

DEAN & DELUCA

Invitational

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Ryan Palmer

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, thank you for joining us. You had your best performance here last year in 13 starts, a T3 playing alongside Jordan.

This is your home course. Just some thoughts about returning to Colonial.

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, no, it's always a highlight on my schedule. There is no doubt this tournament is. Being a member, always playing here with James obviously and a lot of the members here, and then coming close several times. Last year I was leading through eight holes on Sunday. Of course your mind always go back to that moment. Was there something I did wrong? Something I could've done different to be there at the end?

It was awesome being in that atmosphere with amount of friends and family I had. I just remember some of the putts Jordan would make. I still tell him today some of the putts he made you just don't make. I play all the time with all the members and nobody makes 'em. It was special week last year obviously.

No, I always look forward to getting back here. It's a huge week for me. Special week for me knowing how much support I've get from the members and family and friends. I always can't wait to get back at it out here.

Q. Has Jordan apologized yet for what he did on 17 last year?

RYAN PALMER: (Laughing.) Oh, 17? I'm trying to get them to move those bleachers back far away. Because if those bleachers aren't there his ball in on 14 fairway. No, we joke about it honestly since then and of course in New Orleans. It's always been fun talking about it.

Q. What was different last year? You've played here a lot, but that was your best finish.

RYAN PALMER: Nothing was really different. I'm getting more comfortable with the golf course. I think I'm becoming a better player as well, an all-around better player.

And then of course I've seen this golf course in every wind. When I saw the forecast this week, Thursday



and Friday are blowing pretty good. Of course I'm excited to see that because I've seen it.

Even last year the putter, I was putting well -- obviously I putt well every week, but I know how to hit certain drives off this golf course. It helps me a little bit knowing I can kind of freewheel it and let go and hit driver everywhere. That's what I do.

I don't think James and I pull the book out. We just get the number and we go. I'll hold my book up and we'll be on the 2nd hole, we're playing 15. Sometimes.

(Laughter.)

Q. Do you have any clue how many rounds you have played here?

RYAN PALMER: No, I wouldn't know. IF we've got weeks off, if we're off for a couple weeks, I probably say at least six times we play during those two weeks. I'll take two, three days off and spend a day or two with Randy Smith. Then I'll get out for at least two or three rounds during the week for sure.

As many times as I played it, hard to put a number on it.

Q. Hundreds, obviously.

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, it's up there.

Q. In some ways could somebody have too much course knowledge? I'm asking the question in terms of if you know how to play a course, then there are so many different variables; whereas somebody that might not have the experience, likely they have only got one way to attack it. Do you ever feel like you've got a lot going through your mind on how to play this course?

RYAN PALMER: No. I really don't, because I know exactly what to do on each hole. I know if the wind is blowing a certain direction, I played it so I know what to expect. I know 10 and 17 play short in the second shots. Don't tell anybody else that.

I know 13 the wind is never into you. It may feel like it, but it's never into you. So I just know certain tee shots. I know when you can't carry the No. Bunker on the right. I know when you can't get to the left bunker. I know when I can carry the three bunkers on 3 certain

winds.

So for me, it's just staying within control of myself and not getting too ahead of myself waiting to be in that moment towards the end. So I'm able to just go out and freewheel it. James and I are pretty relaxed when we're out there and having fun with it.

This course is a bonus knowing a lot of things because it's such a shot-making golf course. You know, a lot of times players say this golf course takes the driver out of their hands.

Well, it's in my hands all day just because I've done it enough I think and that helps me. That's the way I play it, and it's worked out pretty good.

Q. Ryan, taking last week into account as well, and Jordan mentioned expectations he was putting on his own shoulders to succeed at the tournament that bears his image and the AT&T sponsorship and it's Dallas, hometown and stuff. Is there sometimes a desire to want to win somewhere too much that it impacts the way you play or go about your week?

RYAN PALMER: It does. I mean, we want to win every week we play. Last week was special for him being in Dallas, AT&T. This week is special for me because being a member here. Yeah, there is no doubt you want to win. We talk about it all the time with the members, with friends, what kind of party we would have. We talk about it. Who wouldn't, right?

But the key for me is just kind of I get lost in myself with everything. Friends and family are all in town. I don't see 'em. I come to the golf course, see 'em out here, and I leave. I keep everything quiet. I go home with Jen and the kids and there are no parties, no hanging out, no dinners. I just kind of come here, do my job, get to work, put my work in, but then I go home and relax. I think that helps, too.

If I'm staying in hotels and hanging out, I tend to have dinners with different people or sponsors. This week I pretty much take a selfish approach. I just kind of get away from everybody and everything.

But it is, you put pressure on yourself to win because you want to win your home course so bad in front of your friends and in front of your family.

It was obviously huge for Jordan last year. I mean, he was in front of his family and friends. He's technically from DFW, so 30, 40 minutes down the road.

Yeah, I'm sure if you ask him what it meant, it was pretty special for him to win here even though it was in

Fort Worth?

Q. Does that come from experience for you, finally working out a way to play here for this week, this tournament through the years? How hard is it to let all that stuff go.

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, no, took me probably about three, four years ago when I finally started let's say being selfish. Coming out here and seeing everybody. Everybody wants, Hey, come hang out, come say hi. When I get done, I leave and I'm done and I get out of here. I don't meet anybody for dinners. Everybody stays in Fort Worth. My house is off limits for a lot of people.

So it's that one week where I tell everybody, Look I'm going to take a pretty selfish approach this week and I'll see you at the golf course. That's the way I've taken it. James will agree. James will be the first to tell me, Okay, tell everybody to leave. We're out of here.

Of Jennifer has been there, too. She got on to me a few times years past. You're doing too much. It's worked out. I've had some good success the last three, four years. My game is in good shape on the golf course. I know the breaks, the bumps, and I really believe and I'm confident I'll be there this weekend with a chance.

Q. With the rain and like you said the wind coming in later this week to potentially dry out the golf course, how does this set up from the tour stuff differentiate from when you play out here regularly throughout the year?

RYAN PALMER: We probably have the rough as full as it is. The best defense of the golf course is get the rough up, because the fairways are hard to hit. All you need is inch, inch and a half, two inches of Bermuda rough to catch the far lies.

The green is already small enough to hit, and then they were --I think they were pretty soft coming into the week already just because of the cold weather we've had years past -- or weeks past. It's hard to get these greens firm this time of year.

Obviously the big rain today softened it up a lot. We play this golf course soft every year.

What's funny is the course still stands up. Nobody goes out and shoots 20-something-under par. I think David Toms was the last guy when he shot like 61, 61 I think the first two days. But I don't think you'll see that again. That was a pretty unbelievable week he had.

It's a golf course that will still stand up to 12, 13, 14 under par, short golf course and soft greens. But there

is the protection of the winds coming in that will defend the golf course as well. It'll dry it up hopefully and get the balls running a little bit, and then you'll -- the weather is going to be awesome this week. It's going to be hot, so I think guys are going to get a little taste of Texas heat this year.

I think 96 I heard.

Q. You mentioned Jennifer. Can you give an update on how she's doing?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah. She's doing great. All the testing has been coming back positive - in a good way positive. Sorry. All her genetics testing were clean, so that was a huge thing from the genetics side of deceased.

She's doing great. She'll be done in August. She'll have her port come out in August, I guess. Still taking some medication for the next five to ten years, but other than that, all of her treatments will be done in August. All is good.

Q. With what happened to Jennifer and then the summer before losing your father, can you talk about how difficult it is to compartmentalize and play your best golf when life is going on?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, dad passed away it will be two years this August. Going into the playoffs that year, and then last year's Colonial was the first time he was never there and this is his favorite tournament of the year.

All his buddies from Amarillo came up and pretty much lived in the Champions Club during the week.

So last year was a very special week. Especially I had a chance to win and for the first time he wasn't here. Obviously going through when we found out about Jen last July and taking the time off, six months, to be there for all the treatments, chemo, radiation, and the game is finally getting back.

It was a rough go probably first part of the year, in January. We finally got some good weeks going at Hilton Head and of course San Antonio, and Jordan and I had a chance to win New Orleans. The game is good. The mental game is getting better and better. Not going to worry about that anymore and knowing that she's going to be good, she's going to be healthy. Will take some time, but I think the scare is behind us. That was back then. I can let go and play better golf.

Q. Golf is your job, but does it act as a coping mechanism?

RYAN PALMER: It does. The Barclays, that year after dad died, you know, I finished fourth that week. When

you get inside the ropes, that four to five hours is -- I am able to kind of block it all out. That is my getaway.

I played that week when we found out about Jen in Canada. I get those four, five hours of just James and I and play golf. I able to spend five hours a day not thinking about anything else and just play golf. That helps relieve some of the stress and pressures, I think.

Yeah, then afterwards you get home and it's back to it reality and everything. But I'm blessed to be able to play this game. I get those five hours sometimes to get away from it all, but everything is going in the right direction.

She's doing great. Got some pretty exciting weeks ahead, starting with this one.

Q. Great to hear about Jennifer's update. You talk about the support you typically get here from the members. How was that when you were going through that, when you guys were facing the toughest of the nights during that stretch?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, during the six months we still came out and played. Of course all the member, they're there. Everybody is calling, Hey, let me know if you need anything. More and more -- I mean, the support is unbelievable from my close friends to the members here, people back in Amarillo. It was huge. It helped get through those six months I think.

Then when I got back on tour, a lot of players, players' wives always asking. So it's big fraternity out here, and everybody does care about each other even though we're trying to beat each other up each week.

The support has been awesome for sure. Thankful to have this membership here and what they've done for me.

Q. A lot of hockey players don't like to touch the Stanley Cup until they get a chance. Do you have a plaid jacket since you're a member?

RYAN PALMER: No plaid jacket. I don't think I've ever even put one on here.

Q. Same thought process?

RYAN PALMER: No. I touched it but I haven't put it on.

Q. No plaid pants?

RYAN PALMER: No, no plaid pants.

Q. You're a member though; you could, right?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, I guess I could. I felt it a little bit. Walked by and saw the belt buckle in the display case in the locker room. No, I have not put the plaid jacket on.

I'm not that superstitious. Hopefully we'll get that chance.

Q. In terms of game update, what confidence do you take off the Nelson last week? How do you feel like you're rolling as golfer coming into this week?

RYAN PALMER: It's good. We had some up and down moments last week. We had chances to turn some rounds into some really good rounds.

Of course Sunday, getting the start I had - I was 4-under through ten holes, 6 for the tournament - I had a great putt on 11 to go 7. I'm thinking, Okay, I'm about to be at 7-under, four back, and nobody is going anywhere.

I was probably getting a little ahead of myself on Sunday. A lot of great things: The way I drove it, my iron play, made a lot of great putts. Just look at some of those moments throughout that tournament and I am able to kind of bring that here.

Need to sharpen up a few things. I think my driver needs working on a little bit. And then spend a little bit more time putting with Dave Stockton. He is here this week.

But I love where my game is at and I love where my mental game is at. For this week, just putting the emotions aside and let things fall into place.

Q. You were talking about preparation earlier. Can you talk about what makes 3, 4, and 5 unique to the PGA Tour and how you prepare for those holes?

RYAN PALMER: The Horrible Horseshoe. Those three holes I played numerous times. I played 3 the same way. I take driver. There is a tree there that I'm able to knock it over. I know certain days I can carry all three bunkers. If not, I know carry the right two bunkers.

Of course 4, try to make par. I mean, you're trying to make par all three holes. If you can make 4, 3, 4, so what was that? 8 and 11? So 44? If you can make 44 for four days, you're making good ground. Did I add that up right?

Yeah. And of course 5, I take a 5-wood and get down the fairway. I am going to hit 4- or 5-iron into the green and just try to put it on the green and two-putt.

If you can get through those three holes with no mistakes, because you got 1 and 2 right at the beginning, and then you got 6, 7, and 9; 8 is another birdie hole.

So you can really get the front pretty low if you can

survive those holes. I got a way I play 'em, and just let it go. The Horrible Horseshoe it's called, and it can be horrible to a lot of the people.

Q. Last few majors have been won by guys who at one point spent time as the best player without a major. Just curious, who do you think now belongs at the top of that list or in that list?

RYAN PALMER: Oh, gosh. You may have to throw some names at me to think about that one.

PERSON: Rickie?

Q. I was hoping Ryan could answer the question.

RYAN PALMER: You could throw in several Europeans. Ian Poulter, he's had success at the majors. He's played well. Patrick Reed. Matt Kuchar. Brandt Snedeker. Probably a pretty good list I think there.

Q. Is that a good list to be on in your career until you can get one?

RYAN PALMER: I don't know. I just have to be on a list. I don't know what kind of list it is, but... (laughter).

It's a pretty good list I think. If you're considered one of the best players without a major, you've done some pretty good things in this game and had some pretty good success.

I don't look at it as a negative thing being the best player not to win a major. I know Sergio had so many close calls, and I know it was pretty cool to finally see him breakthrough and win, that's for sure.

I would love to be considered one of the best without a major, sure. Means I've put in the work and I've had success. But all those guys will get their chance again. That's the beauty about the game today I think. So many guys can win today. I think it shows you how deep the game is right now.

Q. You mentioned that Jordan made some putts that you just can't make out here last year. Do you think those good pictures will help him rebound from his admitted putting woes?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, I think so. Every player goes through it. He's trying to get back to where he was. Obviously having some issues lining up I guess sounds like. He's one of the best putters on tour. There is no don't about that. I'm not really too worried about him struggling.

I know a lot of people kind of look at him as, What's going on with Jordan. Couple bad weeks. One golf course he hasn't played well on at Sawgrass, and of course last week, it's hard to play in your hometown like that.

When he gets list driver straightened back up he's going to putt good. He just is.

So coming into a week where he made the putts he made last year, it'll definitely give him a lot more confidence coming into the week than he had last week.

I figure if I'm up there with Jordan at the end of the week we're going to be close.

Q. You mentioned putting and your work with Dave Stockton. Was that the hardest thing when you came back to capture? What did you work with to get back to where you want to be?

RYAN PALMER: Yeah, when I came back it was scary. I never use the word because I didn't want to say that -- we all know what that word is in putting -- but it was close.

You know, I got into some bad habits on the greens. Started working with Dave in L.A., he kind of brought a more mental approach to putting with me and putting with my eyes and not so much with my hands.

My hands got a little active in my stroke I think. He had my putting one handed, and I got to where I was looking at the hole a little kind of like Jordan does in short range. Started freeing me up. Took some weeks to get comfortable. Still felt it through L.A.

I guess Hilton Head was the first week I really started getting more comfortable. Took several weeks, and then New Orleans felt even more comfortable. Even though everybody talks about the putting display we put on Saturday at New Orleans, me and Jordan. Wasn't very good.

It's more and more comfortable. I was more and more comfortable at Sawgrass. More comfortable last week. So it's just getting under the gun and in those moments on Fridays trying to make a cut or Saturday and Sunday trying to get to the top of leaderboard or leading.

We're there. He's here this week. Going to put a little work in today and tomorrow. I love where it's at right now. I am more and more comfortable now, and I think we got some good things ahead of us.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, thank you for joining us and good luck this week.