PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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RYAN GERARD

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Ryan Gerard to the interview room here at the 2026 Worldwide Technology Championship.

Ryan, highest ranked player in the field this week, No. 23 in the world. Can you just I guess open it up with thoughts on the course? You just got off your pro-am. I guess your takeaway so far here at El Cardonal?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, really cool venue this week. Just kind of a big ballpark, a lot of room to hit it off the tee. But got to make the most of your week kind of approaching into the greens. There's a lot of really cool slopes built in that you really can use to help you or they will funnel your ball far, far away from the hole. It's going to be a lot of trusting where the wind is, making sure your approach shots are pretty dialed, leave it in the right spot and see if you can make some putts on the Paspalum.

MODERATOR: Second start in the fall, first since Japan. What went into the decision to come here this week?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, guys at WWT have been really good to me. A couple years ago I was a special temporary and they gave me a sponsor exemption. With some of the stuff going on over in the Middle East, didn't feel like it was a great time to go play DP World Tour Playoffs, so decided to come here, help those guys out because they've been great to me in the past. Just excited to be here, love being in Cabo. Weather's perfect, golf course is cool, and I like playing golf so might as well keep it rolling a little bit.

MODERATOR: You qualified for the FedExCup Playoffs the second year in a row and went to the Tour Championship the first time. When you look back on your 2026 season, how would you sum it up?

RYAN GERARD: Just really a solid year of golf. A little disappointing, just haven't really closed out a tournament to get a win so that's kind of the one thing left to do this year. Just going to go out there, play some good golf, see how it stacks up at the end of the week.

Q. I just want to know, you have played chess (indiscernible) for (indiscernible) years, playing the violin. Which one has helped you more as a golfer? Thank you.

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, this is actually kind of a weird thing that I've talked about before. I played violin for a while growing up, like 10, 15 years. I think there's something to understanding the rhythm of a putting stroke, and my feel is pretty attributed to what I hear. Being able to have that kind of music background and understanding different kind of

tempos, rhythms, sounds, I feel like it's kind of made my feel as a golfer really sharp just because I can kind of -- you know, my ears and eyes and everything kind of go together and feel everything in a very distinct way.

Q. You went through all the other on the PGA Tour umbrellas, PGA Tour Canada, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA Tour. How does these work for a professional golfer in his development going through all the stages?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think it's really important, you know, at least it was for me like kind of growing up and learning how to be a professional. There's a big difference in my mind between college golf and professional golf. It's just learning as a person, growing as an individual, kind of establishing what works for you, being on your own schedule, having a lot of self discipline.

Those individual stages have kind of, you know, starting in PGA Tour Canada learning how to travel on your own, learning how to play golf, learning to be comfortable in different areas. Going to Korn Ferry, learning how to work with a caddie, building a team around you. Getting to the PGA Tour, biggest fields, biggest purses, biggest golf courses, the most pressure and learning to get comfortable out there.

I think it's a daunting sport coming out of college. You get out here and it's just kind of you against the world. I think just having steppingstones to get towards the top has been really beneficial for me because I've been able to learn every year, grow every year, establish good people around me that have helped, but also just become more mature as a person because as a 22-, 23-year-old like I wasn't ready to be sitting here, and sometimes you'll play good, sometimes you'll play bad, but as you learn more about yourself and as you get better as a golfer, it's just, it's nice to be able to kind of keep moving up the ranks.

Q. Being the best ranked player in the field, do you think -- like what do you think that makes you like the favorite to win the tournament, and what do you think about El Cardonal, the golf course?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think obviously I'm here to win the golf tournament. I think that's kind of, you know, why we all play. Being the highest ranked person here, that's the expectation, have a good chance coming down the stretch on Sunday.

I think the golf course sets up well for me. It's a really good golf course. You've seen a lot of solid players play well here over the years and you can separate yourself from the field based on ball-striking and putting a little bit. So I feel like it sets up well for me.

Yeah, the goal is to win, I'm here to win a golf tournament, and being the guy that's highest ranked that's kind of the expectation, so we're just going to go out and do what we can.

Q. What did you learn about yourself and your game at the Tour Championship, being in contention there?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think it's just kind of I'm ready to be at the top of some of these leaderboards. I think I've played really solid in a lot of golf tournaments over the course of the year. There's a lot of really good players that are playing well almost every week and you just kind of have to be sharp and stay patient.

But I think the biggest thing that I took away from the Tour Championship is it's right there. I've got to clean a couple things up and just try and get off to a little bit of a better start sometimes.

But man, there's so many, so many good players, but I feel like I can be right there with them when I'm doing what I need to do.

Q. Last year you were chasing the Masters invite, did a lot of traveling. What was the motivation to play so much after the Tour Championship this year?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I think part of it was I wanted to continue playing golf, felt like I was playing good. I wanted to play on the DP World Tour. I feel like I took a membership of that tour last year and I felt like it was important to continue playing internationally and play different places.

As a young person without a whole lot of responsibilities at home, I have the ability to go travel to some really awesome places and play some really cool events. Yeah, man, I think just continue playing golf. Like I love playing golf. There's going to be a point here in a few years where there's only so many events that you can play, and I'm sure at a certain point my body's not going to be able to play 35 weeks a year as I'm doing currently, but take advantage of when you can and go see some cool things, go play some cool places and really make sure that I made a commitment to play on the DP World Tour for their minimum, make sure I hit that, make sure I go above and beyond and just really try and play as much as I can all over the world.

Q. What have been some of the highlights of those travels?

RYAN GERARD: I mean, Switzerland's a really, really cool place. Adam Scott like lives on the golf course that we play, so I knew it was going to be cool but wasn't sure if I was quite ready for that.

Japan's awesome, it's one of my favorite spots. Keith was sherpa'ing me to a dinner in a Japan and just let him kind of take the lead, so that was a new one for me.

Yeah, I think just go and experience some different things, getting out of your comfort zone a little bit. It's very easy for me to get comfortable being from America, traveling in America, playing in America all the time to kind of move around and see different parts of the world while getting to play a really awesome game that I love doing.

Q. Ryan, just want to get your thoughts on your good friend Austin Hitt and the KFT Championship, getting his Tour card.

RYAN GERARD: Can you repeat that?

Q. Just your thoughts on your good friend Austin Hitt winning KFT Championship and also getting his Tour card.

RYAN GERARD: Oh, man, it's probably the most nervous I've ever been kind of watching someone play golf at 2:00 in the morning.

He lives in my house in Florida, I talk to him all the time. He practices so hard. He's the kind of guy that, you know, is very, very happy go lucky, doesn't really stress about too much, but you can see how much he wants it and how much he's worked for it. He's put in a lot of effort, he's put in a lot of sacrifice.

I mean, like he doesn't have a car right now because he gave it to his brother. Like he's that kind of guy who would just do anything for the people that he cares about. I'm just so stoked for him, man. Like he's truly, truly an awesome human. I hope you guys will get to know him a little bit next year because he's awesome to be around. He's going to be a great player, he's just going to keep chugging along.

Q. When you were on Chasing Sunday we captured you talking about him shooting a 60 in the final round of Kansas City. Just talk about how big of a score that was in the final round and how that really set him up.

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, shooting 60 in the final round anywhere is fricking crazy, but especially when you're kind of like hovering right on the bubble of the Korn Ferry Tour trying to get your card. Like that's just ultimate stones, just really, really special stuff.

I mean, he's been so close. Like Korn Ferry cut cards from 30 to 20 last year, he was inside that top-30. Like it's gotten very, very difficult to be a PGA Tour player, and guys have worked really, really hard to get there. There's so much talent in professional golf, it's very hard to get to the top.

So anytime you get a chance that you're close and you have a chance to get across the finish line, I think it's very important to do so because you might not get that opportunity again soon.

So I'm stoked for him. I'm really, really impressed with him. He works really hard and he kind of inspires me to go out and work hard too because I don't want to get beat by someone living in my own house.

Q. Who do you have on the bag this week?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I've got my former roommate from college, Mason. Normal caddie JP, he's getting a little hiatus this week, he's going to our buddy's wedding in Columbia. So got a friendly face on the bag over there. Try and make him go through some boot camp here today and get him ready to go for tomorrow. But he's done a great job. He played golf at UNC, I've known him for forever, so I'm just excited to enjoy some time, play some good golf and see where it shakes out.

MODERATOR: Unless there are any more questions, we can wrap it up. All right, Ryan, thanks for the time, best of luck this week.

RYAN GERARD: Thank you.