

RBC Heritage

Saturday, June 20, 2020

Webb Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome Webb Simpson into the interview room. A 3-under par 68, one of four players in the lead. Webb, if we could get some comments on your third round.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it certainly wasn't as good of a day on the greens, but I hit plenty of putts today that I thought were good enough to go in, and they didn't. It turned tough, I thought, on the back nine. Wind picked up. The course definitely changed. It dried out some. To not make many putts and shoot 3 under is still a good feeling.

Yeah, to be tied for the lead going into Sunday is a great thought and right where I want to be.

THE MODERATOR: With that many people tied for the lead, does that change your approach any? Be more aggressive or what? For tomorrow.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yes, I think with so many guys at 13, 14, and 15 under, it's going to take a good, solid round. Obviously, can't worry about them. I've got to focus on me. But, yeah, I think it will take -- it's not like I've got a three or four-shot lead and could shoot a couple under. I think it's going to take a good one.

Q. Is 68 on a day like this feel kind of like you went backwards a little bit? I mean, it's crazy to say that about 3 under, but just the way the day was today.

WEBB SIMPSON: I don't think so. I mean, certainly, if I shot 68 this morning, it would have felt that way, but all the good scores, I'm assuming, were earlier. Yeah, it would have been -- I definitely could have shot two or three shots better pretty easily, but, yeah, I don't feel bad about it. I'm still tied for the lead. I was only up by one going into today, so I didn't lose much ground. I know a lot more guys got closer, but I'm still tied for the lead. So that's good.

Q. This is, I guess, your 11th or so time here. How is this year different? Why is it so gettable this week? Some guys have talked about it already, but I'm just interested in your thoughts on what you've seen.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. There's a softness to the golf course, so more balls have stayed in the fairway that might have gone in the rough or the pine straw, and the greens are way softer. We're used to really firm greens here at Hilton Head, and we're used to cooler

temperatures, so the ball didn't go as far. We're used to more wind, honestly.

I think all those factors play a role. Any time you give us soft greens, we're going to shoot low scores. That's pretty much the PGA TOUR. So I think that's why.

Q. Webb, I've asked this of a number of players. I'm not sure there's an answer. But we get back to work for two weeks in a row, and last week at Colonial -- I know you weren't part of it, but there was 14 guys separated by three shots. We go into tomorrow with 21 players separated by three shots. Is it just a matter of the strength of field basically, or is it a coincidence, or what do you think?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think it's strength of field. I think, because we're not at a Major Championship, you know, Major Championship style golf course last week or this week, where you're going to have separation because of bad scores, I think that's probably why. We're all playing together on a golf course that's pretty easy this time of year. Normally it's not. So any given day, you're going to see 63s and 64s out here, and I think the same goes at Colonial.

I think the wind picks up at Colonial on Sunday and the scores level out a little bit. So if we can get some wind tomorrow, you might see a little separation, but given the scoring positions in the field, I think that's probably why.

Q. This thing gets decided, obviously, on the back nine. How important is the front nine when you've got a leaderboard like this, in terms of the lack of separation?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it's important with holes like 2 and 5, that they're giving you great birdie opportunities. 1 is a great birdie opportunity. 6 is a great birdie opportunity, and then you have 9. So it's definitely important to get a good start. It's a lot better feeling knowing you took care of what you needed to on the front going into the back nine. The back nine, there's still birdie holes, but it's more challenging.

But given the wind direction tomorrow, I think it's the easier wind for this golf course, so that will play a factor.

Q. Hey, Webb, you have now had a couple chances

to play with Bryson, and this question may sound melodramatic, but having watched him and what he's doing to his body, does it feel like he's doing something new and in some way transformational for the sport?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think so. When a guy at this level puts on that much weight and is still able to play great and puts on that much speed, I certainly think guys are going to ask him questions and try to at least figure out how they can do something similar. I know it's been a lot of hard work for him, so it's not easy.

But, yeah, I think that's been the biggest surprise in a good way is how well he's able to hit it still just as good, if not better, at this weight.

Q. Second question. Even though a positive test wasn't unexpected, does the fact of it actually happening with Nick yesterday change anything for you about the way you're perceiving this, or does it change any of your behavior this week?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it definitely got me thinking about kind of everything that I've done this week. I've tried to be really careful, but I could probably be more careful. I hadn't really gone out to dinner. I've gotten takeout every night. But in terms of even wearing the mask, any time I'm out of my comfort zone away from the golf course, I think it's smart.

And really, the six foot rule I've been good about, but I probably could be better. So it definitely got me thinking last night, and I had a conversation with my caddie Paul today about it.