

Travelers Championship

Monday, May 13, 2019

Nathan Grube

Andy Bessette

Jimmy Canton

Pam Thistlewaite

Emma Thistlewaite

Chris Berman

Bubba Watson

Media Day Press Conference

NATHAN GRUBE: Welcome to our 2019 media day. 34 days from now we will be beginning that video for next year. It's going to be an exciting time for all of us. Thank you for being here. Thank you to the First Tee of Connecticut for letting us use the facility again. We're partners with them, and what they do out here is amazing, and we appreciate that. River Highlands, thank you David Corrado and his team for again letting us crash your facility.

Also the homeowners of River Highland, thank you. I saw Ron here. We tend to bring a few people into their neighborhood, and they are very accommodating and very kind to let us do that.

Thank you for being here this morning to hear from Bubba. We're going to have him up here in a few minutes with Chris Berman, but again, what we try to do with the media day, to really remind everyone why we're here, what happens because of the tournament, bring a lot of the stories to life so you get to meet people who are part of this that really make this a pretty amazing story about what this means for our community, the impact that we have on the community with this event, and you are all part of that.

Thank you very much for being here.

I'm going to introduce Andy Bessette to come up and say a few words. This will be Andy and I's 13th time that we have sat down and said, how are we going to make the tournament better, what are we going to do this year that is better than last year, and it has been quite a journey, and I want to say this about him: We had a lot of questions I would say. This is the fifth time



that we will have followed a West Coast U.S. Open, and we've got a lot of questions this year about, hey, what's going to happen with the field. It was very interesting that I think the USGA is now considering moving the U.S. Open because they don't like playing before the Travelers Championship (laughter.) Come on, that was funny. I'm teasing.

But no, I would say when Andy heard that, if you have ever worked with Andy, you know this about him, if you ever said you can't do something, that just means I will show you that I can. We started going out early on TOUR to talk to the guys when the conversation started going about the field, and I think what you're seeing this year from the field is a direct result of Andy saying, we need to redouble our efforts, go back out, make sure people understand who we are and what we are, and lets go out and build the best field we possibly can. So I want to say that I'm proud to say, Andy, thank you for all your work on that and the relentless pursuit of the status quo being absolutely unacceptable, and every year we're going to make this better, and that wouldn't be possible without your leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, the executive vice president, chief administrative and chief golf officer with Travelers, Andy Bessette.

ANDY BESSETTE: Thanks, Nathan. Chief, chief, chief, chief. I don't like chiefs. But a lot of what we do here is so special, and before I make my comments, I want to thank Jimmy Canton for being here and Emma. Having you here with us today, it's really cool, and mom and the whole team.

I'll talk about this as we get through this, but thanks for being here.

On behalf of Alan Schnitzer, who's our chairman and CEO, and all of our over 30,000 employees worldwide, thank you for joining us here today, but also thank you for supporting and being a partner of what we're trying to do with the Travelers Championship.

All of us at Travelers are so proud. I can't even tell you how proud we are. This pride all throughout our company with what we do with the Travelers Championship, we're so proud to be a partner of the PGA TOUR and with the staff at the Travelers

Championship and with the board and everybody locally that has been involved with this tournament, and like a lot of us, since 1952, when it was the Insurance City Open.

The Hartford community if you remember 12 years ago had lost the event, and it was a lot like the Whalers, and it was gone. It was off the schedule. And I hear people say, well, they were going to cancel it. No, the PGA TOUR did cancel it. It was off the schedule and gone. At the time Jay Fishman and I talked and said, you know what, this is a great opportunity, let's pursue it, and before you knew it we were the title sponsor and started our first tournament in 2007.

Our goal from day one has always been, as Nathan said, to make this the best stop on the PGA TOUR, second to none, the best stop on the PGA TOUR. And he's right. I'm never happy. Well, I'm happy sometimes. I'm happy with different things. But I'm never happy that you have arrived because Nathan is correct, it's been our motto from day one that the day you accept the status quo is the day you start going backwards, and so you always have to try to get better, you always forge ahead, and I think we've been somewhat successful with it.

I think this year our field is pretty good. It's gotten better year over year, but the Players Choice Award that we've been awarded in 2017 and 2018 is special to us because it's voted on by each of the PGA TOUR pros. It's not voted on by the staff at the PGA TOUR. It's not voted on by anybody else other than the players, and that means the world to us.

And we've always tried to make the Travelers Championship about something for everybody. You don't have to like golf to be a part of what we do here. You have to only know that we're going to make it better every year and make it something we can all be proud of in the Hartford region, in Connecticut, and for that matter in the whole world. We just want to be the best that we can be here at the Travelers Championship.

The player field, okay. I always get in trouble with this because I always mention a name that's not been announced yet, so I'm going to try not to do that but I have to read it because otherwise something will slip like Louis -- oops, he's not been announced yet, sorry. Brooks Koepka, Justin Thomas, Francesco Molinari, Bryson DeChambeau, Paul Casey, Jason Day, Tony Finau, Bubba Watson, and there's only one Bubba Watson. Bubba is phenomenal and such an important part, and I'll talk a little bit about that in a minute. Patrick Reed, Patrick Cantlay, Tommy Fleetwood, Marc Leishman, Phil Mickelson. So we have a few really great names coming back and some new names

coming in Molinari and Fleetwood, and we're just excited because we asked the players, and I do this all the time, and poor Bubba has been the target of my questions and saying, like, okay, so how do we make this better, what are we missing, because you guys play a lot of other tournaments. What can we do to make it better.

But I also look at the field, and we announced a lot of players early, and I think that was a benefit, just the fact that the PGA TOUR announced a new schedule that was so different and so mixed up that a lot of players looked at their schedules and said, where can I go play that I feel good, they treat me like home, they treat me like family, and I know it's a good event. And so I think we were the beneficiary of that approach.

You know, as we talk about all these players, which is great, we do this for really one reason, to benefit the community and charities. And the charity element of this is really important, and Nathan says this all the time, 100 percent of all net proceeds, 100 percent, go to charity. There's no wealthy owners. Well, actually there are. The wealthy owners of the charities who benefit from the tournament.

And last year in 2018, we hit \$2 million, which was our goal all along. Now we've raised it because the status quo is unacceptable, so it'll be higher. I haven't told Nathan that yet, but that's okay, it'll be good when I tell him. But the \$200,000 that Bubba Watson donated last year to the Hole in the Wall Gang camp got us to \$2 million, and we can't thank him enough for that and for all that the camp does for so many children who have different afflictions and fight the battles of their lives, and it's just terrific to be able to partner with all of our charities, over 150 last year, and since we've been title sponsor we've given over \$16.7 million to charity and over 750 organizations that have benefitted from it.

So there's a lot of charity going on. There's a lot of charity dollars. It's an important part of why we do this. It's a real reflection of who Travelers is. Travelers Corporation gives millions of dollars to this region, to the state of Connecticut each year, to help in a whole different number of causes. And you know, the other piece I would talk about is the state. The state has been very, very supportive of what we do here, and every year they come out, they say, what can we do, and how can we do it, and this year it's really great, and it's exciting for me to be able to announce today that our honorary chair for the Travelers Championship in 2019 will be governor Ned Lamont, and the governor, when Nathan and I went to meet with him, we spent probably a half hour with him, he was so excited. I was excited actually leaving. I said, wow, this is going to be great. He had ideas on who to sell and how to sell and how to participate, and he said,

What can I do to help you.

So we're really excited to have the governor as our honorary chair for 2019. This just reflects that this is Connecticut's event. We have over 4,000 volunteers every year that make this happen, 4,000, and about half of them come from the Travelers employees.

When I look at that, I think to myself, last year we raised \$2 million for charities, over 150 charities, you have 4,000 volunteers. It just makes you feel so good about what's happening here.

And the final piece I'll talk about is our new clubhouse. The old clubhouse was like a house. Well, it was a house. Actually I don't even think it was a house. I'm not even sure what it was. I didn't really like it. But it was -- well, functionally -- I don't say I didn't like it because I didn't like it. It was a very nice house but it was not for a clubhouse. It was too small, for safety and for other things we needed it. And so five years ago I had the commissioner, Jay Monahan, up before he was commissioner, I showed it to him, he goes, We need to fix this. So you know what, that's how visions occur and that's how you start having conversations, and that was the third leg of the stool. We ended up with a world-class practice facility right out here. We have a world-class golf course that had significant changes made to it four years ago, and now we have a world-class clubhouse that's going to be just a terrific, terrific home. 51 weeks a year it'll be great for the club here to use and for us, for the players.

It's just important to know that, again, this is all a reflection that since 2007, Travelers has tried to set a new standard, and it's our entire team from Alan Schnitzer on down, our entire team keeps pushing to make this a better event, and I can't -- I have to say this one more time, but we've won this Players Choice Award two times, but we're really lucky to have Nathan Grube as our tournament director. Nathan, if there was such an award, he should win the Players Choice Award for tournament directors. He's that good. And we try to make sure he's happy just like we try to make sure that the players are happy.

He always talks to me about making players happy, players' wives happy, players' children happy. I'm always trying to make sure Nathan is happy. So that's the hardest job, trust me.

Well, I don't mean it that way. Never mind, forget it. But having Nathan as our tournament director is critical and important to what we're doing here and his team, Tara, Kevin and down to everybody on the team that works so hard diligently through the year to make this happen.

Nathan, having said that, it's just great to have you as part of the team, and thank you for all you do. With that, I will leave you, and I think Nathan comes back up. Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: That was very kind, Andy. I have to say, though, that I don't know if you've met our entire team, but there are 13 of us that work full-time on the tournament year-round, and what they give up to work on this event is a lot. Just the weekends in the spring -- it takes over your life, but we believe in what we do, we love it, but it is -- it's no small sacrifice. So to the team, thank you for what you do to put this on.

I am going to introduce Jimmy Canton now, the CEO of Hole in the Wall Gang camp, and before I do, we've been a partner with Camp since '07, and every single year being able to hear their stories, being able to spend time with them, challenges us to do our job better. If we do the tournament in a more efficient, more productive way, we will raise more money and more money will go to Camp. So we are challenged by that.

But it's interesting this year, with no TOUR event being in the Boston area this year, with the way the schedule worked out, we're the only event in New England this summer, and so we found ourselves actually going to Boston more to talk to media, going to Providence, going to Worcester and kind of expanding out this conversation about who we are at the Travelers Championship because we're the only ones here in the summer.

And getting to tell the story of Camp for the first time to people again, it just had this refreshing reminder, not that it is stale what their story is, but you talk about it and you see Jimmy and you see Ryan and you meet the kids, and it's amazing, but to tell that story for the first time and to have somebody go, wait, I'm sorry, what? Now where is this place? What is happening? Wait, the tournament raises money for that, like you don't have -- you don't have an owner? And telling that story again for the first time, it just kind of is reinvigorating, it's reenergizing to know the better we do our job, they are amazing stewards with those funds and how they have grown, the magic of what Camp is to more and more children, more and more families. We couldn't be more proud to be a partner with them and what they're doing.

I'd like to introduce Jimmy Canton, president and CEO of the Hole in the Wall Gang camp.

JIMMY CANTON: Good morning. We have a former camper right here. He's in the crowd, Ben Goldman. Nice to see you, Ben. Good morning, everyone. It is always an enormous privilege to be here and represent

one of the many worthy charities that benefit so much from the Travelers Championship and the generosity of the title sponsor Travelers. Just extraordinary spirit and kindness and vision for wanting to give back to so many charities. Thank you.

I also want to say a heartfelt massive thank you to Bubba Watson, who is now in the house. Bubba, where are you? You're in the house somewhere. Hi, Bubba. Thank you. You're just an inspiration. What you did for Camp last year is extraordinary, and it pairs good fortune with misfortune, which is what Camp is all about and why Paul started the camp, and we are so lucky to have you as part of our friendship circle and your faith in the camp just really inspires all of us. So thank you.

We've had a very busy spring up at Camp. Already we have had seven family weekends that lead up to our summer program, and our Travelers employees were at the camp volunteering just a couple weeks ago preparing for one of those family weekends. We will see several hundred Travelers volunteers supporting Camp throughout the year, the largest volunteer forthcoming from any corporate partner. So as a company, you all are tremendous.

We just started doing some more programming for adolescent and young adults, so for 18- to 25-year-olds who are survivors of their illness, but that survivorship certainly comes at a cost. We ran our very first -- we hosted our first weekend AYA conference at the camp just a couple weeks ago, and that's another direction that we hope to continue to grow in.

We led a superhero day at Connecticut Children's two weeks ago, which is a blast with our hospital outreach team. I had the most meaningful compliment paid to us, paid to the hospital outreach team. You all -- I don't know if you all understand hospital outreach, but today we have about 40 of the finest young people we can find who are ready for full-time work, and they are bringing Camp to a child's hospital bedside in 40 hospitals, between Boston, Philadelphia, soon to grow down even further south.

I had a camper mom come up to me the other week a couple months ago, and she said, I don't know how you do it, but you find staff who bring joy to joyless places. I mean, what a wonderful affirmation of what we hope to do with hospital outreach.

And we're preparing for our 32nd summer. So staff is getting trained. More than 40 percent of our summer staff this year is made up of former campers. It's great. All together this year, Camp will serve more than 20,000 seriously ill children and their family members through a variety of programs, all completely free of

charge, and that is a direct result of the generosity of this growing community of support, and certainly from what the championship has done and what Travelers has done for us over the last 10 years.

I received a letter from a camper mom that reminded me it's not just about those numbers, right; it's about the transformational impact that Camp has. She wrote, "Camp is not just a place. It's not just a calendar of activities. We each carry Camp inside of us as we work through the trevails of our lives, a warm, comforting embrace that is there for us when we need it." And for me, that reminds me that Camp is all -- Camp is here to heal the hearts and the spirits of the children and families that we are so privileged to befriend and to serve. And that emotional healing is what our founder called a different kind of healing. That's what we're all about.

We have two remarkable ladies who are going to tell you a little bit more about their experience with Camp, Pam and Emma Thistlewaite. So I just want to thank you all again for your constant support of this Connecticut charity and for the championship and Travelers and Bubba. And Pam and Emma, why don't you come up and tell us all about the camp. Thank you very much.

PAM THISTLEWAITE: Hello, everyone. We're so excited to be here today and are honored to be able to share with you what the Hole in the Wall Gang camp has meant to us. My daughter Emma was diagnosed in 2015 at age 11 with osteosarcoma, a form of bone cancer, in her left upper arm. She began a chemo regimen that took the two of us away from our home and family for three weeks out of every four.

These first six months were a very dark period. It was difficult as a mom to watch her suffering and in pain because of the chemotherapy and the surgical replacement of her left humerus with a metal prosthesis. It was also difficult to watch Emma's dream of being a gymnast and a cheerleader vanish and watch her grieve over this.

One of the bright spots during this time was the Hole in the Wall hospital outreach program. This program gave Emma some of the only smiles while she was in the hospital. These staff members made such a difference, and Emma always looked forward to their arrival for some games or arts and crafts. We attended our first family weekend six months after Emma's diagnosis. The other families in attendance that weekend had also been affected by some form of pediatric cancer. That weekend Emma felt free to just be herself, not the girl with cancer, because the other children were like her, and other families were like ours.

That weekend was filled with singing, dancing and so many activities. I wasn't taken care of Emma that weekend because Camp took care of all of us. Emma was the happiest I had seen her since her diagnosis. Our lives changed and it was hard to leave.

Emma has relapsed twice since that first family weekend in 2015. I am so thankful Hole in the Wall has continued to be such a source of happiness for Emma and our family during these last four years.

I would like to now introduce you to Emma, who will tell you what Camp has meant to her.

EMMA THISTLEWAITE: Hello. My name is Emma, and it is so nice to be here with you today. My family and I have attended four family weekends, and I have gone to camp for the last three summers. The first time I went to camp at Hole in the Wall was back in 2016 and I had never been away from home for something like this. I was scared at first, but I had a lot of other girls in my cabin, and a number of them had also had cancer. We didn't need to talk about it, but we understood what each other had gone through.

I didn't really have that with my friends at home, so it made it easier. I was in a wheelchair that first year, following my first relapse in my leg and my lungs, but I was still able to participate in so many activities at Camp. The doctors and nurses on staff there, and they took such good care of me while I was there. The last two summers were so much easier. I was no longer in treatment and no longer in a wheelchair. I did every activity at Camp, my favorites being the rope course and zipline, horseback riding, archery, swimming, the cooking zone, arts and crafts and stage night. I haven't just bonded with other campers while I was at Camp, I bonded with the counselors, as well. We spent a lot of time together, and they made us all feel loved. I was especially inspired when I had counselors who were pediatric cancer survivors. They gave hope for my future.

One day I plan to be a counselor at Hole in the Wall, because I want to give campers the same hope that my counselors gave me. Camp makes me so happy. It is a magical place, and I can't wait to go back again this summer.

PAM THISTLEWAITE: We would now like to take this moment to thank the Travelers Championship, its title sponsor Travelers, and last year's winner Bubba Watson for your friendship and support and for helping make Camp possible for children like Emma and families like ours. Thank you very much.

NATHAN GRUBE: Never follow Camp. I write that every year, and I fail every year. Thank you for sharing

your story.

Why are you crying, man? You got me started. I never do this, ever.

So we have the privilege now, Chris Berman and Bubba are here, and I need everybody to understand this, that to have your defending champion come back into town is -- it's not always how things work. I mean, you get somebody like Bubba and his schedule, it's PGA Championship week, he's trying to win a major, a lot of guys down at Bethpage right now, but instead of there practicing, Bubba is here, and I think that says a lot. Bubba, thank you very much. He's a personal champion for us. We have these pictures up. That was some sweet hair you had going on back then. It was awesome.

But you know, we've gotten to know him over the last nine years, and it's been a joy and a privilege, and so he's here today with us and also Chris. There's a reason why our tournament is special. When the players come here for the first time, when you have people come here for the first time, they're like, something is different about Travelers, and it's the volunteers and it's the sponsors and everybody takes this event personal. Everybody has a personal vested interest in this event, and there's a personal pride with it, and Chris is no exception. I told this story earlier, that he has done an amazing job over his career of building up who Chris Berman is. He has honed and perfected his craft. He has gotten to the pinnacle of his profession, and that's a lot of hard work, decades of it, and then he basically gives it to us to use to promote the tournament.

No charge, he says, hey, I'll do radio for you, I'll do this, what do you want me to do. So we get this lifelong commitment to excellence, and he just turned over that equity to us to use. So Chris, thank you very much for being here. Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to do a short video and then you're going to have Chris Berman and Bubba Watson for our media day.

BUBBA WATSON: Not that anybody cares, but I'm going to tell you, that was -- I didn't have many times to go get my hair cut, so I had to go on home to see my dad in the hospital and everything, so I didn't have my -- now you're going to cry again. (Laughter.)

CHRIS BERMAN: The only advice I'd give you on that is put that in a bag when you get near -- you'll need it in your 60s. Take it from an old guy. Welcome home to our three-time champion, Bubba Watson. (Applause.)

Thank you, Emma and mom. Happy mom's day. That was wonderful.

BUBBA WATSON: Unbelievable.

CHRIS BERMAN: So we did that together. So you come here -- we'll vary from what we did this morning some, but from the South, and again, it's spring, it's a very nice spring day here as you've grown to love it here in Connecticut. This is what we have for you, sorry.

We promise June will be great as it always is. Why are you so comfortable here, Bubba? Golf course, people? What is it? Let's just do golf first. Do you see things better on this course than some others? How is that possible?

BUBBA WATSON: I just think that the way the golf course is set up, the way the holes shape, a lot of the holes shape from right to left, easy for me to hit my driver, being left-handed, wanting to cut it. So it just makes it easier for me to see, easier for me to do, and then when you talk about the length of the course and the way the rough is set up, it's not -- especially coming from the U.S. Open, it's not much rough here, and so it just brings an excitement to the game that way because you're done with that. Now you get to play this golf course.

And so it's always been fun. And then from the other side of it, when Travelers took over in 2007, I came back, and they asked me what would I like. And it wasn't just what Bubba Watson likes. I was only my second year on TOUR, right, so they said, what do you like, and then what do you like, what do you like. So they started asking every player, and they were the tournament, the sponsorship that asked the players what they want. They did everything for the caddies, they did for the families, they did for the kids. They've done everything they said they would do and plus, and then when you talk about the driving range, the First Tee facility, the new clubhouse, the golf course revamp, everything, they keep doing it better and better.

When you see a tournament like that, it develops from a tournament to a bigger tournament, and you can see why we keep voting for it to be the best tournament because of what they're doing, what they're doing off the course, what they're providing for the community, economic growth but also for the charity dollars. It's a tournament that you want to be at, and as you can see, I just found out that Phil Mickelson, the guy with the big calves, he's playing.

CHRIS BERMAN: We weren't going to go there. Keep going.

BUBBA WATSON: I figured you would. So I just saw that -- y'all just told me that he's playing. That's what I'm saying, it's just growing, but it's growing not only

from the golf side, it's growing from the fan base, it's growing from the volunteers, it's growing from the outreach outside the game of golf, the community of charity, community of economic growth. Just everything about the tournament is growing, and everybody sees that, players see that, and they hear the buzz. They know the buzz. And now more and more people are just going to get bigger and bigger.

CHRIS BERMAN: We know why Phil is coming, because he left he was the high lefty with two wins here, but when you won last year for the third time as a lefty, you know that's why he's coming.

BUBBA WATSON: Exactly, and I told him calves don't work.

CHRIS BERMAN: We'll see if we can get Brian Harmon with you, too, maybe Steve Flesch. We'll all change how we hit the ball.

Just looking at you, and you're known for your 350-, 380-yard, et cetera, drives, but then watching that, making a 10-foot putt to win the Masters, easier to hit the fairway and go 350 when you're standing on the tee? Or an eight- or 10-foot pressure putt? How do you channel it and how do you make them both look so easy?

BUBBA WATSON: I think the drive is not distance. Distance is a totally different thing. But the drive is easier because you have a chance to correct the mistake. The putt is the last thing you do on that hole or the last thing you do at that tournament. So that's the mental part is that.

When I messed up that tee shot in the Masters or I messed up the shot here in 2010 when I hit it in the water on 17, I came back -- I had another hole to birdie, force a playoff, and then I went on to win in 2010. Same thing at the Masters. I hit it in the trees and I hooked it out. So I had the chance to not redo it but hit a better shot to improve it.

Now, the putt, that's the last putt you have, so if you miss it, there's no turning back, that's it. That's your score. So it's easier -- I believe it's easier on everything else. The putt is the hard part just because mentally you know this is for the win or this is to get in a playoff or this is to do this. And so that makes it more mentally challenging.

CHRIS BERMAN: So you're not alone in the putt's the hard part. That's good to know.

This supposedly -- not supposedly. When you play some courses like Bethpage coming up this week, which is a monster, which is long, theoretically some of

the golfers are at a disadvantage, maybe even more so with the rain they're going to have. This one, Bubba, all types of players can win here, not that a short game player can't win a PGA, I understand that, but you know what I'm getting at. Why then when seemingly you've got to beat everybody because length isn't as huge here, although you may be hitting wedge, they may be hitting 9 or 8 on some holes, but still, what is it about your long game that suits here where short players can win, too, where Fred Funk used to contend all the time?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, I think when you go to the first hole, I like that motion of cutting the ball, and so you hit driver -- or a lot of guys will hit 3-woods. So it just -- the beauty of the golf course just fits me. And when I go to No. 10, a lot of the guys will hit 3-woods off that hole, but I hit driver because it's the only one in the trees, but it's tree lined and it curves to the left. So for me, it's a perfect driver. I hit a low driver that turns a little to the left, and visually it helps me see that shot instead of just a big open field, and so it helps me see that shot, even though guys, a right-hander is going to be hitting 3-wood, I'm hitting driver every time because I just see that shot and I can make that shot come off the trees just right, so it's worked out for me.

So it's just one of those things when you get here, the energy you feel here from the fans and the people around the event. You get energized, and there's certain places you show up you're just energized. No matter how good you play or how bad you play you're still energized at those places.

CHRIS BERMAN: 15, the drivable, which was built in the '80s, and many other courses have tried to build them, drivable, and then not really, right? What do you hit off it now? Is it 3-wood? Is it less? It's just, what, 301? What do you hit there?

BUBBA WATSON: Actually it's funny, I got a 3-wood -- I had a 3-wood made up a couple years ago just for that shot.

CHRIS BERMAN: Hmm.

BUBBA WATSON: So you want it where it would fall just to the left, so I can start it down the tree line and take water out of play because if it cut that much, it's going to be short of the water, but if I hit it right, I can go on the green. Last year I hit that club really good on that hole. But I've hit it in that water a few times trying to fit something in there, depending on the wind and which way it was going. But that's one of the best designed golf holes. It's fair, but it's tough when you try to go for it. You can easily just lay back and hit a wedge in there, but the green is shaped in a way that it's hard to get it close with a wedge. So that's why

everybody goes for it, and that's why everybody tries to attack it as much as they can.

CHRIS BERMAN: We went there this morning, I don't want to go there yet. So here you've given me about three or four or five different holes, but they're kind of all different, aren't they? It's not like here's another left-to-right, I've got to hit it, right? What are your favorite couple?

BUBBA WATSON: Gosh, I'd have to say 13 -- 10 because of the tee shot. The second shot on 10 everybody doesn't like it. The green is so narrow and so long because if you miss it too far right it falls off and there's a lot of trouble on the left. But the tee shot, it's good for me.

But 13, I like the par-5, 13, because there's water. I've hit it in that water more times than not, but you try to cut it towards those bunkers off of 13, and then when you do that, most of the time without strong wind into you, you're going to have an iron in there, par-5, and so -- I think in '15 I hit it out of the bunker with a 5-iron on Sunday, and I told my caddie, I said, we're either going to win or lose right here because I'm going for it. I said all right, and I ended up hitting it and made eagle. So that's another hole.

The next hole, 14, it's a big dogleg, so it's perfect for me. Where guys are hitting 3-woods, I'm hitting driver again because I just slice it up there.

17 is the toughest hole for me because visually you're aiming at the bunker and you're hitting an iron off the tee, so that one is the most difficult for me. And the same tee shot on No. 6, that par-5, because it kind of doglegs slightly to the right. That one is a little tough for me, especially with the trees growing in. I think someone needs to cut some of them limbs down. But it makes it tough to hit that shot for me. So those are the two tough tee shots from a scoring perspective on 6. I can still have a birdie chance because you just lay up, but on 17 it's a very difficult shot for me coming down the stretch, especially on a Sunday trying to hit that fairway.

CHRIS BERMAN: It's not hard for anybody else, that hole.

BUBBA WATSON: Right.

CHRIS BERMAN: How do you hit it so far?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, obviously Phil said it's not because of my calves and my arms. Everybody knows that, if anybody has checked social media. If only I had a video coming out today that was going to rebuttal all that. But if I did, though, that would be amazing. It

would be very amazing.

But it's all technique, right. I use all of my arms, all of my length, so I try to stretch my arms out as far back as I can, and the same thing on the follow through. So the longer the swing, the faster the club head speed. And then timing and everything just works out perfect, so it's worked out over the years.

CHRIS BERMAN: Let me get off this for a little bit. Bethpage this week, long. You played the Open in '09?

BUBBA WATSON: Yep.

CHRIS BERMAN: What do you remember about that other than it finished Monday night? There were tee times at like 7:10 like three days, right? 7:10 in the evening I might add, right? And you're on the range like twilight rates, right?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah.

CHRIS BERMAN: What else do you remember from that? You've played there since at the Barclays, but what do you put in your pocket there?

BUBBA WATSON: The key around that golf course is hitting the fairways because the iron shots are going to be longer, the holes are longer, so you've got to hit the fairways so you can play to the green. There's not too many people -- you're not going to light it up. Somebody is not going to shoot 30 under because the golf course is that difficult. So you've just got to play steady and focus on hitting the fairways, and then like every golf tournament, you've got to make the 10-footers.

CHRIS BERMAN: My memory is that we finished the wrap-up show with Andy North on Monday night, as just as we were leaving, I had a nice pair of Ecco shoes that I had worn all week, there was a big garbage can in the parking lot at Bethpage, and I stopped, I took my shoes off and I threw them in there, and I went in my suitcase and found a pair of topsiders so I could drive home. It was awful. It's a good start this week, too, though, huh?

This is a different one and then I know you guys have stuff and then we'll go back to a couple things. Almost have to ask from all players' standpoints, since you've got a green jacket a couple of times, but to see Tiger Woods actually be this again, you were rooting for yourself, trying to win it, but what does that mean to the players?

BUBBA WATSON: I've got three things on this one. As a fan of golf and as a fan of sports, to see Tiger Woods come back from where he was, physically, mentally, all

of those things, for his family and everything to see him come back and win is remarkable. It's the best comeback story that we've ever seen.

And then as a past champion, you don't want any more new people in the locker room. (Laughter.) You want anybody with a green jacket, you want them to win. If it's not you, you want the next guy. So we're pulling -- at the champions' dinner on Tuesday night we pull for all of us. No matter how old or how young, it doesn't matter; you're already in here, so let's just keep it these people. So that's why we wore the green jackets out there to meet him, just to -- he's a brotherhood, right? Well, I'm kind of in that one since he's got five, I think. So that's that one.

And then a few years ago, me and him as friends, I told him -- when I say a few years ago, a long time ago, I told him I'd love to be there for his next major, and he said, I'd love for you to be there. So for me it was more about a promise to him that I would be there, and luckily I was there. I made the cut and all these things, right. But I was there to see this and support this, and I told him a long time ago that I said, I love you as a person. And the golfer, yeah, you're good, but I love you as a person. I know your struggles and blah blah blah. So I want to be there when you win. So for him to win and be able to do that and be there, and nobody knows this but I got a special text the next day, so it was pretty cool to get a text from 15-time major champion Tiger Woods that said, Thanks. So it was pretty cool.

CHRIS BERMAN: You know he meant it.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, that one word, "Thanks."

CHRIS BERMAN: Says a lot, though.

BUBBA WATSON: Exactly. It was a couple more than that, but I'm not allowed to say those.

CHRIS BERMAN: No, no, thanks is good enough. That's good. Open it up for questions, and we've got a couple more. Don't be bashful; this is your shot.

Q. Do you remember your original motivation when you gave all that money up in the crunch conference room that we had there when you accepted the trophy?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, there was no -- it was truly no motivation. We talked about it earlier today. Alan and Andy had just announced that \$1.8 million -- we were sitting in that room and rain was beating down, I think it was at 10:00 it felt like. So I was on stage like this, right there with the kids, and I heard \$1.8, and I'm -- heart is my biggest motivation. When something hits me, I run with it, and then I ask for forgiveness to my

wife afterwards. But we've been together long enough, she knows and she trusts me, and so they said, \$1.8, and I just -- in that split second, it hit me, being here in '10 with my dad passing away of cancer, and I've been to the Hole in the Wall Gang camp. I've explored it, I've been around it, we've danced in the room there. They've made songs for me. So when you think about all that, in that split moment with everything happening going on and the crazy couple years ago I was going to -- this is all going on in my head. We're talking split -- just like a golf swing, split second, and thinking about, I could have retired and just called it quits after my sickness, and to have three wins last year, my third one here at Travelers, when I heard that number 1.8, I said, no, this tournament is too good, we need to get it to 2 million. So that's why I came up with \$200,000. If it had been \$1.7, I probably would have said 300,000. It's one of those things; it just hit me. So I pulled him aside and said, I want to donate \$200,000. It wasn't trying to boast, it wasn't trying to do anything, get any credit for myself or my family. It was just straight -- I'm part of Travelers now. I feel like I'm part of Travelers, of this area, this community, so I want to show my love and support, so that's really -- it hit me in that split second. I said, we need to get to 2 million. And as we can see with the voting of the PGA TOUR players that Travelers is the best tournament on TOUR, we keep voting it that way, so that's really how it happened. (Applause.)

Q. This year we have two majors being held at public golf courses, which I think makes a good connection because people can actually go out and play Bethpage and Pebble Beach. Would you like to see that happen more, and are there any particular public accessible courses that you would like to see host a major?

BUBBA WATSON: I'm going to answer the second part first. I really don't know much about golf courses. I just like to play golf. I mean, you know, my other thing is, too, is I've said this -- again, because in my heart, like the way I feel, I think every event we play, the Travelers is a major championship because of the fact that what we do outside the game of golf, what we've heard about today and what they've been a part of, and what other communities -- gosh, the Waste Management in Phoenix, what they give to the community, somewhere around \$9 million or so a year just because it's seven days.

I don't know much about golf courses to answer the first part now. So yeah, I think it's cool. I didn't even know Pebble Beach was public. I just knew it was Pebble Beach, I didn't know it was public or private. You can get on if you win the lotto. Luckily for me I play golf and I've won the Masters so I can get on.

Yeah, so no, I think it's amazing. I think that's the buzz of this week is because it is in New York, but New York has so many great golf courses, but we're playing at a public golf course, which is the hardest golf course we don't want to play at.

But it'll be fun this week. So yeah, if a golf course is good, they'll figure out a way to get a tournament there, and we've proven that this week because this tournament has been there for a couple times now.

CHRIS BERMAN: Just a quick aside, what's the hardest course you've ever played?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, man. I'd say without weather being involved, I'd have to say Bethpage just because of the length. You have to be on top of your game. And then if you don't have spotters, if you don't have volunteers this week, we're losing a lot of golf balls. So playing that with your buddies is a very tough test of golf.

CHRIS BERMAN: Oakmont?

BUBBA WATSON: Oakmont is pretty good. That has to be up there, too. But I actually finished fifth at Oakmont, so I feel like that's not as -- if I can finish fifth there, then --

CHRIS BERMAN: Oh, stop.

Q. This is a question about preparation for a major. You've played in about 40 majors, you've won two. When you go into a major week, do you have a schedule right down to the minute of what you're going to do on Monday of that week, from breakfast, lunch, dinner, movie, whatever it takes, right up until your tee time on Thursday? How do you -- is every minute accounted for and is it written down in the schedule?

BUBBA WATSON: No, not for me. Some people, yes. Masters is the only one that I have a plan, and that's to play as much golf as I can at the Masters because it's Augusta National. Again, we were talking about private and public. That one is so special to everybody when you go down Magnolia Lane, so you play that as much as you can. But this week I know the golf course, I've played here enough, and when I'm saying here, I'm saying Bethpage. I've played there enough. I know it's going to be driver on pretty much every hole. Conditions are going to be really wet. It's supposed to be raining right now, 100 percent chance of rain all day today down there, so I'll get in there this afternoon and then I'll get ready to practice tomorrow. A golf course like that where I know it's a lot of drivers, it's more about mental endurance, so I'm just focused on that instead of just focusing on a lot of reps.

Q. You kind of answered this question, but obviously your support of this tournament, you've kind of answered the question, but how did that affinity for the tournament kind of start, and has it grown as it's gone along?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, when I first came back here, I played in '06. I think I shot 74-74, missed the cut, and I said, I'm not coming back. So I didn't come back in '07, I think, when Travelers started. Came back in '08, might have been my first one, and I remember Andy coming on the range, and -- was it in '10? I think it was. He came on the range and talked to me, and I was trying to make the -- it was the weirdest thing. I'm going to tell you anyway. This is my time. I'm talking.

Now I'm starting to remember this back. So in 2010, it's a Ryder Cup year, my dad, nobody in the world knows except a handful of people know that my dad is on his last few months of living. And so we're driving, we're literally driving down the street, and there was a big sign that said about the water park. I don't even know the name of it now. I'm drawing a blank. It's in like a quarry, rock quarry. So we're driving, and I said, man, we should just go to that. My wife is like, well, you need to practice. I said, who cares, like we should just go check it out. It looks cool. I had some friends, so I came over here to hit some balls, and Teddy was with me, and our whole goal was to play nine holes that day. Andy comes out and talks to me, and he said, you need to win this week. I said, yeah, I need to win any week. And he goes, why do you like this place, and I told him, and I said, what y'all mean to this tournament, we've got a range now, we didn't have a range before.

So I just told him how great they were, and it was the first time really meeting him. I said, hey, have you ever heard of this water park? He said, yeah. So we talked about it, and about that time, here's where the story gets even weirder. I'm trying to make the Ryder Cup team, and Corey Pavin says, Hey, do you want to go play the back nine? I said No, I'm about to go to the water park. But the way I said it, though, I made it seem like I've been practicing for hours. I said, I've been practicing already, I'm just going to go to this water park down the street. I've been there for literally 10 minutes. I haven't hit but about five balls. And so we left. We literally -- the Ryder Cup captain is walking down to play nine holes, and I just told him no.

And I'm trying for a pick, obviously. I'm around -- I think I'm around like maybe 20 something on the points. And then I played him in the playoff that year, and so then I finished second at PGA and made it. But yeah, it's funny, that whole week, that was a weird week in 2010, and then I announced my dad. So the affinity, the love for this place is really about that, like just the communication between player and sponsor, the

communication of my family, my family loves this tournament now because of my situation. Obviously I didn't have a haircut there. But the situation with my dad, and that's why Ryder Cup means so much to me. Every year that I make the Ryder Cup team or as a vice captain, I tell them why it means so much is because my last event my dad -- my only event my dad ever saw me win was the Travelers. The last event he ever watched me play in from his hospital bed was the Ryder Cup.

And so the affinity, it's just coming back here because of what it means to my family, my mom, my first time winning but then on my dad's side of him. So this city, this town, this community has been great for me and my family, and that's really why the love started.

Q. Bubba, after the U.S. Open, a lot of players' brains are pretty scorched, whether it's the difficulty of the greens or the grueling nature of it. How difficult is it for the golfers to play after a major like that, to come here?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, I can only for myself. I love it. Usually I play two days at the U.S. Open and then I come over here early. (Laughter.) It gives me a couple days off.

But I love it because you're looking at this tough test, and then you come here. It doesn't matter really what golf course you go to, it's going to seem easier or easy compared to the U.S. Open. It just happens to be Travelers, to a golf course that suits my eye, and I love it. I'm glad I started playing in the U.S. Open before so that I loved it before because my first year here I wasn't in the U.S. Open and I missed the cut my first year here in '06, but that new sponsor really energized me and helped me.

For me personally, it just energizes me because it seems it's an easier golf course. Not saying it's easy, but it's easier than the last setup that we've just played at.

CHRIS BERMAN: Your strategy is to always be six back. Two of your three wins you were six back, right? That's a good strategy, right?

BUBBA WATSON: Exactly.

CHRIS BERMAN: You come here thinking, geez, how can I be six back. It's hard to do that.

BUBBA WATSON: Right, it's not easy being six back going into the last day.

CHRIS BERMAN: But then again, you're a different sort of player.

BUBBA WATSON: Exactly.

CHRIS BERMAN: Like we said earlier, the one time you didn't have a playoff, we beat the rain by five minutes and then you got the take. So you look at that picture, you talk about the year with your dad and everything in '10, and then this with the trophies with your kids. That was pretty cool.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, it's wild because I shot 7-under last year, and I just saw it on the computer, I won by three. But it was because of the rain come and the wind picked up a little bit, so then guys made a couple bogeys here and there, but yeah, definitely didn't feel like three when I finished putting out and I was up by one. So yeah, it was wild seeing that number again, that I actually finished up winning by three.

CHRIS BERMAN: Pretty good, down by six, up by three. We all have that problem. Any other -- I've got a different one for you, totally different. So you have the General Lee car from -- how often do you drive that thing?

BUBBA WATSON: I don't drive it. I hide it from everyone now. I don't like bringing it up. It's all good. You know, they --

CHRIS BERMAN: You don't take it out in the snow, right?

BUBBA WATSON: No, it's definitely not. My son is seven, so he said when he's 16, that's the car he's going to drive, and I said, you might not want to. But the history of the show and everything, me growing up with my dad, you had Knight Rider, Dukes of Hazzard and the A Team, and then Air Wolf. So those are my three dream cars, and then a helicopter, even though I don't want to get in a helicopter. But those are my dreams.

And so this No. 1 Lee 1 came available. The show was not about race or anything like that, but when I bought it, all this stuff on social media came out about race and all this stuff. So I hide it because of that. But I bought it because of my family love for it. I have every episode on DVD. I have the episodes on my phone right now of the show. Again, it goes back to my heart. My dad is not here, that's who I watched the shows with, all those things.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, better to drive that than to put your 16-year-old in a helicopter. If that's the choice, you're going the right direction.

Q. You went to the Yard Goats during the week. You're talking about the water park, General Lee. I'm a big fan of the Golf Boy videos. How much

about having fun has been a big part of your career and attributes to your success?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, I think it helps me realize I've got a bunch of stories if y'all have time, but it helps me realize what the focus should be on, and we talked about this earlier, in a different -- over downtown somewhere. We talked about this, and the focus, it's great for me to win a trophy, it's great for me personally. It doesn't help him, it doesn't help her, it doesn't help my kids, right, it's my own trophy. But what does it help, and last Saturday the Studer Family Children's Hospital in Pensacola of less than 400,000 people in the general area, they say any children's hospital needs to have at least a million and a half of people to build one, but we built one, and the address is 1 Bubba Watson Drive because me and my family are a part of it. That's the hospital I was born at, my sister was born at, my dad's cancer treatments were at.

So my seven-year old went with me, woke me up at 5:40, and so what I'm getting at is we watched 90 patients go over to this children's hospital from one pound seven ounces to a baby that was born a month early to just over 10 pounds, which was crazy in itself just to see that.

So all these things, and my son and these tournaments, the platform that this gives me, the three wins here, the majors, all these things, it's really just to help my son, my adopted son, my adopted daughter, to get perspective in their life on how blessed they are and how we need to -- people that are blessed need to give back. So my son now wants to go to the hospital and walk the dog, the therapy dog through the hospital. And he's seven years old, and that was his idea. So then he knows the name of these babies that we helped move, literally pushed the beds down the hallway to the new hospital.

So going back to your question about the fun side, it makes me realize golf is just golf. Like if I three-putt, it doesn't matter. I mean, I've got kids I've got to try to inspire in the right way or hopefully inspire with the right way. Hopefully they're better than me when they grow up, two adopted kids that didn't have a place and now they do, and the foster kids that we want to help at this children's hospital and all the things.

The fun side is just to help me realize why I play golf, because it is fun, and it helps me get to focus on the right things on the golf course so that I can do more things off the golf course, and that's -- and going back to the Yard Goats, again, it goes back to my other answer, I missed the cut at the U.S. Open, so I was here for a Sunday game of the Yard Goats, which a friend, Tim Tebow, of mine, was playing, but he has Sunday off, so he didn't play. But we went over there and talked to him even though he was on the other

team, and my son got to talk to him and see him.

So it was just -- the Yard Goats were one of those things where I wanted to go not Yard Goats but I wanted to play the Sunday of the U.S. Open but I only took two days at the U.S. Open, so I came over here early and hung out with the Yard Goats and Tim Tebow and then just did some fun stuff around town.

CHRIS BERMAN: And you own a AA team. How is it doing?

BUBBA WATSON: We're with the Minnesota Twins this year. This is our first year with them, and we're winning by I think five games so far, our team is, and then the Twins are doing unbelievable this year, too. It's been fun, and again, going back to my kids and my childhood, baseball was my life, and now my son and my daughter and my wife even likes it now because my daughter will sit still. So we sit behind home plate and watch the games and just have a blast. So it goes back to me -- everything I do is just about having fun.

The reason why I have a car dealership is I was wasting so much money on cars, I figured I should just buy a dealership. My wife said, you cannot buy any more cars. I said, okay, so I went ahead and bought 200 of them at once. So that's how I got that passed.

So yeah, everything I do in my life, business-wise or anything, is fun. I have a candy shop. It's just fun stuff. So it's really -- it's helping me realize the game of golf is just a game, and so I guess that might be why I play better in certain places because I do have fun. I mean, I went to a submarine here one time, as well. That was fun.

CHRIS BERMAN: Hard to fit in those, isn't it?

BUBBA WATSON: It was interesting going down in it, but then when you get in the missile tube that I'm not supposed to get into it, that was hard getting into, but it was fun.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, you have fun, but you put smiles on a lot of people's faces. You understand that. I'm not just saying it. This is who you are, and we're all thankful for that, that you have won three times. Now this is a list, Billy Casper is four, nobody else three. I mean, you can probably read this in the media guide, but here the hell I am. A guy named Arnold Palmer, two; Zinger, two; Stewart Cink, two; Peter Jacobsen, two; Phil Mickelson, two. There's only two guys that have won more than two, and we've been around almost seven years. And Travelers is, what, three of the 12? It's good math. It's really good math.

You're welcome here at 85, whether you shoot 85 or

you are 85, you're welcome here. You've long been a Connecticut resident. Thank you for coming back and spending the time with everybody. And I've worked with you more than Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon.

NATHAN GRUBE: Andy, I'm going to invite you up. It's a tradition that we have for our champion. Andy has something for you.

ANDY BESSETTE: I have to tell a little story because Bubba and I and Nathan actually have more fun than he let on to. Yeah, we go to submarines which are really good, but I tend to get in trouble with Angie, and I love Angie to death, but Bubba started this thing last year -- you ever hear of this app called Talking Pets? Bubba sends one. So of course Nathan and I feel compelled to like feedback, right. So it took me like three days to make this thing. He does it in five minutes. But it involved Caleb and Dakota, and I sent it just before they're going to bed, Bubba goes, hmm, Ms. Angie is not too happy, you got the kids all riled up and now they won't go to sleep. So I got in trouble. That was the first time.

The second time was in this picture here, with Caleb and Dakota, I said, hey, how cool are those trophies, wouldn't it be great if we filled it with candy, with M&M's. And so sure enough, we had M&M's, so we put some in, and they started eating them, and Ms. Angie wasn't so happy with me that time, either, right, because I got them all riled up and they were eating candy.

But anyways, Nathan and I were at THE PLAYERS this year, and Bubba said, come on over for dinner to my camper. Quite a few players on TOUR have campers now. So we were sitting out on his patio. The patio on the camper is like the roof comes -- the canvas things come out and you put out a carpet and you sit there and watch TV. It's really cool. After that we thought you needed these presents that we got for you for the whole family. So we got you two additional chairs that you can use on your patio, and they actually say on the handles, Travelers Championship, and there are four drink mugs that have everybody's name so that Caleb and Dakota and Angie have their own drink cups and you have two chairs to sit in. Don't ask two, two is all we could fit. But whatever, they say Travelers Championship on them, so we hope you'll enjoy them and keep them in your camper and think of us all the time, but you have to keep coming back, as Chris said. So thank you, Bubba. Thanks for being here.