

Travelers Championship

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Bubba Watson

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



BUBBA WATSON: I would just like to say thank you to Travelers. Thank you so much for what you all do and what you all created here. You all created, like you talked about, you create an atmosphere that players want to be here, families want to be here. The clubhouse, when are we going to start digging on that? Tomorrow? Okay, Thursday.

So the clubhouse. When you look at this, what transpired over the years with Travelers backing, from all the players, thank you. Thank you for what you all do and what you all mean to our TOUR.

Nathan, we can't say it too much because you might end up -- someone might try to buy you away from here, but as a tournament director, you're the best in the world. So that's amazing. Just thank you for all that you do and all that you put into it. From the whiffle ball game that we had the other day, to the four-hole golf tournament that I got to caddie, I think that was Friday afternoon.

Caleb asked everybody to caddie for him except me, and then finally he let me caddie.

But Teddy, my caddie Teddy is back there, was playing golf. He said, I'm full. I'm already busy. Then I was getting therapy, and Brian Harman at that time was winning the golf tournament, I think, at 10-under after two rounds. He said, "Hey, Mr. Brian, will you caddie for me?" I was like, "He's kind of busy. He doesn't really want to caddie right now."

So I was the last man. So it was fun. What you all create around here is amazing. This is a special place in my heart because of my first win. My dad getting to see my win before he passed away. And like you were joking a couple years later, having my son, and now having both kids here part of our family for the third one. It's pretty amazing how it keeps growing. I think we're going to stop.

The RV can't hold that many people. So, no, I think now I found out I was third on the FedExCup, so it's been an amazing year, an amazing ride, and to be part of this and to be part of the fan atmosphere. Those pictures that you have of Jordan holing the bunker shot, it looks like 20 feet deep of fans, I mean, 20 rows of people. Even with this weather they were still out there. So it's a pretty special place.

The volunteers, like you said, part of Travelers, all the volunteers, you can't have a great tournament like this. And the staff, the greenskeepers, the maintenance staff, this is the best we've ever seen it. The greens were perfect this week. So it was a special time for all of us because we get to play on such a great golf course, and it all starts with the leadership at Travelers, so thank you all.

Q. So you said yesterday -- by the way, a little history, three-time winner. We've been here 67 years, and only Billy Casper, only the second three-time winner, he won four, something to shoot for. Arnold Palmer, number two, you can look at any other name, Bubba Watson three. So there is part of it. Six shots back, you said even yesterday, well, if I start birdieing pretty early or put something up, maybe give Paul who is a really good player something to think about. And actually your birdies came, 6 of 10 of them came in the last ten holes. But you were confident yesterday at least in saying that. How did you know? Was it past success here, Bubba?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, you have to trick yourself. I had to watch what I say, my kids are here. I did not want to say lie. So you have to trick yourself into believing it, right? You always have to tell yourself and believe it. So when I saw the -- when I started making some putts, I chipped in on 10. I made a putt on 12. I made a nice one on 13.

Then the weather signs went up. When the weather signs go up, that means the storm is coming, the wind's going to pick up, the weather's going to change, and it's going to make it tougher. So when I fist pumped on 15, that's when I thought I had a shot at it, because I knew the weather.

The wind started picking up, so I had three tough holes, but they had more holes. So that's where I really started believing. That's why I fist pumped there, because I knew with the weather signs up, it was fixing to get difficult or it could get difficult.

Q. Spoken like a Florida boy in the afternoon knowing that the weather is coming. 18, not that you never swing hard, but you swung hard on that

drive. You left yourself what, a wedge?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, we had 71 yards, I think. So we had 71 yards, but it was funny. Our thought process on the tee, because it's downwind, knowing how difficult the downwind second shot would be, I wanted to hit 2-iron. I was like, you know what? If we're going to lose the golf tournament, let's lose it hitting the big dog.

So I went ahead and hit it, and when I got down there, my lie was tight, it was straight downwind, and I was like I don't know how I'm going to hit this shot. So I had a bunch of people texting me saying that's one of the best shots they've seen, these were pros. They know how difficult it is to nip it and get that kind of spin, as you could see with Bryson, right after I hit, he had to hit, and it was hard to get it that close because it was one of those shots that just came off perfectly and worked out in my favor.

Q. Do you see holes -- look, you've won 12 times and you're not done. Three of your 12 wins are right here. Are there just courses like this that you just see certain holes like this as perfect for me more than other places?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, for sure. Earlier this year I had won in L.A. for my third win in L.A. Now I just need one more in Augusta and that would be great. Get a different jacket. I like this jacket, don't get me wrong. I love this. I've got a few of them.

But, yeah, there are certain places that we've built our schedule, everybody builds their schedule around places they've seen, loved, the atmosphere, all of that comes into play. Around here there are a lot of driver holes where I can hit some drivers and shape it. There are a lot of guys, a lot of guys that are starting to come.

Jordan came last year when he won, and he said, "Bubba, anywhere you play good that's where I want to play, because I think I can play where you can play." I don't know if that was a dig or what, but he backed it up with a win.

Yeah, it's one of those things where it just fits our eye. You can see the fairway. You can see the shape of the holes and the greens are always in great shape, so it's fun.

Q. 70, there is nothing wrong with shooting even par first round. But still already got 7 back. How do you say, look, did you know you had to go real low round two or what is your mindset if par and people are 6 or 7 shots ahead of you, Bubba?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, it's funny. Teddy -- I sent Teddy -- I love voice texting. I can't spell so I voice text. So I sent him a voice text so he has to hear my voice. I

sent him a voice text yesterday and I apologized. I said my attitude was not where it needed to be. It needed to be better than that.

So I apologized to him yesterday. Because the first day I was pretty much miserable thinking about shooting 70 out here where I feel like this is my home course. I can play golf around here. So I gave away a lot of shots mentally. He could see it, and he just kept on saying, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it.

Then his text back to me, he can spell, so he actually text back instead of voice text, but he text me back -- had to get my wife to read it -- but it just said keep your head down. You're playing great. Let's just have fun out there tomorrow and see what happens. That's what we did today.

I'm going to interrupt the story. But on 16 a few years ago somebody was angry again on 16, hit it in the water. So today it was a little into us, but I was pumped up. I just fist pumped, and I said are you thinking 8-iron? Chip this 8-iron and draw it in there and he said yes. We're not hitting 9-iron. He goes, no. I don't care where the ball goes, we're not hitting 9-iron. I said but this time I would hit it lower. We'd have gotten there. And he said, no, we're not hitting 9.

It was easy after I hit my 8-iron on the green. So it was our little joke and kept us in the moment where we were supposed to be.

Q. That attitude after even par round on the first. All of us have a bad attitude when we shoot a 70. Three wins this year, I mean, it's just the first week of summer. What is the difference?

BUBBA WATSON: Just last year I lost, give or take, 25 pounds, sickness. So fighting back, getting the strength back and the energy back, getting the mental focus and not feeling sorry for myself, all these things, getting it all back. Having a team that loves me. Getting, like we talked about, we bought a Prevost bus, an RV, camper, whatever you call it. So our kids now with bunk beds, we love it.

There was another funny story, not that you all care. But J.B. Holmes was having a chance to tie me to win the golf tournament today, and he said he was pulling for J.B. Our buses are right next to each other, and he has his dog with him named Ace. Who Caleb and the kids love playing with Ace. He said, I'm pulling for J.B. I said, because of his dog or because of J.B.? And he didn't answer. But I think it's because of his dog. But it's funny, because now we're like a group. There's four of us this week with RVs.

Q. You know what? You guys have good

meteorologists here. This is pretty well -- it will be a fun walk to the car?

BUBBA WATSON: I thought it was people clapping.

Q. That was everybody at 18 that is hearing this broadcast live. Maybe all the tournaments have it, but you're out there with the players. They know you've won this, but look, every year more and more, like I just said, major winners, et cetera. What is the chatter on TOUR once someone comes for the first time? You mentioned Jordan.

BUBBA WATSON: Well, I think the key is his day job somehow is going to other tournaments and telling people about the tournament. Nathan's actually doing the work, but he's there trying to get the free candy, I guess. But when the people see what Travelers is doing, it's not just them writing a check, it's them being involved. Them trying to improve.

The caddie area, what they're giving to them, the food they're giving to them, they're improving from that perspective. They're improving from the family perspective. Everything they do. Then when you see their own workers are volunteering for the tournament and what it means to this town and what it means to Hole In The Wall Gang, \$1.8 million. I mean, you can see that. People hear that, people see that they have a director like Nathan. They get behind it, and when they hear that, see that, feel that, that's when they start showing up. Then they see how perfect the golf course is and how the new clubhouse, people are energized by that, and that's what people see.

Then when they see again, if I can win here, people say I can win there if Bubba can do it. I told Jordan not to come, but he still came.

Q. Are there some holes that are better for lefties? Like, for example, 17. You don't have to come over the water. Is that a hole that, A, a lefty that hits like you, that is better for me than most or am I reading too much into it?

BUBBA WATSON: I don't like 17 at all. 17 is the worst hole for me. But I made a double bogey there in 2010 and then birdied 18 to force a playoff. So it's one of those things where I don't like the hole. But there are other holes that really set up great for me, so that's why this golf course -- I'd say, gosh, there's probably 14 great holes for me and four iffy ones. Then really three iffy ones and one bad one. That's why I like this golf course. There are a lot of things that set up good for me.

Q. Swinging free and easy. What is your schedule before British now? Greenbrier?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, we're going back to our house at Greenbrier, so we'll be there the next three weeks

playing a tournament there.

Q. Got a jacket for it now.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, exactly. When it gets cold at night I'll have something to wear. Then we'll head over to the British, and the British I'll play four in a row. I'll go to British, Canada, Akron, PGA.

Q. You never knew growing up in Florida where you did, the fact that you never knew that you'd be really a resident -- you'd become a resident of Connecticut. You've long been a resident. Now you're in for life. You didn't know you were growing up a Yankee, be careful. Don't tell anyone down there. Congratulations, you wear it so well, Bubba, and to come from 6-back, only once in this tournament has someone come from farther back. You did it once at 6 back. I'm afraid to ask, what else have you got for us?

BUBBA WATSON: I'm just looking forward to it. I think I'm the first one to sign up every year. As soon as they put the schedule up, I sign up for this one because I want to come back here. This means so much, not just from the golf side of it, but from the family side of it. My dad, the only time he got to see me win, he got to see me qualify for the Ryder Cup through this event.

So all these things mean so much to my family, not only the family that's here, but the family that's back home. So it's a big deal for us to be a part of this and to still be somewhat of a name that has a chance to win is a big deal for me, and I love coming here.

THE MODERATOR: This is your third win of the Travelers Championship, second only behind Billy Casper who has four, so you'll have to come back and win another one to catch him. You're also third in the FedExCup, moving up from 15 after your win today. 63 in the final round. You do make things exciting. Just some comments on the final day?

BUBBA WATSON: It's been an amazing ride. My whole career, but this year has been outstanding. After last year, who knows what to expect. It's amazing what some good energy and some healthy energy will do. Coming into the final round, again, I was just trying to play for position. I think I started the day 8th maybe. I'm not sure. So just trying to move up the leaderboard.

I wasn't thinking about winning. I was thinking about just playing golf and trying to move up the leaderboard. Again, like you said, the FedExCup, to move up in the FedExCup, Ryder Cup, just trying to jockey for position and just trying to have a good round and have a good finish.

Then on the back nine, when I chipped in on 10, I made a putt on 12. Made a good putt on 13, par putt on 14. Then when I made the putt on 15 is when I realized I had a shot at it. With the weather signs going up, I could see the weather was going to come in. The wind started picking up, knew it was going to be hard to make birdies. So I figured if there was a way I could get one more, and that's really what I do.

I just hung on and had one on 18 to jump out there to a one-shot lead and made it tough on him to finish or the other guys to finish as well.

Q. Could you just talk about that last shot? That was a pretty special shot and you heard from a couple of the players.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, I got some text from the players. I think it was 71 yards straight downwind. So you had to fly it over the bunker and get it to check somehow. It's one of those where it could have easily went short in the bunker or over the green, just because you guessed wrong on how it's going to come out. The lie was kind of tight down there. So to open the 63-degree up to try to cut it a little bit to add spin to it. For it to come off perfect like that, I knew as soon as I hit it, you could tell the distance was right. And Teddy put his arm around me like that was an amazing shot. He's seen a lot of shots. He's been out here for many years.

So for him to realize it and other players to text me and realize it, it was special. It was one of those shots where it just came out perfect at the right time and the rest was history.

Q. You said you noticed the weather signs go up. At that point do you change anything about what you're doing as you're trying to close?

BUBBA WATSON: No, you don't change anything. I just knew it was going to be difficult. Give or take, he was at that time it's one person I'm talking about in Casey, he was three holes, almost four holes behind me. So I knew how difficult these holes were going to be, especially when it gets around the water, just because it was going to be windier.

So I knew if I could just make a birdie somehow, then I had a good shot at it or a chance to get in the playoff. So that didn't change the strategy any. Just my mindset gave me a little bit of confidence or more of a boost, I guess you'd say.

Q. Coming into today six shots back of the lead, does your past experience here being a two-time winner change your confidence than if you're coming into a tournament 6 shots back that you hadn't won before or didn't have the kind of

experience winning?

BUBBA WATSON: No, again, like I said, you don't think about winning. You think about just playing good golf. If somehow you get on a roll, I mean, look at Stewart Cink. Stewart Cink got on a roll early and he finished great. But you're trying to somehow do those kind of heroics on the final day because you're so far back.

But I was never thinking about victory. I was thinking about just playing golf. I bogeyed and made a sloppy bogey on 8, and I hit a perfect tee shot on 9. Got that up-and-down, and holed out. So the momentum started building, and I was thinking high finish. Then the putt, when I saw he didn't birdie like 9 through 12 when I made the putt on 15, that's when I think I tied him at 16 under. So that's when I really started thinking, okay, we can win this thing.

So the whole day was just about playing good golf and moving up the leaderboard. It wasn't really about a victory.

Q. We all understand the emotions of the first time you won here. Looking around and having the two kids here today, and then maybe looking ahead when they're really old enough to truly understand, will that be another thing that motivates you to keep on winning and being able to have them when they really understand what it means to be able to go out there and compete and win?

BUBBA WATSON: I think it's a beautiful question, but my motivation is to quit before I keep winning because I want to be there for my family. Seeing my son -- my son asked me last night in the bunk bed. He said, "Dad, when are you going to retire?" Because he wants to spend more time with me. You know, they tug at you. You know, being adoptive dad, at some point we've got to break down and explain to them what adoption means.

So, again, I've never had a family before. So to me, it's going to be tougher trying to explain that to them than trying to go on the road. So I think I'd retire before I keep battling or motivating me to win more. It's motivating me to be a stay-at-home dad and watch him grow and try to teach him values and life lessons and hopefully he can bomb driver like me and play golf.

But that would be -- that's that part. But the part of me winning when my dad was about to pass away of cancer in 2010, having my kids here like we joked about in the other room, without kids one year, only one kid one year, and now with both kids, it's pretty cool. All these videos and all these things, it will be a great story when we start talking about it in the future. This is what daddy did, because he doesn't even know that my wife played four years of pro basketball. He

just doesn't know. He wasn't here, and she's only 3, so she could care less about what we're doing right now.

Yeah, these are great story lines and things that I can show them that they were a part of and they were there because they're not going to remember. Like he stuck his head out of the bathroom when the camera was watching him today. I already got a text about that. How funny that was. Those will be good stories in the future.

Q. Do you feel like this year represents the best golf of your career?

BUBBA WATSON: No, I think, gosh -- I think '15. Wasn't it '15? I think '15 I won -- I think I won L.A. and then I won The Masters. Then I holed a bunker shot. Wasn't the same year, but same calendar year where I won my third. I won in China. Double bogeyed 17 and holed a bunker shot to force a playoff and then won the next hole. Then we adopted -- the birth of our child was two days later. Angie was in the hospital with the birth mom. I was in China at that time celebrating a victory, but celebrating a beautiful child that nobody knew about at that time, at that moment.

So in the calendar year, I still go by calendar year, I don't go by PGA TOUR season. So it's three wins that year, so it was good.

I actually think I might have won Hero Challenge that year? It might have been four in that calendar year when you add that in. So that was one of my better years. I hate to say it, but I'd really like to have one win if it was a major.

Q. Sort of based on that, you now have three wins -- first player with three wins this year, and you should be a lock for the Ryder Cup team. What does that all mean for you going forward?

BUBBA WATSON: I still says in my phone that Jim hasn't texted me yet. So I'd really like for him to say I'm going to pick you no matter what.

No, it means a lot. That's always the goal. To win a golf tournament and to make a team. Being a U.S. player, there is always a team every year, right? It's a thrilling time. My whole dream was to get ten wins, if somehow I could get ten wins. I didn't think it was possible to get ten wins. Then I get ten wins and now I've got two more.

Olympic day was what, yesterday? And so, talking about the Olympics coming up, that's motivating me. It was the best experience of my life to watch all the other events, and then the golf tournament got in the way.

I'd love to do it again. I'd love to watch all the events

and have to play golf as well. So there's a lot of things that factor in. This win, the confidence. I know it's a couple years away, but I'd love to have a chance to make the Olympic team again. Yeah, the motivation is I've never won a Ryder Cup, so making the Ryder Cup team and trying to win a Ryder Cup as a player would be another tournament victory to me. Would be a major championship to me just because I've never done it, never been a part of it. Then being over there -- it would be -- you'd rather do it at home, but it would be fun anywhere you can get a victory.

Q. Each of these wins this year is pretty different from each other. Where does this one kind of rate for you compared in terms of the quality of golf?

BUBBA WATSON: This is a weird week, like I said earlier. I sent Teddy a voice text and apologized yesterday after we got done yesterday for my attitude for the last couple days. Even when I shot -- what did I shoot? Somewhere I shot 7-under, even that day I was upset, on Friday. Then I was upset with the 3-under with that bogey coming down the stretch on Saturday. So I sent him a text and said I apologize. I didn't think my attitude was that good.

You know, this was a weird week. It was a week that after shooting 70 you're trying to make the cut then, right. Because the cut can go to 4-under around here. So to come out strong and shoot 7-under on Friday and guarantee the cut and have a chance on the weekend, it was a different victory.

Again, I wasn't thinking about a victory today. I was just playing golf and trying to stay focused and committed so I could get momentum and confidence going into the next tournaments coming up.

Q. In terms of your golf, obviously the three wins this year. Could you compare it to where you were maybe a year ago at this time?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, last year wasn't very good and this year has been great, easy comparison. It would be like me missing the cut this week, but I didn't. I won this week. It's just one of those things. I think I missed the cut here last year. That's the difference. I won this year and I missed the cut last year. That's pretty much how the whole year was. It was a rough year last year, mentally, physically. This year has been good.

Q. (Inaudible)?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, I mean, again, I'm not smart enough to remember back. It's easy for me to forget, forgive, whatever. Yeah, I mean, you've got to look forward and got to keep pushing forward, learn from your mistakes and learn from what's going on and try to get better from it. Luckily I got better, got healthier,

and now I can play golf and swing as hard as I want and have the energy to do it.

Q. Looking forward a little bit to next year's U.S. Open is in California, Pebble Beach. How does that change your game plan heading into the Travelers Championship?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, my RV will not be at Pebble Beach next year. It can't get from Pebble to here fast enough. I don't know the schedule, so I'm guessing the same schedule. Travelers will be after. So, yeah, it will just be a nice comfy plane that gets me here fast. So it will be interesting.

But it's no different than any tournament, any major. You know, we had Chambers over there close to Seattle. It's no different. Looking forward to Pebble though. I've never played Pebble as the U.S. Open, so I'm looking forward to it. Then coming back here where you can actually hit out of the rough, so it will be nice.

Q. You talked a lot about the health issues you faced last year, but the ups and downs of your World Rankings also have a distinct correlation to the choices you've made with the golf ball. What sort of role do you feel like that's had in your recent success?

BUBBA WATSON: I don't think it has any in my success. I don't know if you've ever lost 25 pounds in a short period of time, over a three-month period. Energy level, focus, worried about your own health, the mental -- focused on other things and not golf. My clubs weren't going the distance that I used to. I couldn't shape it the way I wanted to.

Luckily for me, I know the problem, the problem with health and not all these other things. Then you've got to think about the LST Ping Driver, the G400 is going pretty straight. I look pretty wild off the tee sometimes and it's going pretty good. Not a bad driver either. And the new putter that Ping made me, it's two putters put together.

Q. A few years ago you win this championship, and it's the first PGA TOUR win is here. And you were talking about how you texted Ted Scott and apologized for your behavior, your attitude. How much do you think you have changed perspective-wise in the time since your first win to now when you're making that kind of a move on a Saturday to your caddie?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, obviously, I've changed a lot over that. Our joke as a team is I've changed more than anybody in the world from when I got on TOUR to now. You know, it's just growing up. We're going to make mistakes. I'm going to three-putt, I'm going to duff chips. I'm going to do a lot of things on the golf

course bad and off the golf course bad and I'm going to have to apologize. Like I said earlier, I'm the fastest to apologize.

I've got two kids now. They're watching me. They're going to see. They're going to find out YouTube at some point. They're going to see old videos and hear things. Hopefully I won't pay for internet so they can't get on there. But it's a learning curve for me, but it's also helping me. It's helping me grow. I've been able to grow as a person and as a man.

So, yeah, I've grown a lot over the course of, gosh, 12 years, I guess. Give or take 12 years on TOUR. Yeah, I've changed dramatically. But that's a question you have to ask my wife, and Teddy, and my manager to get the insights. I'm not going to tell you how great I am, you know.

Q. Both Rory and Jordan said given next year and The Open being on the west coast it might make it difficult for a lot of the players, and we certainly understand that. But what you just said a few moments ago sounds like in your mind, again, it's way before that, but in your mind if there's anyway you can do it, that you expect to be back here next year?

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, I'm defending champ. You always show up as the defending champ. But, yeah, I've told the guys before Travelers took over -- I told the guys this is one of the best tournaments, and the reason why is because you play miserable golf in the U.S. Open and then you get to play a beautiful place like this where the fans come out and they love that you're here. They respect you. And then you can move the ball out of the rough.

If those guys are playing good, maybe I do want them to miss so I have another chance at winning next year. But, no, I'm definitely going to be here. I sign up first for this tournament every year. I'm looking forward to it. Again, I've never played good in the U.S. Open, so it will be probably a short week and then get over here early.

Q. Does it mean a lot, years ago instead of asking you to come and play, rather than just ask you to come and play, they asked you what can we do to make this tournament better, and it seems like that meant a lot to you. That was the first step before asking you to come.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, when you look at, just right here, a lot of people probably won't put the caddie area where they put it, right behind the first tee. That makes it so much -- it's a perfect location for us to come out of the clubhouse, get onto the range, get back, get on the first tee. Then you talk about the food, the atmosphere,

in the tent, and the stuff they provide for the caddies.

Just thinking about the caddies at first, right. If you hear a caddie or heard a caddie -- I've never heard a caddie say that, but if you hear a caddie that doesn't like a tournament, it's probably going to be in the mind of the pro that maybe I shouldn't go there, right? It's a team event. It's me and Teddy. They should provide for him as well.

When Travelers started doing that, and they started looking at the families, and the wives and the kids, yeah, it makes this tournament -- I think it won Tournament of the Year last year. So if it's up to me, it's going to win it again this year.

But everybody knows it. Sometimes they have to just give out trophies to other people. But this one's high on the list. You can't beat this one. If you're not a major, it's hard to beat this one.

THE MODERATOR: Bubba, we appreciate your time. Congratulations again, and we look forward to you coming back.

BUBBA WATSON: Thank you all very much.