

Charles Schwab Challenge

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Jay Monahan

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Certainly someone that needs no introduction, PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Obviously we're thrilled for the reason to have you here. If you could just talk a little bit about the buildup to this and now the week finally here.

JAY MONAHAN: Yeah, it's great to see you and great to be with all of our partners in the media. Listen, I'm not sure if it feels like yesterday or years ago that we were all together at TPC Sawgrass on that Friday morning, but obviously a lot has transpired since that point in time, and I just -- as I sit here today on the eve of the first round of the Charles Schwab Challenge, I just want to say that we're here because of the great team that I work with back in Ponte Vedra at the PGA TOUR, but also the unbelievable group of players that we have that cares so much about their business. Those four players that serve on our policy board, Johnson, Wagner, James Hahn, Kevin Kisner, Jordan Spieth, Charley Hoffman, who's chair of our PAC, all of our PAC members and all the players who have participated over the last 90 days or reached out as we've come back here to Colonial and the Charles Schwab Challenge.

We spent a lot of time thinking through our schedule in partnership with the industry organizations, the major championships. We spent a lot of time thinking about what that schedule, how that schedule impacts eligibility across our tours, and then we spent an awful lot of time on our health, testing and safety protocols that bring us into this week.

To have this quality of field at this historic venue, a venue we've played consecutively since 1946, and to be able to return and to be able to return the PGA TOUR and the game of golf in such a meaningful way here and at the Korn Ferry Challenge, when the world really is looking for inspiration and the world is longing for live sports, to have the PGA TOUR here with this unbelievable field of top five in the world, 16 of the top 20 and 100-plus winners of PGA TOUR events is pretty spectacular.

I'm happy to field any questions that anyone has. It's great to be with you.



Q. Not to start on a downer question, but I'm just kind of curious in terms of with all the stuff you guys have done, obviously you've been so thorough with protocols and whatnot, is there, God forbid, a number of mind if there were some positive tests in these coming weeks -- is there kind of like a threshold number, I guess, where you would have to consider being able to step away? Hopefully that's not going to happen.

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think the short answer is that there is no "if this, then that." I think when you step back and you look at what we've constructed with our testing protocol, plus our safety protocols here on venue, every player and caddie having the option and being highly encouraged to test in advance of traveling, every player and caddie testing when they arrive, not being able to get inside the clubhouse and into certain venues until they've had those results, to be able to return those results around in two to four hours, I think, is really a strong element to the program we have. And then to have daily thermal screenings, temperature screenings, to have a daily questionnaire that's prompting questions relative to COVID-19, and then to get later in the week, if you're going to move from Fort Worth to Hilton Head and be on that charter, to be tested, that keeps our bubble really small.

So when you ask that question, you really have to -- I would follow up with it depends on -- you have to identify when it would happen in the week. We work very closely with all the local, state health authorities, and we would be working very closely with them to be transparent about where we are with the numbers and to be able to respond accordingly.

I think you just have to be in a position where you've got to be sensible about the reality where you are and what's happening in that market around you and how you're looking at where we are at that point in time.

Because there is no way to completely eliminate the risk, there's also uncertainty about how you're going to respond. But as we sit here today, every single player and caddie that came through our testing facility here in Fort Worth has tested negative.

I would just say the testing -- here we are, it's Wednesday afternoon, and we're making our way through the first week of this new testing protocol, and



every player and caddie that arrived in Fort Worth and went through our testing, all of them have, they're all negative tests. So the pretest into the week, the system is working well. We need to continue to execute and be highly aware.

This is not something that the PGA TOUR created. It's a system that we created, and you've heard it from a number of our team members, in concert with a lot of medical experts and medical advice, and we were assured coming in here that it was the right system based on their feedback and their response and their input into the system itself.

Q. What was your relief level to see that hundred percent negative number for all of your players and caddies, given the circumstances?

JAY MONAHAN: Certainly pleased, but if there's one thing you learn as you look back over the last 90 days and you go forward, there's steps that you take. We've passed some important hurdles. These are important steps. But now we get inside the field of play. Now you think about all the things that we're asking our players and caddies and everybody that's here in this small bubble to do, we need to execute on that.

Q. Speaking with Harold Varner yesterday, he talked about the meeting that you guys had both on and off camera and the conversation not only about what you said on camera but some things about specifically what the TOUR can do to maybe diversify the game, diversify the TOUR. Could you touch on any of those things?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think -- Harold talked about -- you asked him the question yesterday, and the question was what's the number one thing that we can do to help, and he pointed to access. And so I would tell you that -- and I think it's important for me to be able to provide some context to where we are around diversity and inclusion, and I go back to 2016, and we as an organization made a commitment to diversity and inclusion. We worked with Korn Ferry, developed a mission statement, established business goals, made everybody in our company accountable to diversity and inclusion.

In 2017 I signed a CEO action pledge led by PWC and their CEO Tim Ryan to commit to diversity and inclusion progress. We performed six employee resource groups, one of which is CORE, a multicultural group, other groups like Advancing Women in Leadership. Those groups have had a lot of say in how we've continued to develop our brand and how we continue to operate as a company and as a team, and it's been a huge part of getting us to where we are today.

So then I go back to today, we have an Inclusion Leadership Council with five specific objectives around how we make progress across our business in this area. You look at what we're doing this week with the 8:46 tee time, that came from our Inclusion Leadership Council. So we're doing a lot as a business. I am not claiming that we're perfect. We're on a journey. But it's an organizational commitment.

And also, part of what Harold and I talked about that day, is you look at the First Tee, which was started in 1997, 15 million young kids have gone through it. You have 144 chapters, over 5,000 schools where you've got First Tee programming, and we're teaching kids life skills through the game of golf.

The numbers are impressive as it relates to both ethnicity and gender diversity, but there's an opportunity for us, as kids start to matriculate, for us to make certain that they're getting access to the game of golf to play it and access to the industry of golf, and the steps that we can take with the First Tee that we're taking and that we can take more aggressively going forward, that's some of what we talked about that day as we were spending time together and catching up and talking about this issue that's so important to us.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the no fans being here and just kind of the odd feel even during the practice rounds. I know Texas would have allowed some fans, I believe 25 percent, maybe 50 percent. Was that ever a consideration, and how tough is it, because I know Colonial obviously like a lot of tournaments prides itself on the fan-friendly atmosphere.

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think it would have been a lot more odd to not be here at all, so I'll start with that. And we set our schedule on April 16th. And even at that point in time, we were working through our health and safety protocols. We were speaking to all of our markets, and in this market, speaking to the club, speaking to Mayor Price, speaking to Governor Abbott, and we felt like from the feedback we were getting from them as well as from our medical advisors, for us to return and to have a sustained return, it was very clear that for the first four weeks we needed to commit to play without spectators.

So to your question, we knew then that testing protocols -- there would be a lot of advancements. If you think back to what was being said at that point in time, a lot of that has materialized and come true, but we committed then that we were going to stick to our plan because, as I said, this is about a sustained return. Yes, we could have 10 days to two weeks ago responded and added fans to the venue. We love the fans here in Fort Worth; they've been unbelievable. It's

hard for us not to have them.

But I think they know how important it is for us, the PGA TOUR, to be here with this quality of field in Fort Worth sharing PGA TOUR golf with the world, and we'll be back here with all of our fans hopefully next year.

Q. Do you guys have a goal or an expectation as far as TV ratings and what those could do?

JAY MONAHAN: No, I think we look at it from overall consumption, TV ratings being one important element to it. But we expect that we're going to have a significant response, and you're going to have people that are going to be highly engaged in what happens here at the Charles Schwab Challenge and in the coming weeks.

I was reading a study today that of live media, the number one most missed element is live sports. I know myself have felt that way, and I certainly -- we've heard that from our fans as we've had this two-way dialogue over the last couple months in advance of coming back here.

It'll be significant, but keep in mind it's week to week to week, and I think it's going to be significant for a sustained period of time, given of quality of fields we have and the fact that we're on this run to complete the FedExCup Playoffs.

Q. This three-month gap is probably about as long as you've ever been away from the PGA TOUR. I'm just wondering as specifically as you can, I know I've felt this and I know a lot of us have, coming back to a golf tournament, what are some of the specific things for you where it's like, oh, it's cool to see that again?

JAY MONAHAN: That's such a great question. Just pulling in to Colonial Country Club and pulling out my credential and showing my credential and then pulling into the parking lot and seeing elements of the program that we've prepared for and execution.

But I think the thing that is really heartening and has meant so much to me is just walking on to the putting green, walking on to the first tee, walking on to the practice facility and just seeing guys, players, caddies and members of our team that I haven't seen in 90 days. I've missed everybody. I'm a person that thrives off of human connection and human interaction, looking people in the eye, seeing their emotion, and it's hard to do looking at my television screen just like you all have or my computer screen just like you all have for the past 90 days.

To be back and to be with our players and our members and see the excitement in their eyes is

particularly meaningful.

Q. Have you seen any impressive shots that stick in your mind right now?

JAY MONAHAN: You know what, I've been so consumed in the conversations I've had that I haven't had a chance to see a lot of shots, although Bubba's bunker play looked particularly good to me this afternoon.

Q. Just wondering if you had any more details you could share on how the 8:46 idea came about and what you hope that it will do.

JAY MONAHAN: Yeah. You saw the memo that I sent to our employees and I sent to our players. I made and we made as an organization a commitment to step back and to be a part of the dialogue and to engage on this incredibly important topic at this incredibly important time, and recognizing that we were coming back this week, we wanted to have a way to not only recognize the events of the last couple of weeks which are so tragic, but also to be able to look back at the issue, the systemic issue of racial and social injustice and find our way of recognizing that and reflecting on that and having a moment -- ultimately having a moment of silence is something that with all the things that we talked about, our Inclusion Leadership Council and team came back and recommended this as an idea, and we felt like it was the right thing to do, and I'm proud of the team for coming up with it, and I'm excited to be here tomorrow to participate.

Q. I was wondering, have you heard from other league commissioners, officials, asking what you guys have put in place to come back, and what you have told them and what you would tell them, and how much do you think other leagues are watching you guys this week to see how this goes and maybe use you guys as some sort of platform going forward for them?

JAY MONAHAN: Yeah, I would just say that as an industry there was a lot of collaboration between the leagues. I had a number of individual conversations with other commissioners. Really from the outset, really each league and its leadership was in an incredibly challenging position because our core competency is not preparing for a pandemic and having plans in place to respond to a pandemic. And so like us, every league was talking to medical experts, epidemiologists, companies in the healthcare space, local and state government officials, so invariably we were checking in on each other to understand where we were in our return and how we were thinking about that, issues that affect our return in terms of number of events played, for us number of events played relative to eligibility. And then of course how you return in a safe, healthy and responsible way.

So I was on a number of calls with all of the other league commissioners as part of the reopening of America task force and had a lot of individual conversations along the way, really in the past I'd say 30 to 45 days, more around testing and testing protocols and how we were handling it and learning more about how other sports are handling it.

But yeah, the answer to your question is that's been an important contributor to our thinking, and more importantly than me speaking to my peers at our leagues, the team that was leading our health and safety protocols is speaking to their counterparts at the leagues, sharing information, and one of the things I'm most proud of is that as an industry, this has pulled us together more so than almost any event because we were in a position where we were all away for a long period of time, we weren't sure when we were going to come back, but we all knew what we had to address to come back, and then we all had different factors to lead into our ability to do so.

And to your question on do we feel a responsibility? Absolutely. I think everybody is watching, and I think everybody -- I've gotten a lot of nice emails and text messages of encouragement, and I think everyone wants to see this go off exceedingly well and for us to accomplish the same goal they have, which is a safe and healthy return, and to do it in a manner that is actually recognizing the challenges that this virus presents.