

Travelers Championship

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Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Patrick Cantlay, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to your sixth start in the Travelers Championship. A couple good years in '18 and '19, tied for 15th on both occasions. Just some thoughts on being back here at TPC River Highlands.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, it's always nice to come back. I played as an amateur, so I've got a lot of good memories here, and I like the golf course. It's different seeing it with no grandstands, being able to see 17 green and 15 green, even from like the first fairway, but yeah, it's good to be back, and I'm excited.

THE MODERATOR: You're making your first start since the middle of February. Just some thoughts on how you've been keeping your mind and game and body and everything in shape for the return to golf.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, well, just been excited to get back. It's nice to have some sense of normalcy playing a tournament, working. It's nice to see the guys and be able to play just a nine-hole practice round with them. I'm excited to get back to competition, and it's been very weird, but a lot of guys are saying it's been the longest layoff for them, and it's not the longest layoff for me. This was a blip compared to what I saw a few years ago.

Yeah, I'm just excited to get back and grateful that we're able to be out here.

Q. I'm sure you're asked about it periodically, but this week must bring back memories of the 60 that you shot. Just reflect on that a little bit and how much do you think about that every time you come on the property here?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, just whenever I get here, I feel like I have a little bit of a warm spot for this place, and I just -- I can't help but think about it just because of how exciting it was to do and how novel it was for me at the time. It was only my second event, and I had just played the U.S. Open the week before, and so I was elated just to be here and playing, and then to be able to play so well in that second round, it was very exciting, and I can't help but get good vibes whenever I'm around this place.

Q. Regarding Bryson and his new bulked-up look

and what he's doing, how impressive is that to you, and obviously you're a different body type, so it's hard to imagine getting to that spot that he's at, but what is it like from what you're seeing, and would you have any concern about injuries and whatnot just because of the weight that he's put on?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, well, I've never tried to go through that big of a getting stronger period, especially over that short amount of time. But it's very impressive to see how quickly he's adapted his golf swing because obviously he's hitting it not only farther than everybody else but pretty straight, as well. I think I'm really curious mostly to see if it inspires other guys to do something similar. I think that's the one question that I'm just kind of asking, and if a lot of guys try it, will they get injured. I don't know about one person in particular. He may be able to hold that weight really well. We'll see. It'll be interesting to find out. It has been fun to watch him hit it.

Q. I know there hasn't really been an atmosphere the last few weeks for hanging around the locker room, but how much of the talk on the TOUR do you feel like what he's done is? Are guys talking about it? It seems like amongst us they are when they speak to you guys?

PATRICK CANTLAY: They may have been the last couple weeks. I haven't heard too much this week. This is my first week back. But I'm sure they were talking about it definitely the first week. Yeah, news cycle is fast, so I'm sure we'll find something else to talk about next month.

Q. I was just wondering if you have a swing thought that you've always found yourself going back to over the years or something that you've just kind of worked on over a long period of time, sort of a thought that always seems to help you and you find yourself thinking?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think making sure the transition is in rhythm is really important for me in particular, and it kind of doesn't matter what I'm working on in my swing. If I can really click in to feeling what that feels like to make sure it's in rhythm, then that's not necessarily slower or faster, but just in sync with everything else that's moving. That kind of -- that's something that I think about often to make sure that I'm just shoring that up, because it can get off quick even if you're in good positions. Your timing can get off quick,

and usually in that transition period it's tougher to keep your timing if you are struggling.

Q. Guys have talked about how eager they were to get back after this layoff. Why is this your first tournament back?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I just like this golf course and thought it was the right golf course for me to come back to. I watched those guys play at Colonial and South Carolina, kind of wanted to see how it went with all the coronavirus stuff and figured they'd definitely have it dialed in by this week.

Q. Were you supposed to play last week?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I was thinking about it. I was on the fence and ended up not playing.

Q. And you kind of half answered my other question, which was if you watched last week, how much did you watch the actual golf and how much did you just watch everything around it, what guys were doing, how they were carrying, all that kind of stuff?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, watching both. I think it's been honestly impressive that they've only had one positive test. It's very unfortunate for Nick to have tested positive. Hopefully he can get back out here soon. But I think really testing as many people as they have tested, only one positive test is kind of a success story. Hopefully we can keep the number really low, and I think that's the key to being able to play more tournaments coming up.

Q. What do you have going forward now?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Planning on the two Muirfield Village weeks. It'll be kind of interesting to see those back-to-back weeks.

Q. Is that odd for you to be playing on the course where the defending champion without being the defending champion, and is there any part of you that is not terribly happy with the fact that it's been that way, that you don't kind of have that return of being I'm Patrick and here we are at Muirfield Village?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it's great. The more weeks we can play at Muirfield Village, I'm in. I like the golf course, so we can play there every week as far as I'm concerned.

Q. You mentioned you got an early start here. The tournament has a history of giving young guys a crack with sponsor's invites. Can you just talk to how important that was to you and how important it may be for these guys going forward?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I think it's great what they've done with the tournament, prioritizing giving

those sponsor's exemptions to young players that are deserving. They always get the top players around, and they either make their pro debut here or they may even play while they're still in school. And I think it's good for the development of the game, and then also it's an investment in those guys, get those guys to come on property and show them how good Travelers is at putting on a tournament, and then hopefully they come back year after year, and that's definitely the case with me, coming and seeing the golf course and liking the event and liking the golf course. It's just made me want to come back. So I think it's smart and it's a great opportunity for those guys to get that PGA TOUR experience when they may not have had it before.

Q. And what did you take away from your early tournaments when you were afforded that luxury from a few places?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it was an advantage for me, at least when I did turn pro and started playing, is I felt like I belonged, or there was no sense of real, like, new, even though the next year around I was a brand new pro, had no status and was in on sponsor's exemptions.

Breaking down some of that intimidation factor by getting exposed to it early I think was really helpful and made me kind of get out of the gates running when I did turn pro.

Q. I'm just curious you mentioned it being really a different situation this time with the layoff. What were those differences, and where were you? Did you spend your time in California or Florida? How did all that go?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I was in Florida and took some time off. Didn't really pick up the clubs until the schedule started coming together. Didn't know when -- for a while there, we didn't know what the schedule was going to be or what tournaments were going to come back or when we were going to come back. You know, it's nice to get a break even though it was forced, and I'm glad -- I'm very excited to be back playing golf. That's how I feel every time after having some time off.

Q. Any new hobbies?

PATRICK CANTLAY: No, but I did get to read a little bit. It's hard to find a card game, though, not leaving the house. That would have been nice to be able to pass the time that way, but my card game is a little rusty.

Q. What did you read?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I read a Winston Churchill book, a biography, and then I also read "How the Mind Works," by Steven Pinker maybe. I think that's his name. Read a few others, but those both were really interesting, and I really enjoyed the Winston Churchill book. The more I

feel like I can learn about history and everything, it's interesting to me. It's like the most interesting story you could ever -- way more interesting than a fiction story. They're just so complicated, and you almost can't believe all the things that were happening. They go into detail on World War I, and it's interesting to hear about it because learning it in school I kind of have like this abstract what I think about it, and actually imagining making the decisions that are affecting people's lives, it's interesting to get that perspective.

THE MODERATOR: Patrick, we appreciate your time. We wish you the best of luck this week. Thank you again.