

Travelers Championship

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Doug Ghim

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



THE MODERATOR: All right, I'd like to welcome in Doug Ghim into the interview room of the Travelers Championship. Doug is making his professional debut this week at the Travelers Championship, and he won the 2018 Ben Hogan Award during his time playing for the University of Texas, and he earned the Silver Cup at The Masters this year for finishing Low Amateur. Doug, talk about starting your professional career here at Travelers?

DOUG GHIM: It's a dream come true. To do it here at a venue like this, I'm truly honored. I'm blessed to have the opportunity to be able to play against such a great field this week, and I just finished a practice round with Jordan Spieth, and, you know, it's really -- I mean, I can't explain to you how proud I am to be here, and I'm just really excited to get things rolling.

Q. And you're playing in your third PGA TOUR event; how has the experience been so far?

DOUG GHIM: It's been pretty incredible, my first two events being The Masters and the U.S. Open. So I was just mentioning how chill and how quiet it is on a Tuesday here, as opposed to The Masters and the U.S. Open. But it's still -- I mean, it's still a really big event. I'm really excited for the week, and just a little nervous as well.

Q. Could you talk about Jordan and any involvement with him, and what we could expect here? He had such a big shot here last year to win it?

DOUG GHIM: I mean, Jordan's great. He was gracious enough to reach out to me and want to practice with me today. He didn't really have much about this week. There was a little bit of here and there, like this is where you want to miss it, this is where you want to play it, it's very scorable.

He was just kind of giving me what to expect coming out with no status and trying to gain status. He was telling me not to put too much pressure on myself. Obviously you aim high and want to go on a run and do really well and earn your TOUR card right away. That's what everyone wants to do. But if it doesn't happen, as long as you have a good attitude and remember why you play, because we love to compete and love playing the game, you'll get out there sooner or later.

Q. You've obviously played in some high-profile

situations along the way. But how do you think the pressures and nerves, if at all, will be different as a professional this week?

DOUG GHIM: It's hard to say. I feel like I'm ready for it. I'm doing the best that I can to make sure that I treat it like any other tournament. At the end of the day, it's the same objective, trying to get the ball in the hole as fast as possible.

I do recognize that I'm playing against the best players in the world, and I've been given a few opportunities to test my game against them. The only difference now is just being comfortable with that situation and with that task, and it can be daunting. But I've been looking forward to it for a long time, and now that I have the opportunity I'm really excited for it.

You know, in any case, whatever happens this week and into the next couple of weeks I'll be able to fairly assess my game and hopefully improve and come back. Whenever I get the next opportunity, I'll be ready and I'll be able to compete against these guys.

Q. (Inaudible)?

DOUG GHIM: Lance Bennett. I understand he used to caddie for Matt Kuchar. Caddied for him when he won THE PLAYERS Championship, and he caddied for Bill Haas and Daniel Berger for a little bit.

Q. (Inaudible)?

DOUG GHIM: It was a tough one. Obviously, my dad being there my whole life, and he caddied during the Amateur, he caddied during The Masters and the U.S. Open last week. But I've had my whole life him there. Any opportunity that he could, he caddied for me on the bag.

I just wanted to try having a professional caddie. Being out at The Masters and the U.S. Open, I got to see kind of what the caddie aspect was like. It's kind of like a well-oiled machine, and I just figured that having that experience, not having status and never seeing these golf courses before, it was something that I at least needed to try. I know that my dad will always be willing to take the call if I ever need him to be on the bag at any point.

But Lance is great. He's seen all these golf courses before. I think he had like an unreal 36-major

championship streak for a bit. So he's seen a lot and been around a lot of the guys, and I'm just excited to be able to start with a caddie like him at the beginning of my career.

Q. I'm curious, are you goal-oriented at all, and if so, are there any goals you've set as you begin your career?

DOUG GHIM: I am goal-oriented. I think most guys out here are. Obviously, I think the biggest goal for me this week is to have a solid week. Making the cut in your first pro event, getting my first paycheck would be a good start. But, if anything, just to play in a way that I know how to play.

If I play well to my standards and I fall a little short of where I'd like to be on the leaderboard, that's okay. These are the best players in the world, and I've only had two other opportunities to play against these guys.

I didn't fare as well as I would have liked to, and I know it's difficult, and that's why there's only so many people out here and there's only a couple that win.

I am goal-oriented, but I'm also trying to be -- trying to take as much pressure off of me as possible. Again, it's just another tournament. The competition might be a little bit better, but I know that if I play the way I know I can play, I might be able to (inaudible).

Q. (Inaudible)?

DOUG GHIM: Well, I knew that I wanted to turn professional soon after the U.S. Open. I was pretty clear that I wanted to play the U.S. Open as my last amateur event, and it meant everything to me to have my dad on the bag last week. I was just so lucky that the Travelers Championship gave me the opportunity to be here you know as a sponsor's invite. You just don't know when you're going to get called to play in any PGA TOUR event, and I just feel incredibly thankful to the tournament, to the sponsors, to give me this opportunity.

I mean, it's a great field to be a part of with Jordan, Jason Day, Bubba Watson, Matt Kuchar, Jim Furyk. I'm not sure if Matt's in the field this week, but obviously it's a great field this week. It's a great golf course. Last year there was a lot of drama coming down the stretch between Daniel Berger and Jordan. I'm excited to have my number called this week.

I'm going to do the best I can to make the most of it.

As far as expectations go on the leaderboard, you know, obviously you'd love to make a top 10. I am friends with Joaquin Niemann, and to see what he's done over the last couple of months with the three top 10 I think he's gotten so far, it's easy to have that as

your expectation.

But, again, these are the best players in the world, and I have a lot of respect for them. I grew up watching a lot of them. So, you know, if I don't have that kind of success, it doesn't necessarily mean that it's a failure. Just trying to gain as much experience as I can.

Again, I think at any rate, I think the biggest important thing is getting comfortable as fast as I possibly can be, and I think if I can do that, my scores will probably be pretty good.

Q. What is your tournament schedule looking like? How much are you going to chase the Monday qualifying and that sort of thing?

DOUG GHIM: Well, I think some good opportunities coming my way in the next couple of weeks. I believe I'm in next week at the Quicken Loans, and I think -- I'm in the John Deere, The Barracuda, and so I'll be given a couple of opportunities. Anywhere that I get an opportunity to play, I obviously will play.

As far as Monday qualifying goes, I'm not so sure yet what my situation's going to be like moving forward schedule-wise. But hopefully within those events I'll be able to post enough money and get into the Web.com finals and be able to get my card that way. But as far as scheduling goes, those are the evens that I'm going to be playing in.

Q. You touched a little on your dad. Could you expound on how much it meant to your career? Also, this is a sidebar, the eagle crystal that you won in The Masters, was that held up by the NCAA or have you gotten that?

DOUG GHIM: Well, yeah, my dad's been a huge influence on my life. Last week I had a short week than I wanted to. Not being able to play the weekend. It would have meant everything to me to be able to have him up there on Sunday caddying for me in my last amateur event on Father's Day. But it didn't quite shake down the way that I wanted it to.

It's been an incredible ride, and he's done so much for me. There is no person that works harder for me than my father. I've had the blessing to have some really cool experiences with him in the last nine months at The Masters at Riviera at the U.S. Am. Though he wasn't on the bag at the Walker Cup, he was there.

You know, he means so much to me. I mentioned to him on the 17th hole coming down the stretch on the second round I knew I'm going to make the cut, so he was getting emotional, I was getting emotional. You know, I told him there are a lot of heros that I got to meet that week, whether it was Tiger, Phil, Jason Day,

Jordan Spieth, but I wanted him to know that he's always been my hero, and the person that I looked up to the most.

You know, being able to say that to him and walk up to 9th hole for the last time that week, it was special. I just hope that I get a couple more walks like that in my future.

As far as the eagle, I had just got them before I made this trip to the U.S. Open and here. I didn't realize that they would be personalized with my name and the hole that I made the eagle on, but they're pretty spectacular.

I only opened one, I didn't even dare to open the others yet. But those will be coveted. I might have to get a safe so I make sure that no one takes it, and that if the house burns down that those will be all right.

Q. It's probably too early to ask this, but can you talk about the difference between college amateur golf and coming out here on the PGA TOUR versus, you know, making your own travel arrangements, getting a courtesy car and things like that?

DOUG GHIM: It's pretty crazy. I get the opportunity to jump into the highest stage of being able to play here and The Masters and the U.S. Open. So being able to get a courtesy car and not have to pay for it, and I got in the locker room this week and they were like, yeah, dry cleaning is free this week too. So that's quite strange.

You know, it's awesome. It's tough too. Talking to players and asking for advice, like how many weeks in a row do you go, a lot of them tell me to not play too much before the tournament. Like don't play 18 holes every day. Give yourself a breather, play nine. Maybe sometimes just hit balls, you don't have to play. You're a good enough player to see the course once and know what to do.

It is a little bit early to know exactly how different life is, but having full autonomy of everything that goes down, when to that, when to show up to the course, when to fly in, all those things, it can be daunting, but I feel like I have a good team of people around me that are supporting me. It's not too different in that way.

I'm really excited to be here. I'm really excited to play against these guys, and hopefully I'll play well enough to one day be competing with these guys week in and week out.

Q. Just curious, when you got to 18 today, did you try the bunker shot?

DOUG GHIM: Well, we were playing a little match

today between me and Jordan versus Jack Campbell and Ryan Palmer. I had hit my ball short. I was in the left rough, and I wouldn't -- it was an outside chance to get on the green, but I knew if I left it in the front bunker decently and I hit it, as soon as it lands he turns around and goes, "That's all right, Dougie. That's a good spot. That's a Jordan Spieth play right there."

I did not try the bunker shot. I tried the bunker shot to the hole. We were playing a match, so we didn't want to lose. But it was kind of funny. It was a kind of cool anecdote. But it's definitely cool to spend time with him with how many experiences he's had, whether it's here or the U.S. Open or The Masters.

Man, he really does bring a big crowd. We had the biggest crowd, I think, today out of all the players, and I knew none of them were watching me (laughing).

Q. Do you remember where you were a year ago? Did you see it on TV?

DOUG GHIM: I did. I thought he had the tournament won after nine holes. I was coming back from an amateur tournament at Wannamoisett from the Northeast Amateur, and I watched the third round thinking he's going to win this thing. He looks solid. I remember him missing like a short birdie putt on 13, and I was like freaking out. I was like, he's not going to win? What is he doing? He's like walking before he even struck the putt.

Just to see how even when he was that uncomfortable, to still be able to pull it off, albeit a wedge from a bunker, it was still pretty impressive to me. You know, you can always learn from those kind of tournaments and know that that's what great players do. They still find a way to win, even when they're not on their game.

Yeah, I was in my kitchen when he had holed out that bunker shot. I was like I couldn't believe it. I was on my phone and I was like talking to my teammates and we were like what is going on right now? We were watching some of the videos on Twitter of him walking before, like halfway. His ball would get halfway to the hole, he was already walking after it. Sometimes it would lip in and it was like, he's not feeling good right now. When he holed that bunker shot, I went crazy, my parents went crazy, and I just couldn't believe that he pulled it off again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time and good luck this week.