

# RBC Heritage

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

## Davis Love

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will go ahead and get started. I'd like to welcome five-time RBC Heritage champion Davis Love III. Davis, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Obviously, a place near and dear to your heart. I'm sure you're happy to be back here making your 31st RBC Heritage Open start. With that said, just some comments on being back here and walking these grounds that are so special to you.

DAVIS LOVE III: It's just great to be back on the PGA TOUR. I was not in last week at Colonial, so I got to watch on CBS the start back to golf. It's been exciting.

I've been involved in the TOUR in a lot of different ways, shapes, and forms. So I knew a little bit from the tournament side with my RSM Classic and from talking to our commissioner and some of our board members what was going on. So it's just exciting to see back to playing golf, knowing the hard work of everybody at all the tournaments, at PGA TOUR headquarters, all the volunteers. What an unbelievable accomplishment this is to be in our second week back.

I'm excited to be here, excited to be playing the Heritage again. I missed it last year. My daughter had a baby premature, and I ended up withdrawing last year. So I'm excited to be playing again and looking forward to competing.

THE MODERATOR: With that, we'll jump in and take some questions.

**Q. A lot of new guys here this week. This is obviously a more stacked field maybe than we're used to. Has anybody come to you with questions? Have you talked to anybody about the course? What are you hearing from other players?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, first guy I really had a conversation with Monday afternoon when I went out to the range was Tony Finau, and he said, what's your strategy? My strategy now is I hit a lot of drivers, but if I was you, I would not hit a lot of drivers.

So we talked about the way I played the course back when I was a long hitter. Tony's just an incredible ball striker. So we just talked a little bit about Pete Dye, you know, Pete Dye's strategy. This is a lot like PLAYERS. You have to put it in the proper place in the fairway, not just in the fairway.

And it's been generally the way it is at the Heritage, a lot of guys think that I have some secret, and I really don't. I was getting ready for the Masters and THE PLAYERS Championship and a big summer of golf, and I always seem to just put it together here rather than at the Masters or other tournaments in the spring.

Yeah, it's fun. I just played with two young amateurs today. Hopefully, I helped them a little bit, at least be comfortable with playing the Heritage and the golf course and everything that goes with it. But right off the bat, Tony Finau. It was funny.

**Q. What do you think surprises guys maybe out here who haven't seen this place before or haven't seen it in a long time?**

DAVIS LOVE III: I think Tony, it had been a while since Tony played. Just surprised how small the greens are. We're used to these big, huge, long golf courses with deep rough, and all of a sudden, you come to this nice little short golf course that seems like it's not that big a deal, but when the wind blows, it's some of the highest winning scores on TOUR.

They're just surprised at what they've been missing, the guys that haven't played here. Then the guys that do play here year in and year out, you get kind of a sense that this is a comfortable, fun place for them to play. We always wonder, a Tony Finau or a Dustin Johnson, boy, this would really suit them once you think about, well, you don't have to hit driver every hole, and you get to use every club in your bag. A powerful player could play a strategy around here, like THE PLAYERS Championship, that would work. Guys really appreciate the history of this golf course and of Pete Dye.

**Q. Obviously, on top of all the stuff with the pandemic, you had your own personal issues to deal with at home. I was just wondering if you could update us on how tough that has been and where things stand and how you've moved forward from it.**

DAVIS LOVE III: Certainly, Robin and I packing up to come to a golf tournament was exciting, but it was also a little emotional. We didn't have anything to pack like we usually would do. I'm searching for head covers, and my son gave me a ball mark fixer on Sunday evening. I was like, I just don't have enough equipment

to go play a PGA TOUR event. So it's been ups and downs like that.

We've been very blessed in our lives and really in the last few months with friends and family. We bought a house, and we moved in. Slugger White just asked me, are you settled in? I said, no, I'm settling. I'm not settled yet. It will be a long time until things get settled for us. But we're moving forward. We've got great support at home. It's just nice to be back out amongst friends.

I put up a post yesterday that Webb Simpson showed me -- and just the comforting words and seeing your friends that you haven't seen for months. I've talked to all my friends on the phone, and they've called, and we've talked about what happened, but it's just nice to see everybody. So this is a big week.

When my dad passed away, I went to the first tournament -- I don't even remember where it was, somewhere in December, and Andy Bean put me on a golf cart, and he drove me away from -- it must have been like the team tournament in Florida or something. He drove me away from the crowd, and he said, you're going to have to come up with something to say to everybody because everybody is going to want to say something to you and it's going to be every week. So I'm kind of going to go through that again. Yesterday I got kind of worn out because I was talking so much to the people who wanted to talk to me.

Thankfully, all the way back in 1988, Andy taught me that lesson, and I've been through a lot in my career. But it's just great. I mean, Webb made my day. Several people today have made my day, made me -- Mackenzie Hughes just stopped me on the way in here. So it's great to be out. It's going to be a process, but we're moving through it. Again, we're blessed. We just lost some things. Nobody got hurt, and our family is still healthy and safe.

**Q. Davis, is the new home close by or same neighborhood, same vicinity?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, our island's pretty small. We stayed on the island. We'll always stay there. A lot of friends and family. So we don't know what we're going to do long term, but we did buy a house. We're settled in.

We have a pool, and the granddaughters are swimming in it, and everybody's happy right now.

**Q. If I could have you put your Ryder Cup on real quick, with either turn as captain, would you have wanted six picks?**

DAVIS LOVE III: No. I was in the Jack Nicklaus category. Let's just take the top 12 and be done with it.

The picks are the hardest thing for a captain. It's really not the picks. It's the guys you don't pick. You have to call them, and I've seen Bubba Watson, talked to him three times already this week, about this year's Ryder Cup. It's still awkward with guys that you didn't pick or that you did pick and felt like they didn't help. So it's terrible.

Now, we wanted Steve to have 12 because we don't have to do the picking. Like we don't know what's going to happen between now and the Ryder Cup. Let's get 12. And we worked our way back to six as a reasonable number. You want guys to be able to play and earn their spots, but we really don't know -- especially a month or two ago, we didn't know what was going to happen, how many tournaments we were going to get to play, how many Majors are we going to not have before the Ryder Cup. You just didn't know what was happening.

No, I would not want to be in his shoes. Now, we've spent a lot of time talking about the process, so we're going to help him through it, but it's going to be different. Like everything in this world right now is different. Nothing's normal. We're going to help Steve get through it. Hopefully, those first three or four are going to be very obvious, and we're back to just picking the last couple guys.

**Q. With regard to Rory McIlroy and maybe you looking back to some of your, quote, unquote, prime days when you were nearer to the top, he's had a couple of goes where he's been in position, and on Sundays it's become a thing -- like last week is the most recent. I just kind of wonder, in your opinion, is this unfair, to some degree, to criticize because of the fact he's No. 1 in the world and he's been putting himself in those positions and he obviously has won a number of times, or does it become a thing a little bit sometimes where a pattern starts to develop a little bit? Maybe you can look back to some of your days when you were finishing.**

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes, I've been in second a lot.

**Q. I wasn't referring to that. I was talking more to when you were at your prime.**

DAVIS LOVE III: I remember clearly -- I don't remember the year because, you know me, I'm not a good golf historian. But whenever Greg Norman didn't win the Masters dramatically, he came here to play the next week. He always played here. I remember walking down the 9th fairway and meeting him and walking back with him and telling him, if you're not at the top of the leaderboard all the time, you can't have a wreck. He had so many times that he got beat or hit a bad

shot on the last hole or something happened -- Larry Mize chipped in -- but if you're not at the top all the time, we can't pick at you.

I think that's -- with Tiger, his win percentage is incredible, but if you're not up there all the time, you can't finish second. I think that's the way I look at Rory is he's always in the game. He had one little stretch where he was not playing well, but he's always in the top ten. He always looks like he's one round away from winning, and I think that's the way he looks at it. He certainly -- his game is more well-rounded than it was five years ago, and he's world No. 1 because he finishes first and second and third and fourth and fifth a lot.

**Q. So it's almost like he becomes a victim of his own success and the expectation that follows it to a certain degree?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Exactly. If Tiger Woods doesn't win, we're mad because he would win one out of every three times. But you look at Rory McIlroy, he's an unbelievable player. You've got to look at the positive or the -- hey, the guy's always got a chance to win. He's so good.

There's a hundred guys in this field that would like to have his fourth place finishes. That's the way you've got to look at it. If you're not running at the top. If you're not, you know, Kyle Busch out front, you can't get wrecked on the last lap. So he's always running up front, and every once in a while, you have a wreck.

**Q. Davis, are you one of those hundred guys that want his fourth place finish?**

DAVIS LOVE III: The rest of my PGA TOUR career, yes.

**Q. Loaded question.**

DAVIS LOVE III: I'll take some of those fourth place finishes. I've only got 4 FedEx points. I need a fourth place.

**Q. Not many, okay. I wonder if you could just talk about what a different week this is compared to what it's used to, in terms of kind of the big exhale coming after the Masters, and now you've got kind of a sprint to the finish, to the postseason, not having any fans here. What are some of the differences people can expect in that regard?**

DAVIS LOVE III: I didn't play or go last week, so all this is new to me. I saw you out there on the last few holes. When I turned the corner at 16, it was like holy cow. I mean, the other holes looked strange, but when you turn the corner on 16 and there's beautiful oak trees and you see all the way to Daufuskie, I'm like, wow, where are we? Play the wind differently into 17, and

you stand there on 17 green and go, I can see all the way to the lighthouse without walking around the big sky box.

So it's strange looking. It's strange feeling not to have the gallery, the fans out there. Obviously, I'm in the tournament business, it's a disappointing day today to not have the Pro-Am. That's what hits me. Today is the day you make the money for charity. So many things are strange.

Now, it's better -- Coach Harbaugh says, better than not playing. We need to be out here. We need to move forward. So I give Jay a lot of credit for going full on to try to get this -- get us back started. And if you don't do three or four like this, then you can't do the next step. It's strange, but it's also exciting, and it's a new fresh start.

It seems like it was years ago that we last played a tournament. It was only a few months, but it just seems like we're in a whole new world right now.

**Q. Hi, Davis. Could you put your TV commentator hat on and give me your take on Daniel Berger closing things out, getting the win at Colonial, and just your experience in dealing with him during the 2017 Presidents Cup.**

DAVIS LOVE III: He was a great teammate. I had so much fun sitting with him and watching him talk to Fred Couples, like he didn't know Fred Couples, and he was asking Fred questions. He was engaged and soaking it in, and he was a great aggressive -- a great partner, and a great teammate.

So I've been pulling for him to get back going again. I'm, with Stricker and everybody, watching the list, and I knew that he was playing -- trying to play his way back to this winning capability and just waiting for him to bust loose. Been seeing him looking good. I played a couple tournaments, Honda and Bay Hill, and seeing him on a TV a little bit, and pulling for the guy. We need a guy like that, an aggressive, confident guy on the team.

I was thrilled for him. I didn't get to watch much of the Sunday round. Then I texted him, and he didn't get back to me, and he didn't get back to me, and he didn't get back to me. I'm like what's the deal? Then last night on our captain's thing somebody -- I think it was Furyk said, I think I have Berger's wrong number. So we got it all corrected, and we texted him, and then he got back to us. So we're thrilled for him.

I mean, him and Collin, all these guys, they're on a roll. It's nice to see it. Again, it's nice to be back, and we're watching guys play and move up the list.

**Q. What impresses you in his game? And where do you think that confidence he has comes from?**

DAVIS LOVE III: He's kind of like in a different way a little bit like Rickie. He loves competing and loves the stage, and he's not afraid to walk out there. You know, I see Daniel as a guy that you can pair with a lot of players just because he plays so well and aggressively and confidently that you -- like you can trust him. You know he's going to -- he's not going to back down.

A lot like -- well, a lot of guys on our team, but like Kisner. You just know, no matter who you go up against with those guys, Rickie, they're just not going to get flustered. They're not going to get intimidated. They're not going to back down. I saw that a lot in '17 from Daniel. He was not the rookie guy sitting in the corner just trying to fit in. He wanted to be in the mix and wanted the ball. I think that's what you see in him. He wants the ball and wants to take the shot.

I'm excited for him. I don't even know where he went in points, but he went way up, in the 20s maybe. So glad to see him on a roll again and back healthy.

**Q. Can I ask you just one thing about -- you're like the mayor there in St. Simons Island, Sea Island. What has the community done to rally around you? It feels like you're always there for them, but what have they done for you in this situation?**

DAVIS LOVE III: They've kept us going. I literally -- the number one question the last two days is do you have any putters? Do you have any fishing rods? Do you have -- no, I literally -- everything was in the house. It's just one of those times in my life where everybody's home, you're doing the Home Depot projects. I was organizing all my fishing tackle. So none of it was anywhere but in my garage. All my golf equipment was all in my garage because I just got back from Bay Hill.

So, unfortunately, I'm having to restock everything. So a lot of people -- you know, friends went to the Sea Island pro shop that was closed and loaded up on clothes. The club pro guys let them in, and they cleaned out the shop. People just helping us out with everything. I had to borrow or go to the hardware store to get everything I needed. So the island, that, and just emotionally. People being there and having us over for dinner and hanging out with us. That's all you could do. Everybody's home. So our little circle of friends really supported us.

Again, we've been really blessed. My daughter gave me -- I think it was in the Feinstein article. My daughter gave me a great piece of advice, she goes, let people do stuff for you for a change. You've done stuff for people your whole life, and it makes them feel good. Even if you don't need another pack of underwear, let

them do stuff for you because it makes them feel good.

Unfortunately, we've done this for a couple friends of ours at home. You know Bill Jones III and a doctor friend of ours that delivered our kids both had homes burn to the ground. We've been through it in our community, and it's just great to see us rally together no matter what the situation is.

THE MODERATOR: Davis, we appreciate your time as always. Certainly wish you the best of luck this week. Thank you again.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you. Can't wait to see everybody on the Zoom call that I haven't seen in person soon. Doug's here. I don't know who else is actually here. Thank you all.