

Travelers Championship

Saturday, June 23, 2018

Paul Casey

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome in Paul Casey, 8-under 62 today ties your PGA TOUR low round, and I think it's the third time in your career that you've hit all 18 greens and now you're 16 under and you have a substantial lead. Just talk about what a flawless round of golf that was today.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, thank you, I depth know I'd never hit 18 greens in regulation before. I thought it was the first. Johnny and I -- Johnny, my caddie -- we always had a good plan around here. It's always a golf course I've felt comfortable on. And today was just one of those days where I didn't really miss a shot, and if we did, we missed it in the right place.

The lines on the putts were popping out for me, and the hole looked to reasonable size, bigger than normal, and just a real joy. Good golfing conditions as well. Quite liked the sort of grayness and the sticking to the table.

It was just one of those days, so very, very happy, and glad to be in the lead. It's a championship I'd really like to win having gotten close a couple years ago and losing in the playoffs to Bubba Watson. It's one I feel like I can win, and I'm really happy to be in the position I'm in.

MARK WILLIAMS: Before we take some questions, you've got an amazing record around this golf course. What is it that you specifically like about it?

PAUL CASEY: Oh, there are a lot of things. I like the fact that, as I said maybe yesterday or the day before, it's a golf course which is open to all styles of play, having seen that with Bubba Watson, Corey Pavin playoff. Jim Furyk shooting 58, not the longest guy on TOUR. Yeah, multiple ways of playing it. Good architecture, fantastic conditions, plus just a feeling of liking this event. You know this event where it sits in players' kind of heart as their enjoyment of it. That's just another factor of playing well.

If you don't like playing a tournament, you're not going to play well because you don't want to be there. And this is just a good vibe all the way around.

Q. Before Tampa, would you have felt like you were ready to win in the sense that you were kind of were in that boat?

PAUL CASEY: I mean, I feel like, yes, assuming I got things in order. The last couple of seasons not winning has been frustrating, but the reason for it was not putting well enough. You know, I've made gains on the back end of last year, working on the putting. And finally at Tampa, if you look at the stats, there's a very simple statistic of Tampa was the first -- maybe the first week in a long time that I had strokes gained on Saturday and Sunday, and boom, suddenly I win a golf event. So nothing else needs to change.

If I go out there tomorrow and I hit it the way I normally hit it and I putt well, you know, then I'm fairly confident. But it has been the sort of missing link.

So to answer your question, it had been temperately coming and I'm very keen to get another win, and I'd love it to be tomorrow. But if it's not tomorrow, I still think I can get one or two before the end of the season.

Q. Along the lines, urgency may be too strong of a word, but you found a good run since that win. Is there a sense of sort of capturing that from Ryder Cup at this point in your career?

PAUL CASEY: A little bit. The only sense of -- there is no sense of urgency in terms of trying to get that win. There is not a sense of urgency, but I'm happy I played good golf, because I pulled out of THE PLAYERS Championship and in Memphis, and I played Wentworth, but I wasn't a hundred percent fit with a back injury, which was L-4, L-5, S-1, all out of place, big inflammation, nerve pain down the leg, up the back, and I didn't know what was going on.

Then I see Captain Bjorn at Wentworth, and he's like what's going on? And it's like, it's all right, it's all right. I'll be fine.

So we told him last week, the U.S. Open was the first event I played since The Masters where I've been pain free. So that was, you know, a huge positive. This week, I've not thought about it once and I'm trying to win a golf event.

So from my side of things, that's a massive positive, and that's why I'm excited.

Q. When you won at Valspar, you teed off one hour and 20 minutes ahead of the final group, obviously.

Tomorrow's going to be a different animal. What kind of difference in mindset is there? Will there be much of a difference? Obviously you'll be wearing the target tomorrow.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, but that's fine. I'd always rather be -- you'd always rather have a lead. You know, when you're behind, there is no room for error. No, I'm excited. I've got confidence in my game. I've got confidence with the man standing next to me, confidence in the game plan of how to get around this golf course.

I can't, obviously, determine what everybody else is going to do, and I've got to sort of expect I've got to shoot something decent. I don't know. I'll go away and think about a number to kind of go and shoot and figure it out.

The plans aren't going to change, but it would be nice to get nearer 20 or something like that. You never know, because somebody could do what I've done today from already strong position. They shoot 8-under, look at the leaderboard, there are a lot of 10s, 11, and 12s out there.

Q. Did getting Tampa under your belt alleviate a sense of pressure or loosen you up in terms of how you're going to attack and approach tomorrow's round?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, I think so, yes. If I hadn't won in a while, then, yeah, there would be more pressure. I sit here right now with no nerves. I'm sure there will be tomorrow, but no nerves. I'm very happy with what I've done. In years past maybe that wouldn't have been the case because there hadn't been enough wins.

So, yeah, different feeling, different mindset, and, yeah, I'm sure without question that's going to give me more confidence tomorrow.

Q. In general, why is it so difficult to follow up a really low round with another strong round the next day, and specifically, what do you do tomorrow to continue the momentum?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, it's always been a trend. I've proven that in tournaments, yeah, just in general. It's always been one of those things, isn't it? For example, if I win a tournament, I'm rubbish the following week. I never parlay it into another tournament. Thank God I didn't win last (laughing).

What was the question? I don't know.

Q. How do you keep the momentum going?

PAUL CASEY: I don't know. Eat barbecue again like I did last night. I don't know. I'm in a good spot mentally and physically, so I'm not overly worried. That doesn't

mean I know the outcome of tomorrow, but I'm looking forward to it more than anything else.

Things will be different. They always are. That's the thing. You get pin positions that suit your eye, and the greens, the lines were popping out for me, you just hope that continues tomorrow.

Q. You've mentioned your caddie more than most golfers who sit there. What does he bring for you, for your game, that he's such a vital part of it?

PAUL CASEY: Well, between us we've got over 50 years of experience of professional golf, so you can do the mathematics. We've been around a while. He is, you know -- it's just nice having Johnny on the side that I know that he's got my back in all situations, and I've got the utmost confidence in him. Whether it's the simple task of doing some numbers, doing some calculations on picking a club, all the way through to light-hearted moments.

He was having some good banter with the crowd on 16 tee, giving somebody a hard time for being a Man United fan, even though he's a Man United fan, and he failed to mention it to the guy that was he was giving grief to. Yeah, he's got it all, and he's one of my best mates, so it's a pleasure as well. I'm looking forward to being out there with him tomorrow.

Q. (Inaudible)?

PAUL CASEY: No, it's a mutual. For the most part it's a mutual decision, but the numbers dictate what it's going to be. It's not a guessing game. It's just whether who comes to the conclusion fastest.

Q. The back pain you talked about, how did you get rid of it?

PAUL CASEY: Adjustments and anti-inflammatories when I was in the U.K. Went through MRIs and everything -- I guess the treatment before that just wasn't agricultural enough to fix it. We thought we were fixing it, but we weren't. We were kind of hitting the effects rather than the cause. Eventually we figured out the cause, which was structural.

Q. What led you to decide to first play this event in 2015? Given the experience you had that week, a wonderful week followed by a frustrating playoff, what did you take away from that with memories?

PAUL CASEY: I'll touch on that. I mean, first off, yeah, frustrating not to get a victory. It's always frustrating not to get a victory. But then I didn't -- there's always mistakes. So, for me, it was always a lesson in what should I have done better?

How I got here, which I think if the dates are right, when I started playing in Europe, I didn't renew my

membership having kind of fallen out of the top 50 and a young family, it was a case of I'm not going to continue the Europe thing because it's just too much and effecting my game.

Traditionally, I would have gone over and played the BMW event this week, and I've got a great relationship with BMW, so that was a tough decision not to do that. But you can give all the credit, really, to Andy Bessette who is out on the road constantly, as a lot of people know.

It was a conversation back at the range at THE PLAYERS Championship down in Sawgrass. Ross Berlin introduced me to this gentleman who was lovely and spoke highly, and you've got to come try it. To me, it was just the rapport. I knew nothing about this event, and I'm not sure I would have even seen much of it on TV having been in Germany all those years and you're playing in Germany. So I really knew nothing.

I just thought this guy's cool, seems nice. Ross kind of gave me the this guy's solid kind of look, and sometimes you've got to take the plunge. Yeah, so you can give him all the credit for just reaching out and having a good rapport with players. Look at the quality of field. I mean, all credit to Travelers and Andy for what they do. It's brilliant.

Q. Where did you get barbecue last night?

PAUL CASEY: Was it Bear's?

Q. Were you in Hartford?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, Bear's.

Q. Having said all that, I don't know if I'm asking you to tempt fate, but going back, three top 10 here in three years. Second, tied for 17th, and I think 8th last year, do you believe in things like all that building up and maybe it's just your time here?

PAUL CASEY: Oh, I don't know. No, it just proves I like the golf course and I play it well. Nothing is ever given to you. You've still got to get out there and earn it. It's not going to be gifted to you, especially in professional golf. If that were the case, I'd have a bunch more victories. I feel like I've done my time. But, no.

Q. This year is far from over. There are two majors left and the FedExCup title available. If you had your choice at the end of this year, would you rather have a FedExCup title or a major under your belt?

PAUL CASEY: I would rather have a major. Jay Monahan's going to hate that one.

Q. You could have both.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah (laughing).