

DEAN & DELUCA

Invitational

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Billy Horschel

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We'd like to welcome Billy Horschel into the interview room for the first time here at Dean & DeLuca Invitational.

Billy, welcome to Colonial. If we can get your thoughts on being here.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Thanks, John. Yeah, it's nice to be here. Haven't played Dean & DeLuca, but I have been to the course before. We played match play here I believe in - I want to say it was my sophomore year, so would've been 2006, possibly 2007. We had a match play tournament here for college. I like the golf course.

I am a fan of old-school golf courses, and this obviously fits that.

THE MODERATOR: Take us back to just a couple days ago, your fourth PGA Tour victory winning the Byron Nelson. Just talk a little bit about that final round one more time if you can.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, man, that was a great week overall. That final round was -- it was nice to be back in a final group again in a tournament. It's been a while. Probably since McGladrey was the last one.

I thought I was going to on a little bit more at ease. Usually I'm pretty excited inside and a little nervous the first four or five holes, but usually I calm myself down. Unfortunately I just never was able to.

Inside I was moving at a million miles an hour, but trying just to really embrace it because I knew everyone else was feeling the same pressures and thoughts going through the head. So just got to embrace it. It's going to be one of those days it's not going to be as easy and comfortable as you would like.

But it was nice to come out on top. Been a lot of hard work put in on and off the golf course over the last -- not the last month, but since last fall. We really worked our butts off to get back to where we felt like we needed to be in this game. It's nice to see the fruits of the labor paying off.

THE MODERATOR: Sunday night you moved to 15th in



the FedExCup standings, and you had some interesting comments about Tiger Woods in terms of FedExCup. Maybe talk about that.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I said it after I won in 2014 that I wanted to be the first guy to win back-to-back. Obviously I didn't do a very good job of that.

But I want to be the second guy to win two FedExCups. Tiger's legendary name will go down as one of the greatest players ever, so anything I can have my name attached to as to his, I think it's pretty special.

Trying to win the FedExCup is always one of my goals, and I've tried the last few years and obviously I've not succeeded. With this win, I get that much closer to attaining one of those goals I have at the beginning of each year.

THE MODERATOR: Before we open it up to questions, Billy, I know you wanted to talk a little bit about the personal situation you and Brittany are going through and her brave stance that she took yesterday.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah. Usually I'm an off-the-cuff kind of guy, but I want to make sure the statement I have comes across the way I want.

You really never know what is going on in someone's lives, and that has certainly been true this last year for me. There are so many families out here who struggle with any variety of issues. We're not any different, aside from being more in the public eye, which provides us with an opportunity to speak out about the very real struggles of battling addiction.

It can be a very lonely disease, and there is a stigma out there that leads many not to ask or accept the help they need. My wife and I hope that sharing our story will help other people who are either struggling with addiction, or are their loved ones.

We look forward to sharing more in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Billy. We would like to ask if at possible, let's talk about tournament-related questions and respect Billy and Brittany's privacy at this time.

Questions.

Q. Billy, you talked about the pace of your golf swing a lot over the last few days, and that Todd had been telling you something you're working on. I believe the way you phrased it was it finally got through your thick skull. Talk to us about that and how that's settling in.

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, it's still -- it's not 100%. Today practicing the tempo of the swing is still too quick. What happens is when I get quick, right off the ball, the club gets inside, it's not in a great position going back, and then I have to try and reroute or get it back in the right position going on the downswing.

So we're trying to feel like I swing in slow motion, and it's really tough. But what it allows me to do is technically my swing is in spots it needs to be, and I hit it that much more solid.

Todd has been probably telling me this since after 2014 TOUR Championship, because that's one of the things we focused on this week, really have a nice slow, smooth tempo. I hit the ball beautifully that week.

Takes about three years for it to come back for me to realize that I'm not doing it again.

Q. Give me record going into last week. Is that just kind of an indication of how things are between missing a cut and contending at a PGA Tour event?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I think so. For me it was. I hadn't had any success there in the past, but that was early in my career. Hadn't been there in five years. Show up and I fell in love with the golf course and was like, Why don't I play here every year? I thought the golf course really does fit my game.

But to miss four cuts in a row and show up and win, I never thought I was one of the -- and not that I mean it when I say this in a bad way -- I never thought I was one of those guys. You see guys that play bad -- not bad, but they miss cuts, miss cuts, miss cuts, and next thing you know they wind up winning a tournament.

You see it every year. Now I understand what it feels like. You know, now I understand the struggle they're going through. They know how close they are to playing well, and it's just one little thing.

For me, it was the swing tempo, figuring that out Friday at the PLAYERS Championship. We had put a is new PXG putter in on Thursday, and so we knew the putting got better at PLAYERS Championship because I was finally in the positive. I think it was a one-strokes gain per round for two days at PLAYERS Championship, and I hit the ball really well Friday.

So it gave me a little bit of life going into the next week, where in previous missed cuts I was a little lost. Where do I go from here? I feel like I did a really good job of prepping this week, and I played awful.

I felt a little lost on previous missed cuts, but at the PLAYERS Championship I walked away with some light at the end of the tunnel that I could see.

Q. Nobody has won these two Metroplex events in back-to-back weeks. Can you just talk about the challenges of trying to win again after you won the first week?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I think for me, what I need to do is just not put any more expectations on myself. I have enough of them already, and I don't need to amplify them any more.

I'm just going to go out there and try and enjoy the week like I did last week. I have two things I am going to focus on: Nice smooth swing tempo. Not think about my swing on the golf course. Smooth and silky. Ernie Els-like, Freddy Couples. Those are my mental pictures in my mind.

On the putting green all I am going to try and do is commit to my lines and stay in the putt and not come up out of it and miss putts, whether it be right or left. Those are the two things I'm thinking about.

And just really enjoy playing golf. Last week I think for the first time after four- or five-week stretch of just beating my head against the wall, every day I drove to the course and I was like, Man, I'm enjoying golf.

Not that I never don't enjoy golf. I live a great life and I get to go unbelievable places to play. That was it. Whether this has anything to do with it I don't know. I started listening to some -- I usually have a song in my head.

Go back to TOUR Championship, BMW, and TOUR Championship. I had a song that always played in my head, or I remember a song from that day. For a while I haven't had that. Last week was the first time that I could listen to a certain song on the way to a tournament for that day and it just kept replaying over and over in my head, whether it's a couple verses or whatnot. I was listening to Kings of Leon all week. Didn't matter what song it was. Any song that stuck in my head that week.

Q. I assume you'll listen to them again this week.

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, that ain't changing. I'm a little superstitious. I ate at Chipotle probably more than I needed to last week, but I was playing well and didn't want to stop.

Q. So what did you listen to back in 2014?

BILLY HORSCHEL: It was Bastille. I remember TOUR Championship was Bastille. I had this song probably on my phone, but I can't remember the song. It was funny, because going to the course every day at the TOUR Championship I was listening to Alt Nation on Sirius XM, and that song came on every day when I was driving to the course, which was so ironic.

Driving to the course the final round, and I'm like, Oh, man, the song is not coming in today. I pull in the parking lot and it came on, and I sat in my car until it finished playing.

Q. Wow. Very cool. You talk about enjoying golf again. Is there a relief in your mind that now there is no -- you address the emotions afterwards and said it's just something life gets in the way. Is there something more freeing now knowing that it's out there? I think strength in numbers was a hashtag Brett used. Not only to go on with life, but to play golf.

BILLY HORSCHEL: Man, selfishly, you know, my selfish side says yes because that's not the reason why I haven't played well for the last year. That's not a reason at all. But it's something that's on my mind, something I think about on a constant basis.

But now that -- I've been a happy man. The last year has been one of the most enjoyable years of my life. My wife and I have been six years, going seven? Years in November, and this last year has been one of the most enjoyable years of our marriage.

But it's out there now. I think it's unbelievable what my wife did -- I honestly didn't know she was going to do it. I was playing in Ryan Palmer's charity event yesterday. I was on a text message with my manager, Sherry, and Brittany says, Hey, can you guys look at a statement I just wrote and let me know what you think.

I didn't know what she meant. Look at my email and I called her and I said, We don't need to do this. I obviously mentioned something about the last year and it was a struggle, but we can dip, dive, and dodge around these questions no problem and we can wait until you're ready.

She said, No, I'm ready. I'm ready to share our story and start helping people. Unfortunately, there is a stigma out there about addiction, whether be alcoholism, drug addiction, and eating disorder, people don't want to talk about it. Whether you have a mental disorder as well. No one want to talk about it, and we need to talk about it.

It's nothing to be frowned upon or ashamed of. It's a disease. It's just like cancer and other diseases out there, and we need to do everything we can to help as many people as we can.

So getting this out there and hopefully try and help as many people as we can just from our story. You know, that's our goal. That is one of our goals now. My wife is one year sober. The journey is not over. It'll never be over. But we're on the right path, and every day we have challenges, just like everyone else in the world. We're no different.

So we're just going day by day and staying on the path that God has put in front of us.

Q. The video of your little girl celebrating dad's victory has gone viral. What was your reaction?

BILLY HORSCHEL: That put a big smile on my face. I was FaceTiming my wife on Sunday when I got back to the hotel and I hadn't seen the video. She is like You see the video I put up. I said, No, I'm looking for it. I finally find it and I'm just smiling. I mean, that was awesome.

I've had four wins on tour. My wife and my kids have been at none of them. My parents have only been at one of 'em. Yeah, it's nice. It was awesome to see. Skyler was happy when I FaceTimed her. If you're ever down -- and listen we all have bad times, get frustrated with something -- that's something I can always go back to look at and put a smile on my face and forget about all the challenges I had that day.

Q. How do you prepare to play the Horrible Horseshoe, holes 3 through 5, and do you have a strategy for it?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, just try and par them every day. They are a tough stretch. They are everything you want in three holes of golf.

We're going to be very smart. We're going to play conservative. We would love to make birdie on 'em, but we're going to make sure we put ourself in position to make par.

If we get out of position, we're going to make sure we don't make a big number. Obviously those three are crucial holes on this course. My stats guy has already explained to me how big those holes are for playing well this week.

Q. The video you posted the Saturday morning after the PLAYERS about the club, why is it important for you to be open with the fans and the media?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I'm an open guy. That's why this

last year has been so tough for me, because I want to express, show people that we are no different than anyone else. I'm no different than you. I mean, yes, I'm in the public eye, but I'm just a regular person. I put on my pants one leg at time. I've tried jumping into them both and it doesn't happen.

But I like being open. I want to show people that I'm not afraid to admit when I'm wrong. We all do things that we aren't proud of. I think you got to be man or woman enough to be able to admit when you do something wrong.

So being open is huge to me. I want the fans to really act like they know me. People, whether you're a friend of mine or just a fan, a casual fan, I want you to have that feeling, Hey, I know Billy. I may never have met him, but I feel like I know him.

That's just a big thing for me. It's always been that way since I've been a kid. Always been open with everything. That's never going to change. I'm going to do things wrong and I'm going to admit it, but I'm going to be who I am. You either like it or you don't.

I've tried my best early on in my career to please everyone, and I realized you can't please everyone in this world unfortunately.

Q. Could you talk to us about what the latest victory means when you weigh it against significant victories you've had in your career?

BILLY HORSCHER: Yeah, this one is huge. One thing I didn't get across afterwards, after I won, when you win the TOUR Championship and you win the FedExCup, and a year later you switch club companies, people are going to question you, which is right.

But I'm looking at trying to do things that are going to make me a better player. Every day I am trying to figure out what will make me better in the future. I felt like PXG was that company.

Reason behind it was two of the engineers that have built my clubs for the last ten years went over there, Mike Nicolette and Brad Swaggart; one of my closest friends out on tour was Matt Rawlins who took over the Tour Operations Department at PXG.

Then Bob Parsons, the belief he had just not in me but the other guys that he signed early on to carry the banner for PXG was massive. I think we all have felt a little bit of a weight on our shoulders to carry it. We want to prove that Bob is not crazy. People may think he is, but he's not. He's a brilliant guy.

We talk on a regular basis. He's different. He texts every one of us, every one of the PXG staffers on a

fairly regular basis checking in. He's not just checking in to see how we're playing, he's checking in to see how we're doing. He cares for us as people.

That's truly amazing. I can't thank him enough for believing in me. That's huge. And to think that I can help PXG get to the level he wants was massive.

The other reason is obviously I want to -- I was outside top 50. I want to get back to where I feel like my game is. I feel like I have the game and talent to be one of the better players in the world. I've shown it in stretches, but not on a consistent basis.

Ala Jason Day, ala Dustin Johnson, and Jordan Spieth. So I am trying to be more consistent. I want to be up there where they are and have chances to win majors on a regular basis.

It would suck to be at home sitting on my couch watching the Masters and not having a chance to win, especially coming off the previous year where I felt like I made a turning point around the corner at Augusta when I finished 15th or 17th there.

Now I'm back in the majors where I feel like I need to be. Now I got chances to win majors, a FedExCup, and be the only two-time winner of FedExCup.

Unfortunately I haven't been on a Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup team. I would love to be on a Presidents Cup team. I would love to play for Steve Stricker. I would love to go to New York and be with those fans. It's going to be a really raucous atmosphere there for the Presidents Cup, and I can't imagine what it's going to be like there for Ryder Cup.

So being part of doing things that the legends and the greats of this game have done is where I want to be. I want to hopefully go down as one of the best players ever to play this game. The only way you're going to do that is be in the biggest stages of golf. Majors, PLAYERS Championship Presidents Cup, and Rogers Cup teams.