

Webb Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Webb Simpson, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Second consecutive 6-under 65 here at the RBC Heritage. Just a few comments on your first 36 holes.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I feel like two different days for sure. Yesterday was pretty solid tee to green, didn't make a ton of putts. Today a little less solid, but I made a lot of putts. So I feel good and confident knowing why I didn't hit it as well today, so I'll go work on it now. But definitely nice to see the ball going in a lot more on the greens.

THE MODERATOR: Question coming in. What's it like hearing some of the cheers out there at 18 as opposed to a fanless tournament like this?

WEBB SIMPSON: It was actually nice. My caddie Paul, we made a long putt there, and he said something. He said, it feels nice to have some fans out in their houses on their porches and cheering for us. So that felt good. It felt kind of like back to normal a little bit.

So I miss the fans. I miss hearing those roars when my putts go in.

Q. Webb, when you got to 16, after 16, and you did the search for the golf ball, did you have a little talk to yourself before you went to 17? Because after 17, you started lighting it up.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I just asked Paul why I'm a little off with some of these shots, and he said my lower body wasn't really firing like it normally does. So I just tried to feel that fire position in my preshot routine or my practice swing, and I started hitting a lot better. I only hit one ball left after that.

Q. Did you guys find the ball?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, we found it. Pauley stepped on it, and under the old rules, it would have been a penalty, but new rules, no penalty.

Q. Aside from his physical appearance, are you noticing anything different from Bryson in his game right now? Can you tell that this has made a difference for him?

WEBB SIMPSON: Besides the distance, no. He's hitting it, it seems like, just as well, just as straight. Distance control is really good, and short game's still good. So I mean, I've only seen positives from what

he's done.

Q. Are you a little bit, or maybe some of your peers, amazed at this transformation?

WEBB SIMPSON: Physically, no. I think you give somebody three months -- well, I guess it's been six months, seven months since he started. I think he can get -- you can do that. But I've been amazed and impressed with how he's been able to swing it so well. Last week he lost by a shot. This week he's right there.

I think that's the most impressive thing is he's been able to take this body that he's never played with before and still play just as good, if not better. So that's really impressive.

Q. Webb, yesterday you talked about having a comfort level here on the beach. I think this is your 11th start. Can you remember the first time you played here and any memories from junior or amateur golf?

WEBB SIMPSON: I remember playing in the Junior Heritage, MCI Junior Heritage tournament here. I just love coming here. I feel like the golf course hasn't changed a whole lot. We're used to golf courses getting longer and new tee boxes. I think they've only added a couple tee boxes. 16 is maybe the only one I can think of that's a new tee, and I love that. I love that it's kind of stood the test of time.

Most years the wind blows, anywhere from 9 under to 15 under usually wins. So I think there's a comfort knowing I'm going to show up and I know what to expect. I know how to play the golf course. I've seen every bit of wind from each direction. So that's pretty cool to think about 11 years.

Q. Webb, I was just wondering how does this -- the putting performance you had today, how does it compare with the best putting days you've had in your life, and how much was your confidence growing as the round went on?

WEBB SIMPSON: It was definitely growing as the round went on. The small change I made yesterday felt great, and we were reading them well today. I'd have to look at the stats. I think I know what my strokes gained record is. My caddie certainly does. So I don't know what I was strokes gained putting, if you have it right there.

Q. 5.994.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, that would be close. I don't know if I've hit in the sixes. I'll ask my caddie. I think I have maybe one time, but, yeah, I guess it's up there.

Q. Everyone enjoys watching the ball get launched. Whether it was Bubba when he came out and a lot of talk about Bryson now. When you've seen it, I'm just wondering how satisfying it is to you to play your own game and be just as effective in the ultimate test, which is scoring?

WEBB SIMPSON: That's a great question. It's very satisfying knowing like I'm not near as long as some of these guys and I'm able to kind of use my skills of distance control and shot shape to kind of pick me back up when I'm 40 yards or 30 yards behind these guys. I would like to hit it further. I set out on a journey three years ago to get stronger, hit it further, but do it a lot slower than Bryson, but he's made it look easy and seamless.

Yeah, I think for me, that's why -- a good example is you look at WGC Mexico, where I've played very poorly there, is that at that altitude, you take away my distance control strength because it's more of a guess there. My distance control there has been terrible for three years. You put me anywhere else besides a place with altitude -- you know, Phoenix has 1 or 2, maybe 3 percent. I think it's warm. But distance control for me has to be really strong, and that week it's not. That's what allows me to play well and stay up with these guys.

Q. Is there any concern in trying to get longer after so many stories over the years of guys chasing the distance and losing their way? You're never going to be Bubba or whatever it is.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, you haven't seen many guys go from a certain length to a lot longer and play really well. It just doesn't happen much. That's why me and my trainer, Cornel Driessen, just went about it very methodically. I went six months without lifting a weight because my body was out of balance, and before I could get my body in balance, he wouldn't let me really work on weightlifting and actually bulking up and getting stronger. I'm 20 pounds more than I was 3 1/2 years ago.

Q. Yeah, me too.

WEBB SIMPSON: And I have seen an increase in ball speed. My ball speed's gone up probably four or five miles an hour in three years. So it's slow, but it's getting there, and I want to keep going. I want to -- I can get it to 172. I want to get it to 176, 177.