

# Travelers Championship

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

**Nathan Grube**

**Andy Bessette**

**Russell Knox**

**Chris Berman**

**Giana Cardonita**

**Jimmy Canton**

**Chris Dadlez**

Press Conference

**NATHAN GRUBE:** Good morning, everyone. We're here for our media day, 2017 media day going into the tournament. Obviously, that was a recap of 2016, so there is definitely an element that we want to celebrate about what happened last year, but then also look forward to 2017.

Russell's here. He's doing a few interviews. He's going to be up here with Chris in a few minutes to talk about '16 and what it meant to him. But obviously there was a lot in there for those of you that were watching and haven't seen that video before. About 40% of what we do is a golf tournament, about 60% of what we do is about everything else. You've helped us tell a lot of those stories to really give a lot of the charities we work with a platform to be able to talk about who they are, to talk about why we're different than any other professional sport that's out there.

The fact that we can do this, we can host a women's day, and do concerts and run a 5K, and have military appreciation all around a PGA TOUR event, all raise additional dollars for charity and our community. It's not a small impact every year. And we couldn't tell that story about how unique this event is, how unique our market is without your support. So thank you for being here. Hopefully it will be a good day, and we'll enjoy a lot of memories.

2016, I'm going to introduce Andy Bessette. He's going to come up and say a few words from Travelers. But 2016 was a unique year for all of us with everything that was going on with our awareness of ALS, and Jay Fishman as CEO. And Andy and I talked about this probably six, seven months before the tournament



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when we were looking at the dinner for the Bruce Edwards Foundation, and we really felt like a lot of us said, you know what, we want to do everything we can with the tournament this year to honor Jay, because of what he has meant to this event.

Andy really drove the charge and said let's leave it all on the field. Let's make sure at the end of the day, at the end of the tournament that there wasn't anything we wish we would have done. Man, I wish we would have tried harder at that or wish we would have done X over here. He said let's look at the end of it and say we are so proud of what we did for '16, and Andy drove that.

He put a lot of this on his shoulders. The dinner on Friday night for those of you who were there was an unbelievable experience. Raised close to \$1.3 dollars for ALS to fight the disease, and Andy put that on his shoulders and said we are not going to regret a thing about this tournament.

And at the end of the day, we didn't. We were proud of it, you all worked very hard. We threw a lot of stories at you, a lot of different events, and you stepped up as well. You told a lot of stories, you were here early and you stayed late.

So thank you for being part of what was a very, very special year. We're looking forward to the next 47 days, because 2017 is going to be even better.

So I'm here to introduce the guy who has very broad shoulders, you know that, but Andy Bessette, the executive vice president, chief administrative officer of Travelers to say a few words.

**ANDY BESSETTE:** Welcome to everybody here today. On behalf of Alan Schnitzer our CEO, and everybody at Travelers, it's always great when we look forward to media day because it's a special time for us. How many days left now until the tournament? How many? 47. The 47, wow, that's like pretty soon.

Each year we work really hard, and you've heard me say this before, that the status quo is unacceptable. Every day we have to get better. Every year we have to be better. It's going to be tough to match the finish we had last year with Russell Knox and the putt on 18,



was that unbelievable or what? Then the hat toss, which was really pretty cool too how accurate he was with his hat toss.

Then Jim Furyk's historic round of 58, that was cool. That will go down in history. It already is in the golf Hall of Fame. It's funny too, the other night I had a chance, I was in Ponte Vedra last Thursday and Friday, and I had a chance to have dinner with Jim Furyk, and Jim couldn't say enough nice things about Russell Knox. I didn't even know Russell lived in Ponte Vedra, not more than five minutes from the course at TPC Sawgrass, and Jim just said what a great young man he is, his values and how he approaches the game. And Jim then said he was really excited about coming back this year.

I said to him, of course, jokingly, I said, 57? And he listened for a second, and then went back and we talked through the rest of the dinner.

We're back to our dates in June, which is really cool. Right after the U.S. Open. We're really proud to be the only PGA TOUR event, at least for the entire summer until late August, in New England. That is important to us.

People love golf whether you're in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, it's a great place to come, easy to get to in New York as well. Our field. In addition to having Russell Knox back this year, which is really good and exciting, we're so happy to be able to announce Rory McIlroy, Bubba Watson, Jim Furyk, Zach Johnson, Justin Thomas, Justin started up the season so hot. He continues to play very well.

But we're going to have one of the best fields we've ever had, and we'll have some announcements coming out in the next few days and probably coming weeks which will even enhance that field a lot more, a lot more.

I always look at Nathan, and he gives me this morning -- I always let it slip, and he says, no. We were coming over, and I said that's like in Happy Gilmore when Lee Trevino looks at Happy, right? And he's standing there with his arms crossed and he goes, when he's ready to throw the club. So I can't tell you any of the other names yet, but trust me, you'll love them.

Travelers has been a part of this since 1952 when it was first started as the insurance to The Open. What makes us so happy and proud is that we are a hometown company, we sponsor a hometown event that gives to hometown charities. And Jay Fishman said that, Alan Schnitzer says it, I say it, we're going to continue that because that's our motto and it's really

important to us.

I think you all know this, but Travelers is a corporation that gives over \$23 million a year to different philanthropic organizations around the country. And we have well over 100,000 hours of volunteerism by our employees. That's 30,000 employees that we have around the world. We have 13,000 independent agents around the world. I was just with somebody last week, as a matter of fact it was in Ponte Vedra and I was talking to him and he said my father's an insurance agent for Travelers.

So with 13,000 independent insurance agents selling our products, you run into them everywhere. It's really pretty special for us and important to us in our business.

2017 is our 11th year as title sponsor, which is really important for us and significant. Since we've been the title in 2007 we have generated over \$13 million, over \$13 million of charitable donations to over 600 non-profits. To us, that's really important because in 11 years, when you think about what we do corporately and where we've gotten with the \$13 million, it's really very important.

In 2016, as Nathan was talking about, that was really important to us too because we had a banner year for charity. It was \$2.8 million. \$1.3 of that was from the ALS dinner which benefited the Bruce Evans Foundation on Friday night, and if you were there, it was such a memorable evening to hear Jay talk. It made an impact and impression on all of us who were there.

Last year, Bruce Evans Foundation and The Hospital For Special Care, The Hospital For Special Care was our designated beneficiary. This year the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp will return in its role as primary beneficiary. As you all know, they've been with us for many, many years, founded by Paul Newman, and it has so many different programs and approaches to the diseases that they serve, that it's really spectacular what they do out in camp. You'll hear more about that in a few minutes.

However, we are going to continue our relationships in 2017 around ALS, because it's really important for us, to Travelers, to continue to help benefit the Bruce Evans Foundation. We actually have a fund, the Jay S. Fishman Fund at the Bruce Evans Foundation to raise money for ALS research, to build on the \$1.3 million we gave last year.

The Hospital For Special Care will be back up on corporate row. The as a matter of fact, they were the beneficiaries of the Road Race this past weekend.

Then also back up on corporate row where we'll have a tent and chalet, and they'll bring many ALS patients out to enjoy the week of golf and food, and hopefully warm weather by then.

So we're going to continue to support both of those organizations for ALS and ALS research.

As I mentioned a minute ago, 2016 as Nathan mentioned, it was a really important and personable year for many of us at Travelers. Jay, interestingly, nobody expected him to pass, but two weeks to the Friday of that event we had to raise the money, Jay passed unexpectedly.

Those of us who knew Jay, I worked with Jay for 25 years, we knew the passion that he had around golf. He would take -- he was so proud of golf, of what he -- he was a very good golfer himself. He had like a 6 or 7 handicap, but he loved playing with young players, identifying them, and then Nathan and I would get a phone call and say, hey, what about.

So Luke List was one of them. He identified Luke at a very young age, and before you knew it, Luke was playing in our tournament. And he's gone on and he's had some injuries, but he's resuming his career now.

So this year, to commemorate Jay, we are going to name the Memorial Garden, the Jay S. Fishman Memorial Garden and name it in his honor and his memory. We're all looking forward to it. We're going to do that during the opening ceremonies. We couldn't think of a better way to commemorate and honor Jay and all that he meant to this tournament, all that he meant to golf as a profession, and all of the passion that went into getting us to where we are today with the Travelers Championship.

If you want to go see it today, you can. It's down there. We just haven't put the plaque out yesterday, obviously. That will be done at the opening ceremonies on June 19. It's down by the practice facility. It's a beautiful area with pavers and stanchions and plaques of past champions who have passed away or deceased.

We are also going to, I guess you would say, enter Arnold Palmer into the Memorial Garden this year as well since he passed in the past year as well and he's a past champion of the Travelers Championship.

So two important events, but a very important way to memorialize Jay and remember Jay. To do all of our ALS activities this week, this year during tournament week is critical to us and continue to be a partner with hospitals for special care, and with the Bruce Evans Foundation we'll continue on.

We look forward to seeing all of you during tournament week, and again, I want to just personally thank all of the media that are here today for all of you do. We can do everything we can do to make this a great tournament, but we can't do it without you. You tell our story, and you write about it, and you tell people about it to want people to get involved with us so we can raise more money for the charities that we serve and for everything that we try to accomplish around the Travelers Championship, the pride in the community.

So thank you for all you do. I look forward to seeing you for the rest of the day. Again, thanks. Have a great afternoon. The sun's coming out. If you look outside, it's just really cool. Thank you very much.

NATHAN GRUBE: Andy, thank you. I'm going to introduce Chris Dadlez here in a second. I know there was some traffic, and you made it right on time.

Before I introduce Chris, Chris represents our only other presenting sponsor. So you have Travelers who are title, and then you have one presenting sponsor, and they are a significant, significant piece of what makes this work. It is the foundation that we can build upon. All these other things that we have these ideas on, that we like to do, the military appreciation, and the things we're going to talk about in a minute, none of that would be possible without Travelers and St. Francis and Trinity Health and what they're doing with the tournament.

So I'm going to introduce Chris in a second. But I wanted to talk briefly about with the foundation that we have, you look up there, and there are founding partners who have invested with us, and who have bought into the vision of what we're doing here, who understand to grow charity every year, who understand to grow the purse every year it requires investment. Our goal is to provide a product that is worth investing in.

These partners have found a number of things to invest in. But I want to call out a few that really jumped out this year. Bears, I'm going to get back to you in a second. Dell stepped into our market this year and made a significant investment. Aer Lingus is a partner who has invested more. They looked at our demographics of who we have at the golf tournament and what they're trying to do, and they want to have more of a presence.

EBM out of Farmington, Mark Shiring and his team, made a five-year commitment, mid-six figures, because they believe in what this means to the community, the economic impact it has on the region, the impact on the charities.

And also, Stanley, with a new CEO, and talking to Don Allan and the CFO, we've been talking to them for a few months, and they made a significant investment in the tournament this year and in the fan experience.

So what you're going to see on property, you're going to see areas that the fans, general admission ticket holders are going to be able to go and experience cooling benches and shades, and these venues where they can go in and actually sit down and sit at tables to really take the fan experience to a whole new level. Stanley was really big about that.

The community supports this event, we want to support the community. So there are going to be some exciting things out there.

Stryker is another partner who came into our market. A national partner who looked at our market and looked at what we have to offer and said we want to invest in this market. Vineyard Vines, one of Russell's partners has come to the table, a Connecticut company.

We have all these partners who have either come to us for the first time or incrementally gotten involved because of what they experience when they get here. And what they experience what they get here is a very passionate fan base, a media who takes this event very personal. Sponsors who feel a sense of ownership over this event. It's very different than what you have anywhere else on TOUR.

All we ask of the tournament is come see us once, and you will experience why we are different, and what we're seeing is the result of the investment we've been putting in. Led by Travelers, led by Chris and his team to be able to give us the springboard to do this.

So I'm going to introduce Chris now because he leads a team that the TOUR has said is the best medical on the PGA TOUR. That's 45 markets across the country. You are taking care of thousands and thousands of people every day, and there's no other event that takes care of their patrons, caddies, players better than the medical team that we have here. That's no small task. We build a temporary city and we take care of those people.

Chris, I want to say thank you to you and your team for providing what the TOUR recognizes some of the best that's out there on TOUR. So Chris, the CEO of Trinity Health New England, he's going to come up and say a few words, Chris Dadlez.

CHRIS DADLEZ: Thank you very much, Nathan. It's exciting to be here to kick off another Travelers Championship featuring the star-studded roster of

players and to be with such a distinguished group of speakers this morning. So through the years, the Championship has benefited the greater Hartford community and our state under many names. The Greater Hartford Open, the Buick, and The Canon Championships.

This year it is the tournament's presenting sponsor that is participating under a new name, and that is Trinity Health New England. Trinity Health New England is a group of first class health care institutions formed for a common purpose, to make health care better for you. To make your lives better, and to make our communities better. The Trinity Health New England brings together the best in Catholic health care in Connecticut and Massachusetts. It's St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford, it's Mount Sinai Rehab Hospital in Hartford, it's Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs, it's St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, and it's Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts.

This is the 19th consecutive year that our physicians and health care providers from across Trinity Health will be providing free, on-course medical services for players, their families, fans and volunteers. Being the tournament's medical sponsor is an important responsibility, and we take great pride in the safety and care of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who will be in attendance at this year's event. This is the 29th year that our associates from all disciplines will volunteer throughout the week in the concession tent and in the fan zone, where we plan to help keep you moving with an interactive activity to showcase our world renowned orthopedic services, as well as the integrative medicine therapies that we offer to our veterans in the patriots outpost.

This year once again, we share great enthusiasm for our involvement in the week long military appreciation Salute For Armed Services personnel. This initiative is our special way of showing our gratitude to those who served our country and serve it still today.

Our support for the military appreciation salute, which has significantly grown over the years, includes, complimentary admission to the event for all active, reserve and retired military members and their dependents. An extended and enhanced climate controlled patriots outpost which serves as a gathering place for military personnel, their families and also offers complimentary refreshments.

A military caddie program that gives active duty military an opportunity to join TOUR players during the Travelers Celebrity Pro-Am. Complimentary massage, acupuncture, and mind-body techniques from St. Francis integrative medicine department offered



throughout the week for all military members and their families.

We are thrilled to support these efforts, and we hope our military service members share our enthusiasm for the special salute and tribute.

So in closing, we at Trinity Health New England, would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Travelers Championship board of directors, Nathan Grube and his stellar staff, Andy Bessette and the Travelers team, the PGA TOUR, and the countless other volunteers who make this local event a national showcase.

So, thank you, and we'll see you all at the tournament. I can't wait. Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: Chris, I get stopped so often from people who have visited the outpost just saying thank you, and that we obviously direct that back to you and your team. But if you haven't been to the outpost, it's a special place. Like I said, what they did building that foundation, one of our partners, I mentioned earlier, Bears, if you haven't met Jamie and Cheryl, you need to. They're a special couple with what they're doing in this community with their restaurants.

But they sponsored something last year that built off of this, where they provided free admission for veterans and their families. It was something that was received so well. We were one of the first events to do something that comprehensive for the military. This year we're actually building a deck off of the outpost, a viewing deck for the military outpost for them to be able to actually view golf.

So it's been a lot of fun to build off of that foundation and do some pretty special things for our military men and women to say thank you.

I'm going to introduce Jimmy Canton next. He's going to come up and a few words. Jimmy's the CEO for the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. I have to say something really quick about Jimmy. When we went to camp, camp has been our primary beneficiary really since the tournament started. So that comes with recognition, that comes with a platform to be able to tell your story, but it also comes with funds. They serve a lot of children, they serve a lot of families.

We were privileged to be able to help fund the service of their families. So there is a huge cash piece of this. We came to them in '16, before '16 and said, hey, here's where we are with ALS. Here's where Jay is with ALS. And we want to take the 2016 tournament and have it be focused on ALS. That means taking you out of the primary beneficiary seat and you guys taking a step back. They didn't even bat an eye. They said

what can we do to be supportive? That's the right thing to do.

And that was speaking to something that's very, very important for a non-profit. That was money. They said we want to be supportive in every way we can. How can we help you guys with this mission for ALS?

So there was no bit of, wait a minute, how are we going to fund this or X, Y and Z. It didn't go there. It went to the relationship. It went to we understand. How can we help you? And we are thrilled that we're able to bring them back this year as the primary beneficiary. They're a special place. They're a group of very, very special people. We are fortunate to have them as a partner. So Jimmy Canton, CEO.

JIM CANTON: Good morning. Camp is a place where we are, I think, acutely aware of how fortunate we are. It all started with Paul's dream of dedicating a place that recognizes luck, good luck in our lives and bad luck in the lives of many others. To be here and connected with this event and connected with the Championship and with Travelers is a blessing that all of us at camp know deep in our hearts is something so special and we're so lucky to have.

We are preparing for our 30th summer, crazy. 30, 30 summers. We've just been running our family programs during the spring. We just had a family camp for children with cancer this last weekend. But the activities are hopping all over camp to get all the program areas and the staff ready for the summer.

It's amazing to think back at that first summer. I was very lucky to be a cabin counselor back in 1988, and that transformational magic that happens today was so clearly evident in '88. I had a little boy named Wilson who was suffering from brain cancer, and he was -- it was hard to read him during the session. He was really angry and in a lot of pain. I just wanted him to know that I was getting through to him and making a difference.

Quite honestly, it was just hard to see it. So we gathered on the last day of camp the night before all the kids left. It was the very first session of the summer. We held hands in the cabin circle and we were singing a song. And Wilson was holding my hand. He was ten. And I started to feel these drops on my hand. I remember looking up and thinking how is it raining? There's not a cloud in the sky. And I looked down and his head is down, and he's holding my hand, and the tears are just dropping all over my hand.

So I knew that he had gotten it. And that summer 288 children we served, and this year more than 20,000, and of those 20,000, many of those children will be

served multiple times through the year in various services.

Two years ago our board charged us to go broader and deeper. We wanted to go broader to reach children who had never walked through our gates. So we started our hospital outreach program. We are in 40 hospitals and clinics throughout the northeast, bringing camp right to a child's hospital bedside every day of the week.

We're going deeper with families who have walked through our gates. How do we keep those embers alive and impactful. So we have this Scooby-Doo Camp van traveling all around the northeast, going to a child's home who has been to camp before, maybe a child whose health is declining, and we bring camp right into that home, or we create a day camp experience in a local neighborhood and invite families that have never met one another to come together and experience the play of camp, but then connect with one another and hopefully leave with lots of other new friends and networks.

You know all of camp services are provided free of charge, and that is due to the thousands of volunteers and donors that we have who took Paul Newman's dream and made it their own. When I look at the growth over the last decade, I know that we won be here today if it was not for the friendship of the Travelers Championship and its title sponsor, Travelers.

The strength of that partnership and the generosity of this event and Travelers has allowed us to reinvent ourselves and reach thousands of more children and family members through the year. So I can't say thank you enough to all of the Championship and Travelers.

In closing, I just want to acknowledge the steadfast friendship of Jay Fishman, and how blessed we were to have him in our corner and how blessed we remain to have the friendship of Alan Schnitzer and Andy Bessette and Nathan Grube, and the entire Travelers team, and the Championship team in our corner.

We cannot, we do not want to compromise on surrounding our children and our families with as much strength as possible, and certainly the championship and Travelers is one of the most outstanding, strongest partnerships we have. So we're very grateful.

It is my great pleasure now to introduce one of our campers. Giana was a camper for a number of years. She was a senior camper last year. She's going to share her story of camp and her dear family is here, the Cardonita family. So please help me welcome Giana Cardonita.

GIANA CARDONITA: Thank you for the intro, Jimmy. Once again, my name's Giana, and I will be 16 on May 16th, and not only is that significant because it's my birthday, but it's also Brain Tumor Awareness month.

I've had the privilege of being a Hole in the Wall Gang Camper from 2012 to 2014, and attended my senior year last July. Before my diagnosis of a rare brain tumor, I really had no fear. I liked to go into the pool, go on the swings, and do fun stuff, but that all changed.

I was diagnosed in August 2010 at nine years old. The tumor went undiagnosed for four years. This resulted in frequently becoming seriously ill from age five until it was finally found. The tennis-ball-sized craniopharyngioma left me legally blind in my right eye, without peripheral vision in my left eye, and no 3-D vision. The tumor attached to my pituitary stem which had to be removed. My body can't produce any hormones needed to survive, which is a life-threatening condition called panhypopituitarism, and I'm adrenal insufficient and no longer make cortisol, which is vital to life.

Any illness other than the common cold can cause me to spiral into adrenal crisis and can be fatal. I have diabetes insipidus which doesn't allow my kidneys to hold on to water, and puts me at risk for severe dehydration. The tumor deprived me of growth hormone and estrogen, and I have hypothyroidism.

The tumor was located in the middle of my hypothalamus. My neurosurgeon called it prime real estate, and as a result, I developed hypothalamic disfunction. My body temperature can reach over 106°. I experience pure exhaustion as my body doesn't have the stamina to keep up with daily routines. But I have insatiable hunger because my brain no longer sends the signal that I'm full.

I'm currently taking eight medications and most are necessary for me to live. I also have brain processing and motor skill deficits, but I've managed to maintain high honor roll status in school.

[ APPLAUSE ]

Thank you.

After my diagnosis I became fearful of things. I was afraid of hurting or damaging my head in any way. I wouldn't go in a pool, forget even going under water. I wouldn't get on a bike, and didn't know how to ride one anyway because my learning was now effected. I wouldn't fly on a plane. I was petrified and missing out on life.

My oncologist at Yale told me about the Hole in the

Wall Gang Camp. Of course, I was scared being away from home, but my mom encouraged me and sent in the application and I'm so glad she did.

My favorite thing about camp is the relationships made with both the counselors and fellow campers. I've kept in touch with those I've met. These relationships are so meaningful and special because each one brings me back to a specific memory of camp, and this keeps me close to the Hole in the Wall. Equally meaningful is acceptance between campers. In public, I tend to bump into people and things because of my visual deficits and I get looked at and stared at, but not at camp.

We all have this unspoken universal language and you can't find this anywhere but here and at Hole in the Wall.

Not only did camp help me with making life-long friends, it's helped me do activities that I normally couldn't do outside of camp due to my medical condition. The complexity of my medical history would never allow me to attend a traditional overnight summer camp or even a day camp. The average camp is not adequately staffed with personnel to accommodate my medical needs. But at the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, my parents and I feel safe and trusted that I can be taken care of.

Before my tumor was found I wasn't able to sleep over at friends houses because there was always the risk of becoming ill. Unfortunately, this didn't change after diagnosis. As a result of the slew of serious medical issues I have now, it's impossible to impose these responsibilities on family and friends, and sadly, most of them shy away from it anyway.

So for the first time I experienced my first sleep over slumber party ever when I went to camp at 11 years old. Camp made me feel like I belonged and I finally felt like I fit in. It freed my mind of what medicine can do for me. Camp has given me the drive to push forward and say, I can do this.

I was able to go into pool again, I rode horses, did archery, and at home, I learned not only to go in the pool, but actually swim and jump in. I learned to ride a bike, and a scooter, a motorized one too. I also had the courage to go on an airplane.

Last summer my little brother, Lucio, attended camp for the first time during siblings week, and again with me for reunion week last fall. I was so excited for him to experience the magic of camp as I have. There are so many fun things he misses out on because of my illness, yet he never complains. I wanted him to feel how special I feel when I'm here. This was his time to raise a little hell as the late founder, Paul Newman,

intended and he sure did.

Mom and dad also had time for themselves, which is the first since my diagnosis. Rumor has it they raised a little hell too. Two weeks ago I was hospitalized with another astonishingly high fever, 106.7. No medicine was more healing than camp's hospital outreach program who visited me.

I was committed to speak here today, a message that reaffirms how pertinent all of Camp's programs are. The impact Camp has had on me and being around other campers has inspired me to share my story. I'm looking forward to giving back to the Hole in the Wall by volunteering and being a camp counselor some day. Camp and its memories will always be with me, and that is where I belong.

Thank you to the Travelers Championship and the title sponsor, Travelers, helping kids like me attend the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp free of charge. Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: Lucio, you looked so busted when she called your name. It was awesome. Giana, thank you, for letting us be part of your story.

I want to say that's who we are, but that's why we are. We put on a TOUR event. We have an incredible champion. The better we run our PGA TOUR event, the more funds we're going to raise to be able to effect more people's lives. So thank you for letting us be part of it.

I now get to introduce Chris and Russell to come up and say a few words. Again, to really highlight Russell's win in '16, talk about his career a little bit. We're so lucky. I talked about this a little bit this morning.

To have an advocate like Chris for your event is something that you can't manufacture. Everywhere he goes in this done tree he talks about this as our event, as his event, as our event. It's very personal to him, and you can tell that by how he gives his time, his energy, his texts throughout the year, hey, what about this? Hey, have you thought about this? I ran into this guy, you want me to invite him to play?

He's always thinking about this tournament. He cares about it. He cares where it's going, and he's vested. He's a big reason why we are where we are.

Russell, I mean, the more I get to know Russell, the more I enjoy just his demeanor, his outlook on his game, on life. We're going to get this much of Russell today, but embrace it, enjoy it. Get to know him. He's one of the better guys out there on TOUR.

So we have a little video that we have done for Russell and for everybody. But it's about Russell, so we're going to show that video really quick.

[VIDEO PLAYING]

As Russell and Chris make their way up, we have a tradition here that I'm going to let Andy talk about. Don't get nervous. It's okay. There are no cameras here. But Andy's going to present you with something. We'll make our way over here for a second. Okay.

ANDY BESSETTE: So Russell, I wanted to give you bagpipes, but my whole team said no. I was voted down. I wanted bagpipes so badly because last year we had the bag piper thanks to somebody. But Nathan brought the bag piper in, and she happened to be here when you win. But we heard that you liked arcade basketball better, so I got voted down.

So come here, we're going to show you. We got you a special present. This is real. This is real. Is this cool or what? And look, you have a competition against your wife or whoever, and, shoot, it scores and everything. And the balls have Travelers Championship on it.

RUSSELL KNOX: This may instantly be the best gift I've gotten.

NATHAN GRUBE: No, no, 30-second clock. You ready? You guys got the clock? Everybody start.

Dan, how do you start it? First shot goes in. Go.

Rebecca, what's going on? Russell took the lead. Are you left-handed or right-handed? I don't know. Oh, Russell, 8-4, it's LeBron against somebody else. Andy's in double digits.

No, Andy, yours is the other basket, yours is the other basket. Hold on, they're worth three points now. Oh, Russell. Andy, I think you're a really good business executive. Okay, all right. Let's just say 21-7 was really close.

RUSSELL KNOX: This is an unbelievable gift, and I thank Andy for it very much. My wife and I were actually building a room for all my golf junk, so I get to proudly put this not junk, amazing basketball game in there. I'll probably put a bed in there and I'll sleep there, I'm sure. (Indiscernible).

CHRIS BERMAN: The golf season's underway. Welcome home our champion, Russell Knox.

RUSSELL KNOX: It's good to be here. It's amazing to be back in a place where you have such great

memories. It's a dream come true to come back as defending champion, and I'm looking forward to coming back in June.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, first of all, we would be remiss. Giana was awesome, and thank you for doing that.

So, did you get to take this home ever? I mean, did you drink out of it like the Stanley Cup, they drink out of it. Did you ever get to take that home?

RUSSELL KNOX: There's been Coke in there. There has been very cheap wine. There's been very expensive wine. I've had everything in there, I think, yes.

CHRIS BERMAN: Yes, from Scotland, I'd be really upset if I heard another story and you checked out the names on it. Pretty cool, Arnold Palmer, Billy Casper, Sam Snead, hello. Mickelson, Norman, price, Bubba recently, I mean, Lanny Wadkins was his last one with 20 or 21. We could go on, Russell Knox. That's cool, isn't it?

RUSSELL KNOX: Oh, it's incredible. When I first picked up the trophy and I saw Arnold Palmer's name, that's kind of a pinch-yourself moment of being able to win the same trophy as such a golfing legend.

Another name which I recognized on it was a guy called Billy Maxwell, and Billy Maxwell lived close where I do in Ponte Vedra Beach. And he still practices almost every day out at Sawgrass, and he's 91 years old. So it's amazing to bump into him and to say we're both Travelers champions is pretty cool.

CHRIS BERMAN: Nathan will announce later that Billy Maxwell has an exemption this year. When you shoot your age, man. Going to have to live past 91, some of us.

But, look, you played golf so in the moment. How often do you drift back, Russell? And you won before at a place very much like the Travelers, very much like Connecticut, Shanghai, I mean, so very similar situation. But let me go to this event. How much do you drift back to not only up-and-down, made 12-foot putt for a million bucks, something all of us would do. Right. But how much do you draw on that ten months later for maybe a round or just your head?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, all the time. Golf is about storing positive memories. So the putt that I made here to win, a 12-foot putt, the next time I have a putt that has similar meaning, I mean, a putt to make the cut. You go back to these memories that I've made this putt before. I can do this. I've made the putt when I really had to.



That's what golf's all about is creating these positive memories, the journeys you take traveling. It's all about storing it and using it when you have to.

CHRIS BERMAN: This will be your sixth time here. You like it, you like the event. But obviously you've gotten to know it a lot better being a champion now and what it means, et cetera. What is it that's special about Travelers to you as a champ?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, I mean, the golf side of it is obviously incredible. But to hear stories like Giana just said, that kind of makes us sitting here talking about this completely irrelevant. I mean, it's mind boggling how much good is done from golf tournaments and supporting such great causes to help kids all over the country and the world.

I'm just good at golf. It's such a pointless thing. We all wish that we can help sick kids get better, and that's the biggest part of it. As Travelers can help us help kids. That's unbelievable. I'm just glad to be like a tiny part of the whole picture, and hopefully I can keep helping.

CHRIS BERMAN: It sounds like, yes, you win twice on TOUR, but has your life -- you're very grounded. Do you think your life has changed? Will you be disappointed? I don't mean changed -- that has nothing to do to your point. It so happens the last season, last year and a half, has your life changed? Are you and your wife, your family making sure that it doesn't change?

RUSSELL KNOX: My wife makes it pretty clear that things are not going to get too out of the picture. I mean, she knocks me down to size pretty quickly. So I thank her for that. But, no, my life hasn't changed. I get to do this for a living for at least a few more years. It's such an honor to be a part of the PGA TOUR and get to play golf for a living.

I tell people all the time, this is not my job. I'm just very lucky to be good at golf. I enjoy playing it. I enjoy practicing and like competing. I don't have a job. I'm just very fortunate to be doing this. Hopefully it lasts a long time.

But my life's not going to change. I'm still going to lie on the couch and be very lazy when I go home. When I come out to play, I'm going to try my best.

CHRIS BERMAN: Now, Russell, a young man from Scotland, when you went to Jacksonville to college did you think -- of course, we think at 18, we didn't think anything, right or at 17, 19. Did you think, okay, the States, I'm going over to go to school, and I'm going to

stay? I mean, that's a pretty big decision.

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, I was fed up with being cold and miserable in Scotland, and I wanted to go somewhere warm. Florida was my first choice. Jacksonville started out to be a great place for me. I've been there now since 2004. Did I know this was going to happen? Of course not. I mean, this is a dream come true.

I had a feeling I was going to want to stay in the United States. I am a U.S. citizen. My dad was born in California and my mother's Scottish, so it makes the transition much easier for me. I love it here. Am I super lucky to be on the PGA TOUR? Yes. And I tell myself that every day. And like I say, I hope it lasts for a long time.

CHRIS BERMAN: How did your accent go over in the dorm freshman year in Jacksonville?

RUSSELL KNOX: Well, after a few beers, nobody understood a word I said. It does, however -- I know the ladies like the accent much more than the guys.

CHRIS BERMAN: That's okay. Last time I checked, that was a good thing.

You're on TOUR, your accuracy off tee, well, that's your strength. You made a 12-foot putt to win the tournament. But what is your favorite club, is it driver?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, driver, yeah, yeah. It's good to hit driver. Hit it hard, tee it high. I don't hit the ball that far, but I'm trying. I'm trying to hit it as hard as I can every time. It's demoralizing sometimes playing with some of these big guys. Dustin Johnson, McIlroy, Bubba Watson, they hit it so hard and it looks like they're swinging so easy, and I'm trying to smash it and I go like a hundred yards shorter.

But it's crazy. Yeah, accuracy is my biggest strength. But I'll take holing 12-foot putts over driving it far any day.

CHRIS BERMAN: Yeah, I would think so. Of course we all remember, and we did the thing in Hartford this morning, but I find before you teed off, Jim Furyk had a 58. So you knew right away he shot a 59 on the Web.com Tour, okay? So this is like a little club. You saw him and you weren't thinking about it. Did you welcome him to the club?

RUSSELL KNOX: Well, he had already shot 59.

CHRIS BERMAN: He did. He's a first time member.

RUSSELL KNOX: So he's in his own special group

now. I'm kind of jealous, because I wanted to be the first person to shoot sub-60 twice, but Jim pitched me to it. So he's a good person to have to do that though.

CHRIS BERMAN: For the tournament, we'll go to questions soon, and we have to relive something ten months ago, so you already knew, okay, like there may be below scoring out here, but I'm already in second when I'm teeing off. So do you say, oh, oh, I've got to shoot lower? You actually guarded against that a little bit, didn't you? Like I've got to shoot 63 or I'm dead, right? I mean, that could be trouble?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, it's tough, and this course as the day goes on, the course gets significantly harder. I mean, it was very warm and sunny and the greens get firm and fast. Shooting low 60s was almost not realistic starting out on the last group on Sunday. So I knew anything, two, three, four, five-under would be an incredible round.

So I actually, when I was walking out to start warming up, Jim Furyk had just finished and I congratulated him, and kind of -- I know Jim fairly well, so we shared like a ten-second conversation. As I continued walking, I kind of thought to myself that this is good luck that I just bumped into someone that shot 58. So I thought maybe this is going to be my day. So us golfers are always looking for tiny things that we can try to help us perform better. And I think that moment kind of helped me get off to a nice start and ultimately win.

CHRIS BERMAN: Rub shoulders with a double member of the sub-60 club.

**Q. You seem to be a very optimistic person. I've known golfers that dwell on the negative. What makes you such an optimistic person? Who did you get it from? How do you use that to your advantage?**

RUSSELL KNOX: I mean, everybody, regardless of what they do in life has a choice. You either be optimistic or you don't be. Seems pretty obvious which choices you should pick. So you wake up and you say, listen, I'm going to have a great day, or you wake up and say I'm not going to have a great day.

So if it's that simple, guess which one I'm going to pick? It's not rocket science. My dad's a very optimistic person. I probably got it from him. But I'm glad I'm that way.

Golf is a hard game, and you lose 99% of the time. You're always hitting in the water, you're always messing up, hitting out of bounds, three-putting. So the times when you don't do that and the putt goes in and you win the tournament, they make up for all the bad parts 100 times over. So I tried being an optimistic

person.

I try to live life to the fullest, because you obviously never know what's in store for you. I think we owe it all to, because people who are less fortunate than us, to be happy and live an optimistic life.

CHRIS BERMAN: So even if you hit the windmill in miniature golf thinking you're going to break 60 and you don't, we still remain optimistic?

RUSSELL KNOX: I break the windmill and smile.

**Q. Russell, was there any particular, interesting or funny anecdotes that you could tell that somebody might have mentioned to you after you made that putt, particularly the hat throw? Was there any special comment that one of your players or a friend or something said about the hat throw?**

RUSSELL KNOX: I think one of the funniest things was maybe a day later somebody posted a video on YouTube of me and the video game Mortal Combat. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but it would be like Chris and I were fighting and in the Mortal Combat video game every person had a finishing move. But once you're kind of being the guy you did the finishing move.

So somebody posted one of mine, and it was like finish him. And I took my hat, and it was me throwing my hat and his head could fly off. So I thought that video was pretty funny. You can go on YouTube and Google that. It's an hilarious video.

**Q. You said that when someone handed you your hat back you didn't -- how did that get to you?**

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, I threw it, and the walking scorer that was helping us out that day handed me back my hat, and I looked at him. I don't think I said it to him. But I said why do you have my hat? How did my hat get over there? So in the moment, I was so lost in the moment, I was in the zone or whatever you want to call it and I had no idea what I was doing.

Just the way the putt was breaking and the way my body, I don't know. The hat just went flying. I'm glad I did it, because I've made a lot of friends and a lot of positive comments from it.

**Q. A lot of the players now have teams that they put together. I was just wondering if you have a team and each week or each quarter you review your statistics, say it's putting or greens in regulations. Do you go over your numbers?**

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, I have a team. I also have a full-time caddie for four years. I have a physio guy that works on me after every day. Keeps my bulging biceps

nice and slender. Yeah, I've worked with Lynn and Pia at Vision54 on my mental approach to golf.

I had a swing coach for the longest time. He was an older gentleman. He passed away a couple years ago. Since then I haven't really gotten too technical about golf. I like to just free-wheel it. I do have a putting coach, a good friend of mine, Ramon Bescansa.

I have a team, and I have a wife though as well. And she's my biggest team member. I mean, she's the best. She helps me more than anyone. It's nice to be on this journey with her.

**Q. She played pro tennis, right? So she's been inside the ropes, if you will, right?**

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, tennis players are animals. They workout so much, and they practice so hard. When we first got together, she laughed at how lazy I was. Golf is pretty unique. You've got ten people, like Vijay Singh that practices hours and hours and hours a day. Then you have guys who have always been successful like Colin Montgomerie who hated practice. And I follow my fellow Scot, Colin Montgomerie, and I don't really enjoy practicing too often. That's what makes golf so great. There's no magic formula.

But as it comes to the start, no, I don't believe in that. I mean, I know which part of my game I need to work on without looking really (Indiscernible). But the PGATOUR.com they have so many different stats you can look at. So if ever I needed to, but I don't really have a stat guy.

**Q. Are you 160 yet, 155? Where are you?**

RUSSELL KNOX: After the barbecue last night, probably 160, yeah.

CHRIS BERMAN: I was that in the seventh grade.

**Q. Tell us the state of your golf game right now?**

RUSSELL KNOX: It's good. I'm pretty optimistic. I played after winning here I had a great stretch there. I played well in Asia for some reason. So I contended in Malaysia and then China again, and then Mexico I finished third. So I thought this is great. I'm just going to keep playing well every week and become a world beater.

Then that ended pretty quickly. I took some time off. I played way too much at the end of the year last year, so I took a break, and then I missed some cuts, and took another break, missed a couple more cuts. So I had kind of a rough patch.

But my game feels great now, and I'm really looking forward to a busy summer. I think there's great things ahead. I have good feelings that a victory is not too far

away. So I look forward to playing next week at THE PLAYERS Championship in my hometown Jacksonville. So hopefully I don't have to wait too long for another victory.

**Q. Can you talk about the Ryder Cup?**

RUSSELL KNOX: I hate the Ryder Cup. No, that was tough. I mean, all of the emotion that came out when I made the putt here, and it had a lot to do with the Ryder Cup. I thought I was close -- I was close to making the team before this tournament happened. When that putt went in, I thought I had made the team. I was so happy. All this stuff was going on in my head. That was one of the things I thought I've done enough. So I'm going to make the Ryder Cup team. I was really proud of myself.

Then the stars unfortunately just kind of aligned against me, Thomas pierce played incredible the last couple weeks, and just the amount of rookies that were on the team, Darren Clarke and the vice captains decided to go with more experience for Westwood and Kaymer, which I can't blame them.

So, yeah, it was tough. I was disappointed. I wasn't sure if I was going to watch it on television. I ended up watching, I think, every minute of it. The standard of golf was incredible. I kept trying to put myself in that situation like how would I have dealt with this? Would I have been too nervous to tee up my ball? Would I have loved it? Would I have played incredible?

So I look forward to hopefully finding out in 2018. But at the time I was really disappointed I wasn't able to play, but at the same time, I'm going to do everything I can to make the team in the future. So I've just got to maybe practice a little harder.

**Q. Russell, have you seen the movie Tommy's Honor, and could you have played the role of young Tom?**

RUSSELL KNOX: I have not seen it. I've seen the commercials on TV, so I do look forward to watching it. Could I have played him? No, probably not. I don't know why I say that, but I would have loved to have played golf back then with the Wooden clubs and the Hickory shafts. I do look forward to watching the movie though and to see the story behind it.

**Q. How many times St. Andrews for you?**

RUSSELL KNOX: I played a British Amateur there, I played The Open a few years back there which was insane, horrendous weather. I mean, it's an unbelievable course. I've never played well there, which is not good, but it's a special place and I encourage anyone who has not been there to give it a go.

CHRIS BERMAN: A couple years ago they had the Claret Jug over here. Is it again this year? No. I think Luke Donald got in that way a couple years ago. That's little. That's hard to squeeze all the names on there.

Well, maybe that will come as well. Well, coming back here, do you think, hey, look, you're here and then you move on and you've got The PLAYERS, you've got the U.S. Open, you have other stuff. But when you're flying home tonight or tomorrow morning what do you think you'll draw by sniffing the air here where you really excelled under pressure, Russell?

RUSSELL KNOX: Well, they have such great gifts, so I want to win this tournament again. Imagine what it's going to be next year. So, no, it truly is amazing to be part of this. It adds motivation and fuel to the fire to practice hard and to do well and see if I can defend the title here in June. I mean, Travelers has been amazing. Everyone that's involved has been incredible.

So I really do -- I'm going to give it my all. It's been an amazing year to be named the champion, and one more year would be nice.

**Q. It's open. We're ready for you.**

RUSSELL KNOX: Why not, right? Why not.

CHRIS BERMAN: Listen, we've had a lot of wonderful champs and we're so proud of our event here and the way it gives back to the community. But you're a breath of fresh air. Your birthday's going to be during the week.

RUSSELL KNOX: I want cakes.

CHRIS BERMAN: Nathan's got an a announcement.

RUSSELL KNOX: No nuts. I'm allergic to peanuts, so no nuts.

CHRIS BERMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, our champion, Russell Knox.

RUSSELL KNOX: Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: Chris alluded to it, we're going to do something fun this year. If you head out the front, we're going to walk down to 18. Russell has agreed to try to make that 12-foot putt again. We're going to put the pressure on we can and do some interviews down on the green. Russell, Chris, thank you very much for everything.