

Travelers Championship

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Paul Casey

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



THE MODERATOR: Paul, just some thoughts on coming back to Travelers this year where you've had a lot of success, had good form, and then we'll talk about the FedEx Junior Business Challenge.

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, I saw I was on the PGA TOUR Instagram post. I led the power rankings mark, which is pretty cool, which means -- I love this place, but I play it well. I've come very, very close. I would love to get a victory here.

I had a playoff and two second place finishes, another Top 5 as well, top 10.

Q. Yeah.

PAUL CASEY: And I'm playing good stuff. You know, last week was great to be at Pebble, but I feel like my golf is right where it needs to be. We got not only this but the push to the end of the FedExCup, so things are getting very, very serious now.

Yeah, feeling good, buddy.

Q. What is it you specifically like about this place and why do you perform well here?

PAUL CASEY: I think it's a multiple of things. We've got a great golf course. It tests the player and kind of every club in the bag. But really this is -- you know, the other factors are maybe you wouldn't hear from a player is we've got great crowds and great energy around this championship.

The people who run this Travelers Championship, Andy Bessette right at the top of the kind of list for us as players to interact with him; filters all the way through. So it's things like that, factors like that that make this championship so great.

THE MODERATOR: Before we take some questions, just participating in the FedExCup Junior Business Challenge this morning, what was that experience like?

PAUL CASEY: Like I had no clue what I was doing when I was a teenager in school. They're so far -- brilliant. My focus was obviously sport when I was at high school. Great to see the enthusiasm, but also the business minds that these kids, I mean, our kids, they have. They've got great futures sure. We saw some really great products today.

Simplex who and will be going to the TOUR Championship with a chance to win this whole thing and then a big grant, is a product I've never seen before. In this day and age to see a technology product that's a very simple concept that you haven't seen before is something very, very cool.

Great presentation. Hats off to all of them, and I feel very honored to be sitting there as a judge.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How much of a draw are the facilities, like the driving range and the clubhouse?

PAUL CASEY: You know, the range -- I didn't play before the range had been redone, but when I first came and I first saw it I was amazed. I just sampled the clubhouse for the first time before coming over here this morning. Unbelievable the fact that they built that. It's a wonderful structure.

I've not explored all of it. It's pretty large. I like the quirky old clubhouse. Obviously times change and facilities need to always be improved. They should be proud of what they've done. The fact that they've done that in less than 12 months, I'm astounded. I can't get anything done around my house in less than 12 months. (Laughter.)

Brilliant stuff. It just adds to what is already -- I mean, as you know, this championship has been voted best event on tour outside of I think a major. I think they can -- look, you don't know how the players are going to vote at the end of the season, but the improvements that they constantly make, it's why they stay at the top of the list.

Q. In terms of the course itself, when you come off an Open where you can hit a great shot and not be rewarded; you guys know here you'll be rewarded, but you'll be penalized for bad stuff. Is it that that makes it more fun again, and also the fact that different types of golfers can win this tournament?

PAUL CASEY: Very much so. But I have to give credit to the USGA last week because that was a championship U.S. Open. I don't remember playing in one like that where I felt that was incredibly fair. The story last week was about the great golf that Gary Woodland played and all those, you know, Brooks and

Justin and all the other guys. It was very, very good setup, so hats off to the USGA and all those involved.

But you're right. We're not used to that. This golf course you get exactly kind of what you put in. Very different test this week because last week was about rough and always is at a U.S. Open. Both golf courses test the entire bag, but a lot of shaved areas here around the greens.

So the test that's being asked this week is a very different one from Pebble Beach. We will see. I definitely he length can play an advantage around this golf course. Maybe didn't so much last week, even though we had a very long player win it.

Look, the only thing that's great about this championship we know the best players for the week comes out on top. Hopefully that's me.

Q. You're 8 in the FedEx points right now. How important is it that you make a strong push towards the playoffs individually?

PAUL CASEY: Very much so. The format has changed for the TOUR Championship, but even more so you want to be near the top when you go into the TOUR Championship. You don't want to be giving up any shots.

So it's important. Seems like recently everybody who has kind of just been behind me has been winning. Patrick Cantlay and Gary Woodland and Justin Rose is playing well. So I am getting -- I've been leap-frogged the last few weeks by a lot of guys, so it's important to keep playing make on the weeks -- we've got great field here this week -- but maybe on those weeks you don't get every single top-10 player playing. You got to make hay while you can.

I'm not playing that much between now and the playoffs. Take a couple weeks off before the Open Championship and then obviously in Memphis for the FedEx. This is a really important week for me.

Q. Is that a result of the condensed schedule a little bit?

PAUL CASEY: It is. It's been an interesting year, a learning year in terms of schedule for everybody. And the PGA TOUR, the powers that be, they didn't know what they were going to get in terms of how strengths of fields would change and shift; and they have.

I think some tournaments are maybe a little bit disappointed and some pleasantly surprised. Travelers continues to get a great field. That's for various reasons we've already mentioned. But it's a balance. Hopefully when I get to the playoffs I'll be happy with how I managed it and still have enough energy to push

through the playoffs and put in a good performance and not feel like I maybe left something out there.

It's a difficult balancing act.

Q. (Regarding Ronan.) Was that during a practice round or something?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, and to be a defending champion in Tampa this year, I've only had that feeling a couple times on the PGA TOUR. I've had it multiple times around the world. It's a brilliant feeling. It's awesome to see obviously your own face on a poster or a program.

But I enjoy that. I've never successfully defended a professional event before. Certainly one of the highlights of my career.

Q. It was close all the way.

PAUL CASEY: It was close all the way. To be playing with Dustin Johnson, final group, and to have the lead on him and get the better of him -- you know, Dustin is a great friend, great player, but that's a very, very good feeling to go up against the best and come out on top.

The whole week was great. You touched on a young lad, Ronan, who we did a little bit of -- presented him with a pair of glasses to help with his color blindness. So all of that. To be honest, it's the things such as this today, the charity aspects, that make my job one of the best jobs in the world. Not just being able to lift trophies, but a lot of the other charity work and things that go on that a lot of people don't get to see day in and day out.

Q. Ronan was the Pro-Am?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, Pro-Am day.

Q. Walking around with you?

PAUL CASEY: No. We just played the last hole. Cool experience.

Q. Paul, you're 41 years old. When you left Arizona State all those years ago, did you say, I'm going to be playing pro golf at a high level into my 40s?

PAUL CASEY: I didn't know I would make it on tour, let alone be this long. Proud to have -- proud to be still chasing my dreams. Seems like college kids now, we were seeing 16 year olds last week competing at the U.S. Open. I didn't have the skillset to do that physically or mentally when I was that age.

They seem to be so good now, so certain of their destiny. I was never that way. I'm still excited to do what I do. I have to pinch myself that I'm doing this. The fact I'm doing it for as long as I've done it, very proud of that now.

I've had up and downs in my career, and I feel like I'm playing some of the best golf I've ever played. Nothing wrong with being proud of that, and I am.

Q. (Regarding Bubba.)

PAUL CASEY: No, no. I love playing with Bubba. He's one of the most enjoyable golfers, even for me, to watch. He's great for our game.

Yeah, frustrating he's got the better of me a couple times. On both occasions I made errors and didn't play the golf I wanted to. I would love to play better golf and give him more of a match.

Yeah, I never think of those losses. You never think of the other player. In our sport it's always about I should have done something different. Great thing is we come back every year and I've always got a chance to try and get one up on him.

Q. Is there an energy shift coming from a major on the west coast, flying over here? Is there reset at all or anything like that?

PAUL CASEY: A little bit, yeah. Travelers were great. They chartered us over yesterday. It was not even easy waking up this morning on the time change, and there is an energy shift. Sometimes in the past I've felt - myself included - guys can lose energy. There is sort a fatigue factor from last week. The energy kind of pours out.

But I don't think that's that big a factor this week because we've got such great crowds, such great support for this event. If you're not excited when you stand on that first tee on Thursday, the amount of the energy that's in this championship, then I can't help you. I'm going to feel good. My golf game is in a good place. I don't think it's going to be a factor this week.

Q. You've come so close a couple times. Is there anything unique you see now to be able to finish it off to win it here? Also, you've handled yourself in such a stellar way both times. As a fierce competitor, how difficult is it to maintain that gentlemanly composure?

PAUL CASEY: You know, it's a gentlemen's sport, so I've never found it -- it's always been easy to be a gentlemen, and I think everybody is on the PGA TOUR in defeat. We've got a great group, great membership.

It's interesting. In fact, this championship last year where I finished second, you know, I did not have a good warmup. I felt like I just got out of rhythm on the warmup. I'll give a lot of credit to my coach Peter Kostis and my caddie John McLaren. It was something we discussed.

Nobody ever likes hearing kind of their faults, but we sat down and reviewed it and we discussed how poor the warmup was and how I went to the first tee just a little out of whack.

I've worked incredibly hard on a warmup and controlling that. Now there is a timing to it, a number of golf balls that I hit. And that showed itself early this year at Pebble Beach with all the stopping and starting and I stayed consistent and ended up with a decent result.

I know I didn't win, but I didn't have the golf game certainly to beat Phil that week. Then stuck with that, and it's become really a key part of what I do now. Without doubt, it very much assisted in Tampa and the victory there. I've got that new warmup now, so maybe that's the key.

But you learn in the defeat, learn in the mistakes. If you don't, you don't survive. So as much as it's painful to lose, it's when you learn and when you grow.