

RBC Heritage

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Wesley Bryan

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Wesley Bryan into the interview room at the RBC Heritage. Wesley is our 2017 champion of this event, a South Carolinian, so I know it's very important to you. If we could get some comments on being back here.

WESLEY BRYAN: Thank you, Mr. Bush. It's just obviously great to be back here. It's been a long time coming, I guess, to have this PGA TOUR return. It's been, I think, about 18 months or so. Just to be back on property where my first and only PGA TOUR win came is great. I'm excited to lace up the shoes and go out there tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: And not only the PGA TOUR's return but yours, making your first PGA TOUR start since last year's RBC Heritage. Take us a little bit through your shoulder surgery, your health, and your goals for this week and the rest of the season.

WESLEY BRYAN: I mean, health-wise, we're doing pretty good. I would say I got maybe 5 percent left to go on the shoulder, just as far as range of motion and flexibility and all that stuff. But the strength is there. It feels good. I wouldn't say great, but it should be good enough to complete four rounds. So that's kind of the main goal.

As far as expectations are concerned, I realized long ago you've got to leave those at the door and just go out there and give it all you got and see where it stacks up in the end. Have I been playing good leading up to it? Yeah. But, I mean, expectation-wise, I don't really got much.

THE MODERATOR: Before we open it up to questions, just talk a little bit about Harbour Town, what a special golf course this is, and even though fans are not here, what people can expect watching on TV this week.

WESLEY BRYAN: I mean, golf course-wise, it's as good as it gets. It makes you think on just about every single shot, whether it's off the tee, trying to be on a particular side of the hole, or going into the green. Some of the -- I would say most of the holes, you would have to work the ball going into the green just to avoid trees.

I mean, it's just -- it's a shot maker's golf course. I know it's kind of like a broken record, people saying that

around this place, but it does put an emphasis on hitting the correct shot shape and hitting it where you're looking.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Hey, Wesley, welcome back. You probably played this golf course a couple of times in the fall -- I'm sorry, in the spring, when it's overseeded, and now. You have a better idea than anyone how different it's going to play. What do you expect this week?

WESLEY BRYAN: Yeah, I've played this golf course a lot from the middle of winter, when it's firm and fast and the wind's blowing 30 miles an hour and it's 36 degrees, and I've also played it when it's 110 out here and just soaking wet from thunderstorms every single night.

I would say the golf course is really playing quite similar to the overseed. Down here in the south, I guess, we've gotten a fair amount of rain. The grass is a little bit different. It's probably going to be a little more difficult to chip around the greens just with some softer, grainier Bermuda versus the overseed, where it just kind of sits up and it's a little bit stickier.

But I would say overall, I would venture to say the winning score and all that stuff will be around the same number. I don't think it's affecting it one way or the other.

Q. And what has changed this week for you the most? I know the testing protocols and not being able to work with equipment reps and all the different things that go into the bubble that the TOUR has created. What's the one that stands out the most to you?

WESLEY BRYAN: I think just not having family here and being able to watch. I mean, my wife is a very dedicated, loyal watcher of golf for me over the past few years. Just not having her here is going to be a little bit odd. I mean, we had a family change in the last year and a half. We had a little baby girl. So, shoot, I don't even know at this point how much on the golf course she would be. But I think that's the one thing that's a little bit odd.

Q. Wesley, so you went from Sea Island at the end of '18, the entire '19 season out, correct?

WESLEY BRYAN: Yes, sir.

Q. What was that like coming back at Panama? Was there any nervousness about teeing it up when it counts and then off to Mexico City? Those two you got before you shut down.

WESLEY BRYAN: Yeah, it was weird getting on the 1st tee. I've been wearing the WHOOP for a few months leading up to it and was just excited to see kind of what the heart rate was doing. It clocked in at like I think 165 or something on the 1st tee. Just getting those nerves and the juices flowing was amazing. That's what I miss. That's what everybody out here wants to do is compete.

As far as the expectations are concerned, I had pretty high expectations going into that week and laid an absolute egg. So going to Mexico, it was a place where I'd won in the past and a golf course that I was really familiar with. I started to put the pieces together that week, just as far as getting in the rhythm of playing golf.

I told a few people down there the biggest jump that I had to make was figuring out how to use a yardage book again and use front numbers and a pin sheet and all that stuff because at home it's just riding a cart, laser the flag, shoot right at it. There was no real thought process. So just getting in the rhythm of actually playing golf and looking at a yardage book was something odd the first week.

Q. What was the nature of the surgery that it would keep you away from competition for 15 months? That seems long by kind of modern standards, if you will.

WESLEY BRYAN: Yeah. I mean, it was -- where it fell, when I would have been coming back around the year mark for the surgery that I had done, just with the actual surgery and I didn't touch a golf club for four months, then started the rehab process, just trying to get the range of motion back to 100 percent. It's still not even really there yet. It's kind of on a case-by-case basis, I guess, is what they say.

When I was coming back, I was trying to get ready for the fall of, I guess, 2019, and it just wasn't quite ready. So then when you go into the off-season, and then I had my rehab start. So I did come back in January, whenever Panama was, and was gearing up for an April return, and then the coronavirus stuff hit. It's good. It gave my shoulder a little bit more time to heal, but just some odd circumstances that delayed it a little longer. But I was shooting for the 12-month mark.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the experience of playing again, kind of putting the band back together with your brother and doing all the

YouTube stuff during the down time.

WESLEY BRYAN: Yes, I think George got the channel cranked back up again doing some YouTube golf vlogs and trying to create another source of income. As he was starting, that is when basically everything shut down. So it gave us time to put the camera back in our hand and get back on YouTube.

I would say at this point the channel's been growing pretty steadily over the last few months, and just having matches with him, being competitive, and trying to entertain the small following we've got going right now has been a lot of fun. I think we'll probably keep it up.

Q. Can you describe what the response has been like? And was there any other scenario, you think, where you might have been able to do this again?

WESLEY BRYAN: Probably not in the volume we've been. I would say the response is overall good. We've created a little bit of a friendly family banter that's definitely recognized in the comments. I've been seen as very brash and abrasive and a lot of smack talk towards George, and George is embracing the role of the guy that's always jittering and jolting around the golf course and readjusting his glasses and picking up his tee oddly. So we've been running with that for a little bit.

I think the biggest comment I get is why can't you take that level of trash talk on TOUR and mike yourself up? And I think that it would be a more entertaining product than what you normally see on the golf course, but I don't think -- it's not the time or place. I can talk junk to my brother, but I can't quite do it -- I don't know.

If I'm playing with Kevin Kisner -- actually, that's a bad example. I think we could really get into it. I wouldn't mike us two up, but you know what I mean. It's a different game when you can edit and do all that.

Q. They had Rickie last week. Have you put your hand up saying you'd like to do that one of these days?

WESLEY BRYAN: Believe it or not, when you are away from competitive golf for 18 months, nobody really remembers that you were there. So I think I'm kind of flying under the radar. Maybe after a few weeks, they'll realize that I'm back out here and maybe ask me to get miked up, I'm not sure. But it's not like people have been blowing up my phone or banging on my door trying to get a camera in front of me with a microphone on.

Q. And what's your schedule looking like? How much are you planning to play?

WESLEY BRYAN: I'm going to play here and Travelers, and then -- I mean, we'll reassess. I hadn't played two

weeks in a row in I don't know how long. We'll see how that goes. Those are, I think, the only ones that are for sure on the schedule.

The goal is to play and hopefully play enough to get in the FEDEX playoffs for this year. However many events that takes, I don't know. I don't know if I'm in the spot right now where I really want to push the shoulder and try and do this three, four weeks in a row. We'll have to assess after these two weeks and see how it is.

Q. As long as you've been gone, the time you've been here on property, have you run across a player you had no idea who it was, and did you get a sense people walked by you and wondered who you were?

WESLEY BRYAN: It's been a long time. It's been kind of difficult to juggle the actual time on property because there's so many people that you want to say hello to that you haven't seen. I will say there's a couple guys that I definitely haven't seen or I had to like scan the golf bag and go, oh, that's who it is.

Q. Do it all the time, yeah.

WESLEY BRYAN: There's a few -- I'm not going to name them by names, but I've got two of them in mind that I would put a face to a name.

THE MODERATOR: I think that does it, Mr. Bryan. We appreciate your time. Play well this week.

WESLEY BRYAN: Absolutely. Thanks, Mr. Bush.