

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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RYAN GERARD



MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Ryan Gerard to the interview room. He's making his third career start at the Wyndham Championship.

Ryan, welcome back to Sedgefield. If we can get some comments on your goals for the week.

RYAN GERARD: Yeah. Happy to be here, excited for the week. Yeah, just looking forward to hopefully staying dry the next few days. I've played a lot of golf around this course. Unfortunately, haven't played great here on the PGA TOUR so hope to kind of change that and maybe throw some low numbers out there. Course is kind of playing how it normally does, fast greens, really grainy but in good shape. Excited to get out there on Thursday.

MODERATOR: Yeah, what is your history here at this course prior to the Wyndham Championship?

RYAN GERARD: I played some junior golf here. I grew up in Raleigh about an hour down the road, so played some junior golf events. I think we actually played a couple high school tournaments. Played here occasionally in college, not in any tournaments but just kind of around. Have gotten a lot of reps around this golf course. Just feeling comfortable hitting the tee shot on 15 that's blind and getting really familiar with the visuals, which is nice kind of feeling because not a lot's changed here. It's kind of been very, very consistent over the last 10 or 15 years or so. Just loving being close-ish to home.

MODERATOR: Yeah, as a local favorite, do you put extra pressure on yourself going into the week?

RYAN GERARD: I don't know if there's any extra pressure. I think it's more just everything feels a little bit more comfortable. There will be a lot more familiar faces out there than usual. It's always nice being in a place where you feel really good about the vibes and kind of feeling like it's not too far from home. There will be a lot of Cook Outs this week and have some Bojangles so that will be lightening the mood. Besides that, it's not home but it feels close to it and I appreciate all the people here that have kind of helped out along the way.

MODERATOR: My last one, No. 16 in the FedExCup standings, big stretch coming up over the next month. You had three runner-up finishes this year. Just comment a little bit about your season and how you're ready to get back into the winner's circle.

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think the season's been pretty solid, a little up and down at times. I felt like I've been playing solid golf but haven't quite got over the hump yet. Been working



really hard and playing a lot of golf to try and change that.

Have four more weeks kind of coming up here to put an exclamation point on what's been pretty solid. You know, there's a lot of opportunity this week that we're kind of focusing on to try and make a push to get in a good spot for the Playoffs. It's a "one week at a time" and "one shot at a time" mentality that we're taking right now to just put our best foot forward this week and see how it all shakes out.

Q. Is there a single thing you feel like you need to just sharpen up a little bit that maybe has kept you from getting all the way to where you want to be?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah. I think I've played a lot of golf this year in tournaments that's maybe like three good rounds and one kind of mediocre round or three good rounds and one bad round. My ball-striking in particular hasn't been quite as good as where I want it to be. At times it's been kind of the driver and at times it's been kind of the iron play. It just kind of hasn't all lined up at the same time for the most part.

Been working really hard to try and get some fundamentals cleaned up. We spent some good time over across the pond where I was getting a lot of weight stacked on my left side and kind of hitting a lot of lower trajectory shots and kind of threw some things out of rhythm.

For the most part I feel really, really good about where we're at trending wise. It's just kind of putting four really quality rounds together. The guys out here are so good that you kind of stay in neutral for a day, you get lapped.

Things are trending, but it's been more ball-striking this year than last year. Last year I felt like I hit it just as good if not better this year. The putter's let me down at times but this year kind of turned the putter into a little bit of a weapon, which is very exciting to me because standing over a 15-footer, I feel good about it and that's a good feeling to have. Just excited to kind of hopefully put all the puzzle pieces in the right spots.

Q. You're not that far removed from college, but we've seen what younger players coming through PGA TOUR U have been able to do. Could you see a scenario where maybe more guys should be slotted up immediately given the success we've seen from various guys?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think college golf has prepared a lot of really good players to succeed at this level. I think you've seen a lot of really special talents coming out. Thor winning last week. I don't really know Jackson but he's got an awesome reputation, his game is incredible.

I think those guys are kind of like really, really special talents. Dave Ford was a teammate of mine, he came out of PGA TOUR U, he's played really solid when he's been healthy.

I think PGA TOUR U sending some guys to Korn Ferry Tour -- look at what Tommy



Morrison's doing -- I think that can be a good thing. I felt like I wasn't necessarily ready to be on the PGA TOUR when I first came out of college. I played pretty good on the Canadian Tour, then I got thrown into the PGA TOUR almost before I was ready to. I wasn't necessarily as prepared to be at the top level as I thought I was going to be.

I think if you asked every 22-year-old kid, like they think they're ready to be there because you kind of have to have that mindset and you almost don't know better. So yeah, if you can throw them in the fire, great. But I think developing talent at Korn Ferry Tour level, PGA TOUR Americas level, those things are kind of not -- it might not be as much of like just a blowby as you might think.

I think it did a lot for me in my career, it taught me how to be a professional, it taught me how to plan travel, it taught me out to manage my time, it taught me how to negotiate, deal with caddies; just do a lot of things that a professional golfer does on the PGA TOUR without thinking, whereas when you're first coming out of college, you're used to coaches handling everything. You're used to logistics, being on a schedule. Now all of a sudden it's on your own time and own dime and you have to go out there and plan things.

For me, I needed that learning curve. Obviously there are guys that don't and have had a lot of really good success early on, but I think they're special guys and rare talents. I want people to have the opportunity to be successful. I think throwing 10 guys a year from college straight to the PGA TOUR, you're not setting all of them up for success.

Q. With you being where you're at in the FedExCup standings, does that enable you to play freer over these next few weeks or what's your mindset going in?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think the next few weeks are all about having fun, playing good golf. But there is kind of a lot of importance at stake for me from FedExCup, winning golf tournaments, trying to maybe track down a spot on the Presidents Cup team. Just kind of being competitive, being the best that I can be out there, but just kind of taking a step forward with your game.

Whenever you get the chance to play against the best 70 guys, 50 guys, 30 guys on the Tour, you're going to have to put your best foot forward. You want to show that you belong and that your game stacks up just as good as you think it does. You don't want to show up any week and kind of get blown out or play really bad and feel horrible because Scottie beats you by 30 shots. That's kind of -- obviously you want to win, you want to play really good golf, but there's a level of pride that goes into, hey, the job's not finished, we're going to sprint through this finish line.

There's a lot of awesome things for me to play for the next few weeks and then get to East Lake and try and win the big one at the end.

Q. As you've tried to tighten up your fundamentals recently, when you get to the practice tee on Thursday or you start your warmup routine, is there anything in



particular you're trying to replicate those fundamentals, find a feel for the day to carry you through?

RYAN GERARD: I think for me the most things that I do on Thursday are routine based. Like I think I'm finding a lot of feels on Monday through Wednesday or kind of working on techniques. Thursday it's a lot about getting the alignment stick down, making sure aim, alignment, body's moving properly, swing feels good. If there's any tendencies that you see in ball flight or something feels a little off, you can kind of know what to correct before you get on the course. Or not even correct but just understand, hey, I'm cutting it a little bit more than usual or things are kind of falling a little left with this club. If you get on the course, just kind of understand that that's a tendency that you might have.

I think the biggest thing is when you do a warmup every day and you've hit a lot of golf balls, you try not to take too much stock in how things are actually going on the range. It's not going to translate directly to what it does on the golf course. Some of my best rounds have come from some of my worst warmups and some of my worst rounds have come from my best warmups. You have to separate the two and just understand that you're using that as a warmup to get your body loose, to get everything moving, to get everything feeling like it's ready to go.

When you step on the first tee, it's kind of a blank slate and you try to execute. You do take away, hey, greens might be a little firmer than I thought, or we have the TrackMan down, it's really hot out, ball might be flying a few yards further. So there are things that you write down, but for the most part you don't want any bad feelings or bad vibes or any really good vibes to give you a false sense of confidence going onto the golf course.

Q. Also, is there any particular stretch here where you feel more comfortable and be more aggressive or other stretches where you feel you'll be a little bit more conservative?

RYAN GERARD: I think in terms of like golf course tournament stretches, I feel like you can kind of pick your spots depending upon what the course gives you. I think they do a really good job setting hole locations and making the courses consistent week in and week out that you can't just take dead aim all the time.

Last week the greens were new and really soft and you could kind of go flag hunting at times, but the penalty for missing on the wrong side was really severe. So you have to take that into consideration when they stick a pin in the middle of the green; yeah, it's a green light, go for it. But you stick it three, four paces next to the edges of greens next to bunker or hazard, whatever it might be, there's the proper way to aim for that, which is a few yards in the proper -- or on the fatter side of the green.

I think a lot of it is just understanding what the golf course gives you, what spots you can, can't miss. But also, if you're in a rhythm and you're hitting it well, things are easier to go at.



I've talked about this before, but I think one of my superpowers in golf is when I'm angry, I tend to hit really good golf shots. There's a level of extra focus. You kind of get pissed and you just, you don't think too much and you just hit it. You have to kind of channel that but not let it go too much in the wrong direction. If you make a stupid mistake and you make a bogey or you have a dumb three-putt or miss a short one or something like that, usually the next shot for me is pretty good.

So we try and use that to our advantage. Doesn't mean be stupid and ridiculous with strategy, it just means kind of go out there and allow yourself to maximize the potential on every kind of swing that you have.

Q. Ryan, a little off topic, but many of us have seen you in a TV commercial recently for one of your sponsors. I'm curious, what was it like behind the scenes filming that and participating in that compared to your typical day-to-day routine of things that you normally do to prepare for play?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, a bit strange. I tend to like the golf course being on camera a little bit more because I don't have to remember lines or kind of sit there with makeup on my face all day. It's a weird feeling.

No, it was cool. We did it at this really nice old couple's house in North Carolina. We used their deck and they were letting us hang out in their like family room, living room during kind of breaks.

There's a lot more that goes into a 30-, 40-second commercial than you think. It was a lot of OK, start it over, state it a little bit differently, that kind of thing. I'm like, man, I just thought I nailed it but it was apparently not what I was supposed to be doing.

I'm glad that this is my day job and not acting. I have a lot more respect for people that are on the TV screen more than I am. It was kind of a cool glimpse into that world. I hope it turned out decently well. It was an interesting experience, but it was a lot of fun.

Q. Going back to The Open Championship, you had a great week there and Ryan Fox won. You and Ryan Fox both have kind of fairly unorthodox swings when you look at textbook swings. Do you feel when you go and play a links course like that that requires a lot of creativity, do you think that's an advantage for guys like you and Ryan and others with kind of similar unorthodox swings? Do you think it gives you that creativity because of the way you feel or play? Do you think that's an advantage to play at courses like that?

RYAN GERARD: I'm not sure if it gives me a specific advantage. I think my advantage on links golf is I do a really good job of flighting the ball down and when it gets windy, picking it off the turf that can be really firm and kind of doesn't have a lot of grass on it, it's really, really kind of matted down, I feel like that's kind of my advantage.



Foxy, he's a special man. He hits it so good. You watch him hit golf balls and I think his kind of major like thing that separates him is the repeatability of what he does. Yeah, it looks unorthodox but he does the same thing like every single time. When you watch him hit balls on the range or you watch him hit golf shots coming down the stretch in a golf tournament, you have to own your swing and you have to own what you do and he does that just as good if not better than everybody else.

I think just being comfortable being yourself at a golf tournament like The Open is almost more important than feeling good about your swing because the ball can bounce anywhere. There are a million things going on, the wind, it's so firm, the bunkers are everywhere. You're just almost playing to mitigate disaster at times. You just have to really go out there and try and own it and not be scared of the potential negatives. Just go out there and really feel like you're executing the way you need to execute. I think that's what Foxy did amazing coming down the stretch was he was owning his swing. He does the same thing very, very consistently. I was unfortunately not able to do it as well as he did, but I think that's kind of his major (inaudible.)

Q. You own your swing too, right?

RYAN GERARD: I definitely feel like I do. I don't look at a lot of videos of it sometimes, but I love my move, I love how consistent I am through the golf ball. It's taken me a long way in this game and I hope it takes me even further. It's not something we're changing anytime soon.

Q. Just want to walk it back a little bit. Just curious what your Cook Out order is.

RYAN GERARD: Oh, yeah. Got to go tray, quesadilla, sometimes nuggets, got to go fries, and then I'm kind of that Oreo shake guy. But sometimes there's like a flavor of the month that will get you. You've got to really understand what you're getting into. Yeah, there's no better value in life than a Cook Out tray.

Q. Is there anything there that's kind of a guilty pleasure that you want to order every time but you're like, I've got to hold off on?

RYAN GERARD: I don't know if it's a guilty pleasure, but I love a hot dog.

Q. First let me start with something important. Let me give Bojangles equal time. What are you going to get there?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, appreciate that. Cajun filet biscuit always, breakfast lunch and dinner. Doesn't matter what time of day, Cajun filet biscuit.

Q. Rounds or fries?

RYAN GERARD: Fries, Cajun fries.



Q. Now my other question, it's been a good year for people who grew up in Raleigh, I can think of at least four guys who had really, really good years. Do you guys know each other and have you thought about that at all?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, from a golf standpoint I'm very familiar with all the guys who grew up in Raleigh. Obviously, all the Hurricanes did a great job, too, so that was a big shout-out to them.

But I think you grow up playing a lot of golf with the people in your area and we're all of similar ages. I mean, Doc has been playing amazing on the Korn Ferry Tour and he's going to be back up here next year, which I'm super stoked for him. He's one of the guys that I grew up playing with like every day kind of at home. He had so much success early on and I think he kind of found his second wind. It's been really impressive to see what he's been doing kind of week in and week out. It's not easy to do what he did out on the Korn Ferry Tour and it's been impressive. I'm excited for him.

But you play a lot of golf with guys kind of growing up in the same area. You get comfortable with them, you get competitive with them, but at the end of the day you make a lot of friends along the way and it kind of serves you well when you get out here because you kind of push each other to continue making the best out of it.

Q. I know you know (inaudible,) but do you know Akshay?

RYAN GERARD: Absolutely. Yeah, Akshay and I, we know each other really well. He's a few years younger than me. When I was kind of the junior, senior in high school, he was kind of freshman-ish year and he would play in a lot of the same tournaments, so I've known him for a very long time.

Alex, kind of very similar to Ben, grew up a lot of junior golf tournaments with him. When I was kind of a freshman in college, he was a senior and played with him a few times that year in college, but also, I've known him for 15 years. I've known Ben for 20 years. I've known all these guys for a very long time. You just get to kind of know them, know their families, know their parents, know where they come from.

You see a lot of really, really cool things with them playing good golf and it kind of forces you to get back out there and give it your best too. Because I don't want Ben Griffin beating me my entire life, that's not something that I want. He's done a really good job of it so far so we're going to kind of continue pushing him.

Alex is awesome, Akshay's awesome, Doc's awesome. There's a lot of really, really good guys from central North Carolina and lucky enough to be one of them.

Q. North Carolina really loves its golf. There're a lot of people around this tournament maybe a little nervous in a couple years that they make the cut. Being in North



Carolinian, how much are you rooting for this tournament to make the cut?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think this golf tournament has been a really, really good staple of the PGA TOUR for a very long time. There's a lot of history, there's a lot of special moments that have happened here. I think that's something that you can't kind of replicate at a new venue or something like that.

I know John McConnell's done a lot of really good things for golf in North Carolina, Mark Brazil's done an amazing job for this golf tournament. I'm rooting for them more than I'm kind of rooting for anyone else just from the standpoint of they've done a lot of good things for me, but this has kind of been the event that when I grew up an hour down the road, this was an easy one for me to go to. I obviously went to Quail also, but this is kind of as close to my hometown as it gets.

I would love for it to kind of continue being part of the fabric of what they're doing on the top level of the PGA TOUR, and based on some of the monetary things that I've seen, there are a lot of other people that are feeling the same way and want it to kind of be a part of the Tour for a long time. I don't know what 2028 holds, it's far above my pay grade in terms of making decisions, but I know there's a lot of really smart people and a lot of passionate people in the rooms that have the best interests of everyone at heart and we'll see what they kind of do.

MODERATOR: All right. I think that does it. Ryan, I hope you get angry this week, maybe we'll see you in here Sunday night. Appreciate it.

RYAN GERARD: Thanks, guys.

