

Travelers Championship

Sunday, June 23, 2019

Chez Reavie

Press Conference



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CHAMPIONSHIP



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Chez Reavie into the interview room. 2019 Travelers Championship winner. What a final round that was. Keegan made it very interesting. Just get some thoughts on what it means it step into the winner's circle for the first time since 2008.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, it means everything. I knew Keegan was going to come out firing today and ready to go. I've played a lot of golf with him. He's a fantastic player.

I just was fortunate enough to stay patient and make that big putt on 17 to give myself a little cushion on 18.

THE MODERATOR: You move into the 12th spot in the FedExCup standings. Really since your wrist surgery you've been making progression in the FedExCup. This really sets you up well for the rest of the season.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, making it to TOUR Championship would be a goal of everyone at the beginning of the year, and fortunately I'm a long way towards that goal. Hopefully I'll be inside that top 30 and be off to the TOUR Championship and hopefully make the Presidents Cup team.

THE MODERATOR: Well I was going to say, before questions you're 13th in the Presidents Cup standings. There is a certain captain of the team that's in 12th spot. Tell us a little bit about that.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, he's a fantastic player. He'll be a fantastic captain. It would be an honor to be on his team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. When you came here yesterday you said you feel nervous. At what point did the nerves start to take hold and how do you control them on the back nine?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, I think I was more nervous this morning when I was just sitting in the hotel room and the mind was wandering kind of going through the round, the different possibilities and stuff.

Once I got out here and started warming up on the range I was very comfortable. I was still nervous but not as nervous. Once we got playing, yeah, they kind

of went away and it was just time to play golf.

Q. Couple of things. Chez, how much did last week and having some momentum from that and some other recent starts play into this week?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, you know, going and being in the second to the last group at the U.S. Open last week, that definitely gave me a lot of confidence coming into this week, and in particular into today. I played really well on Sunday at the U.S. Open, and I tried to treat this the same as I did then.

Q. Just curious. You go back to 2008; you win as a rookie. Curious if you felt like next win was around the corner, and the difficulty of when it doesn't come for almost 11 years.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, you know I went through some injuries; had long years there in the middle. It was great because it gave me good perseverance and good perspective of what life is and what golf. I enjoy every minute of every week I'm out here now, and I don't think I would necessarily be that way if I didn't go through those tough times.

Q. Would you have expected to win sooner? I know there were a couple years with injuries.

CHEZ REAVIE: Not really. Golf is tough, right? There are a lot of great players on the PGA Tour. To win out here is an honor and something that shouldn't be overlooked or under appreciated.

Q. Coming back in the, wrist you've made that steady progression. What changed in your game? I know you've credited your swing coach. Talk about that and how he's guided you to this point.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, so I went through the wrist injury and I sat down with him and picked his brain on what he thought I should do. We pretty much tried to change my swing to shallow it out to get rid of the flip at the bottom just to mainly take pressure off my left wrist.

What that did is just helped build some consistency in my swimming. I learned how to match my path to club face, if that makes sense. So before I would come in the face would be a little open and I would slam it and get real steep at the bottom which would pretty much cause my left wrist to blow up.

We tried to square it earlier in the downswing and then

just rotate and keep it nice and shallow.

Q. Have you ever had any road golf matches like that before? Obviously you were clearly the No. 2 choice.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, Chez, we love you, but we love Keegan more.

Q. How difficult was it? There was a spot at 10 where you stepped off.

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, they were screaming at me. You know that happens. You get it every week. It's not just this week. People are just having fun. I don't think they necessarily understand how important it is to us. Keegan was great. He told them to stop it and back down when I was trying to putt. It wasn't malicious by any means.

It was Sunday and just another test I had to go through today.

Q. What have you come to love in all the appearances you've made here in Cromwell? Where have you found this course really start to fit your game, especially this time around?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, I've always loved the layout since the first time I came here. Just the way the holes are shaped you can shape shots and think around the greens. It's a great challenge and something I really enjoy.

The people, except for the one or two knuckleheads today, have been great. Everyone at Travelers, I mean, they just make it such a fun, special week for the players and their families. It's a company that I like to support, and I feel privileged to come here and play in their tournament.

Q. Was it hard to walk the back nine and keep the emotions in check knowing he was getting closer and closer? Was it easier than you thought?

CHEZ REAVIE: No, it was a challenge for sure. I just kept one shot at a time. I still played aggressive. Even though I had a six-shot lead I didn't shy away from flags. I hit the same shots I did all week. Unfortunately didn't make any putts until the end.

Q. How did you stay optimistic all the years, and was there anything special you did mentally to tell yourself you can perhaps still win again?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, you know, it was great. I had a great support system: my wife and my family and trainers and coaches. Everyone kind of rallied behind me and picked me up on my down days.

Once I got going and I started seeing that I can hit golf shots and I saw the progress I was making, I was

excited and ready to go.

Q. Biggest shot for you down the stretch?

CHEZ REAVIE: Biggest shot for me down the stretch? The putt on 17 without a doubt. Go from having a one-shot lead back up to four-shot lead. I would say if I could have got that putt on 16 it would've been huge.

Then when I stepped up to 17 tee, which that is the toughest visual shot for me on the golf course because I like to hit a draw. With that water off to the left it kind of doesn't suit me, so I just tried to aim at the bunkers and let the wind blow it into the fairway.

Knocked it on the green and I was very comfortable, and when I made the putt it kind of sealed the deal for me.

Q. How delicate was the second shot at 15?

CHEZ REAVIE: 15, yeah, that was tough. I was surprised it got up the hill there in the rough. I thought I was just going to be down in a little chipping area so I was actually planning on putting it until I got up on the green and saw it was in the rough.

The nice thing was I was on such a downhill slope that it would help propel the ball over that little false edge up onto the green. I would pretty smash it into that hill and it was going to kill it and just trickle onto the green.

Q. Do you feel a notable difference in your confidence level from winning this week versus coming close last week?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, absolutely. I think finally getting it done you feel like you can win. I've played well down the stretch. In Phoenix I birdied the last hole to force a playoff and lost. Finished second the week after that.

I've been close, but it's just not the same as sealing the deal and winning a golf tournament.

Q. Paul Casey said you were a really good teammate but that you weren't really as recruited as some of the hot shots.

CHEZ REAVIE: Uh-huh.

Q. Did that give you added incentive? You won the Pub Links. That might have got you going a little bit.

CHEZ REAVIE: I was ranked in the top 20 as a junior in the United States and got recruited a little bit. Not at Arizona State. They were ranked second in the country and didn't really have many in-state players, so I pretty much just hounded the coach until he had to take me.

That's where I wanted to go because of guys like Paul

Casey and Jeff Quinney and Matt Johns. They all played there. It was going to be a steppingstone for me. I was either going to get better and learn that I could do it for a living, or I was going to realize I wasn't good enough and I was going to have to get a job.

So that's kind of when I came into my own and figured out that I was good enough to come out here and play.

Q. Going back to those ten years, what was the lowest point for you?

CHEZ REAVIE: You know, when I was in a long-arm cast after my wrist surgery I went and met with the doctor and he said the surgery went great, but there was a 50/50 shot whether it was going to work or, and there was no guarantee that I wasn't going to go make one full swing when he allowed me to and it wasn't going to happen again.

So those were probably the darkest days. Just the unknown and sitting at home not being able to do anything and your mind wandering. Okay, if it didn't work, if I can't play golf, what am I going to do?

Q. What would you have done?

CHEZ REAVIE: Good question. Haven't figured that out yet.

Q. Was it a long period of time where you couldn't hit balls or whatever?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, so I was in a long-arm cast for over three months, and then I was in a cast to my elbow for another two months, and then I was in a cast just mid-wrist for another two months. He literally wouldn't even let me ride an exercise bike. Literally do nothing. Let this thing heal and we'll figure it out after that.

Over six months I didn't touch a club. Really didn't touch anything.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

CHEZ REAVIE: Start doing rehab. I think I did probably -- it was probably a month and a half, two months of physical therapy just to build the strength back in my arm and kind of mimic some easier exercises than swinging a golf club. Then I started chipping, putting, and I was allowed to hit up to like a pitching wedge and then up to an 8-iron.

It was a long process, but one I stayed diligent and did exactly what the doctors told me to do.

Q. Was it a year?

CHEZ REAVIE: Yeah, maybe not quite a year. I was playing golf in a year. I probably didn't hit full drivers for nine or ten months.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Okay, congratulations once again to our champion, Chez Reavie.

CHEZ REAVIE: Thank you.