still working hard now. For them to see me out here, it helps them if they see someone who looks like me to inspire them to work hard, possibly play out here some day, too.

Q. I know every round is different, but when you come back to any course where you've had even a little bit of success, is it -- obviously got a smile on your face, you like coming back here obviously because you won. What is it like to come back to a course where you have done well?

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, I like the golf course for one. This week's a new week. I'm trying to win every week, I want to play well every week but I definitely like this golf course, it fits my eye. So yeah, I do have a little more confidence here I would say than any other course I play.

Q. This is the last go 'round for this tournament here. How special would it be to win the last one?

TIM O'NEAL: It would be awesome. A course that I won on and now it's going to be gone. Yeah, it would be really special to get another win here. Just, I don't know.

Q. Tim, unfortunately like you said this tournament's going away next year, this course. Can you explain to people why this course is so well liked for Champions Tour players?

TIM O'NEAL: Well, first of all, it's in great shape. And the course, it's a demanding golf course and it's fair. I think guys, they just love the golf course and the people definitely come out to support here in Richmond. Yeah, I don't know how long this tournament's been going on here, like 10 years, so all the players love this golf course. This is one of the better courses that we play all year.

MODERATOR: Real quick, talk a little bit about the state of your game coming into the week. Nice finish last week.

TIM O'NEAL: Yeah, my game's in a good spot right now, finished fourth last week at the SAS. My game's trending in the right direction and hopefully I can continue that this week.