

# KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

## Rocco Mediate

### Press Conference

JOHN DEVER: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome back to the 78th KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. And we are thrilled to be joined by Rocco Mediate.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Thrilled.

JOHN DEVER: Yeah, I'm thrilled. Our defending champion.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Don't they have a thrilled look.

JOHN DEVER: It's palpable in here. We enjoyed a great media day back with you in March.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah, that was fun.

JOHN DEVER: A little early to play golf at that point.

ROCCO MEDIATE: It wasn't bad.

JOHN DEVER: But it didn't work out. But you've since been back. So I would be curious to hear your impressions of the championship course.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Well I came a couple months ago? I don't know when I came. A couple weeks later. Monday, Tuesday. We had some pretty heavy wind those two days, which I liked. But the golf course is perfect Major Championship course. They could have the young kids PGA here in a second if they wanted to because they got the length. But it's great. Right in front of, no craziness, just good. Mr. Trump doesn't make, do anything bad, though, so it's really solid, really classy that -- Kevin and his staff has been fantastic. They run the whole show here and it's good. All his courses are like this, high end, high quality and good golf, as far as I've seen.

JOHN DEVER: What's it like the difference week-to-week from coming in as just a member of the field and coming in as the defending champion; is that different?

ROCCO MEDIATE: There's a lot to do, which is fine. It's a great problem to have. If you could call it a problem. Just we did the pro-am draw, then we did the Champions Dinner last night and it was fantastic. I've never done anything like that, so I love it. I love that



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stuff anyway. But, no, there's nothing you can really expect. It's a different venue. Because I won last year means nothing about this year. But at least I know I could do it in a big time, because I did it once. So if I get myself in contention somehow, who knows. That's the hard part. I think we all love to be in contention, it's just hard to get in contention all the time. The greatest players in the world get there all the time. Bernhard's there all the time. Tiger was there pretty much all, every single time he played. Look at the best players they get there, that's remarkable to me. Because I've gotten there some of the time and not a lot of the time. But it's always fun when you do get there. It's just a blast because then you get to see what you have. There's nowhere to hide. I always said that, there's nowhere to hide when you're in the last group or second to last group at pretty much any tournament, but especially these, the especially the big ones, especially the Majors, you can't go anywhere.

JOHN DEVER: That's another good problem to have.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah, it's great to see what you have. Everyone says, are you going to repeat this week? I say, how the heck do I know. I have no idea what's going to happen this week. That's the beauty of our sport.

JOHN DEVER: Questions?

**Q. You wear the Trump name on your shirt. How long ago did you start that and --**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Seven eight years, I guess.

**Q. So has the reaction to that from galleries changed at all in the last 16 months or so?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: This year it's been very, very positive. Better be. I've had issues a couple times. My answer to this is, listen, a few other choice words, now I'll say, President Trump is my friend. He has been my friend since 2008. This isn't a bandwagon jump on the thing because he's President stuff. That's just not it. He's just been a very nice, extremely nice person with a lot of good advice he's given me over the years about certain things. But he's just my friend. I don't bother him I don't call him, I don't go, can I go to the White House, I don't do any of that stuff. If he wants to see me, I'll, trust me, I'll know. So I don't bother him. He's got enough stuff to do without talking to me.

**Q. What were the issues that couple times you said? You said you had a couple issues with fans.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Oh, just like, what are you wearing that for? And I said, well, you guys have two choices here, you have two choices. One, you can come across the ropes and if you don't come across the ropes the next choice you're going to get, which isn't really going to be a choice, is you're out of here. And I've had them tossed a few times. Because you don't need, this is, we're playing a golf tournament this week and you're talking about the President of the United States. And one thing about, one thing Mr. Palmer taught me, too, he goes, look, you don't have to like the President, but you have to respect the office. We elected him. So you have to, we all didn't like certain Presidents, right, we don't know what we're talking about, first of all, because if you put us in that job, we have no chance. But you have to respect the office and that's all I expect people to do when they come and talk to me. Doesn't happen very often. Just a few times, just a couple little times, and I get mad because I'm like, he's my friend, I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know all the issues he deals with. I have no idea. I'm not even going to pretend to, but getting to meet him and the family and Eric and Donald, they're a blast, they're wonderful kids. And I just enjoy the relationship. But like I said, I don't see him very often, I saw him more before President, before he was the President. I saw him in February a little bit at Mar-a-Lago, just said hello, but it's quick, he can't do the things he used to do because he's the President. And it's pretty good to see the change how he's handling it and what he's doing, so it's fun to watch.

**Q. You're one of my favorite golfers.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Thank you. You're just so cute.

**Q. Thank you. My question was, I notice that not a lot of schools have golf programs especially for girls. As a matter of fact, I created a web site called Kids On The Greens to help get more kids into golf.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Nice.

**Q. My question was, do you have any suggestions about how kids like me could get more kids interested in golf? And I have some follow ups too.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: I don't know why a lot of schools, now that I remember what you're saying a lot of schools have dumped certain programs. No idea why. Women's golf is getting big again. Look at the girls out there now. It's pretty exciting, right? I pay attention to my whole sport, not just men, but I look at what the girls are doing, have a bunch of good friends that still play out there over the years. But I can't answer the question on why. It makes no sense. Right? It's like

stupid that they're doing that. Because LPGA golf is on the rise again. We all have our moments in our sport, but it's going back up. You have some pretty good stars out there right now.

**Q. I know you have a daughter Francesca Rose.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yes.

**Q. Does that change how much you've been involved in getting more girls especially interested in golf?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Not yet, because she's only two. But she's like putting a little bit, I'll put her hands on the club, she hits it with one, she doesn't know. But I'm going to assume that she's going to want to play. I have three older boys that -- Rocco doesn't play at all, the other two kind of mess around. They didn't want to go, they didn't want to get into the game like I did. Which is fine, because it's not an easy life, you're traveling all the time it's kind of hard sometimes. But I'll definitely get involved. But I don't understand why the women's golf stuff is cut out. It doesn't, it doesn't make sense. I don't know how to help you on that one. But if I can, I would love to. Because they need to be -- like I said it's growing. The game is growing. So like I said a lot of stars out there on the LPGA now. Big ones. And they play great. If I can help let me know I would love -- I don't know how I could help but I'll try.

**Q. Since you were talking about President Trump as your friend, I was curious, and you've opened up this line of conversation, I think, with your impassioned defense of him, which I understand totally.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Right.

**Q. Last year when he was campaigning, as you well know, there were several things, and I'm curious, as a friend, how you felt about them. Of course the Access Hollywood tape where he bragged about sexually assaulting women --**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Right.

**Q. -- the mocking of a disabled person, and the week-long battle with the Gold Star family among other things. What did you think of those?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: I, I don't know -- do I need to talk about this stuff at all, because it's kind of like not my --

JOHN DEVER: It's your choice.

ROCCO MEDIATE: -- it's not my forte really.

**Q. But you were just talking about him.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: I was talking about him, right, but all of the stuff that happened, we, I basically came here to talk about the tournament and what's going on and

with other questions. It's, I certainly will not get into what people said and people did. It's just not going to happen. I won't get myself.

**Q. Maybe I'll phrase it another way. Did any of, as your friend, I mean, obviously, we all have friends who do things we like or don't like.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Right.

**Q. Are you a hundred percent on board or did some of that trouble you?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: I really never even thought about it to tell you the truth.

**Q. Really?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Because I don't know what's true and what's not true. I do know that when you talk to your, like, for instance, when you talk to your friends or you talk to people about certain things, you say things that no one's supposed to be seeing and I look at it that way. Whether it's right or wrong, I look at it that way. I've said a lot things to my friends that I wouldn't want anybody to hear me say because it's our friends, we're screwing around, so that's how I look at it. I don't think there was anything meant by it, but.

**Q. We had a chance to talk to John Daly earlier and obviously the win two weeks ago was an exhilarating moment for him, but he still draws incredible galleries and why do you think that is? What's kind of the allure of John Daly to fans?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Just look at him. Tell me the allure there. There's allure. Johnny's really good guy. I've known him for hundred years. And he's become a very good friend now that he came become out here again, because we were gone for awhile. But he just brings people out. He just sends it. He just doesn't care. He does, you know, what I mean he does care, obviously. But he'll talk to, you he'll do things he's not supposed to do out there, just because he wants to. He doesn't have to answer to anybody, he just goes and plays. And him getting the win at Houston was fantastic. That golf course doesn't really, if you would say where he's going to win, I certainly wouldn't say Houston because it's small. But he's probably one of the longest straightest drivers ever in our sport. There's been a few good ones, too, but I think he's one of the best every ever, but, no, only thing he ever had to do was start making putts. We all can say that. When you're not putting goods it's hard to shoot good scores. If you're putting decent it's hard to shoot good scores. But I wasn't surprised. I was just surprised it took him that long. When he's hitting it 80 yards past you, I'm going, oh, my God, I wish I could be up there like once. But it's just the way, he's just something else. Now that he's found his stride he could do some crazy stuff. I mean he's, he played behind me last week on Sunday

and I had to hurry up and get out of the way because and I stood on one hole on No. 6 we played the back nine last, so, yeah 6. And I drove just short of the bunker on left anyway and I'm walking up and said to Martin, we got to see where John hits it. And I'm waiting right there in the fairway but I'm about 30 yards in front of where I was. And as soon as he hit I started running that way because it was right at me and it landed about 10 yards short of where I stood about 40 past where I was in the air. Huge advantage. And he's starting to take advantage of it like he did when he played good. Hilarious.

**Q. When you were opening you were talking about Langer and Tiger. And I was talking to Mark O'Meara on the range today and he was talking about Langer and in fact saying basically that what he's doing out here now is similar to what Tiger was doing back in the time and I would be wondered you've been in both situations, you've been with Tiger in 2008, you've been and then out here now. Can you compare and contrast the two and their careers and those certain time frames and what you think.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Well comparing anybody to Tiger isn't really going to work. Comparing the record, with what Bernhard's done, is the same type of thing that Tiger was doing. He's in there pretty much every week. It's hard to say -- if we knew why that happened we might do it ourselves sometimes. But he just does it all. He works as hard as anybody or harder. And he just, it's hard to explain why those -- he doesn't hit it like four miles. He hits it plenty far enough what is he 60 now? Almost 60 now? Hits it plenty far enough. Is always in good shape. He's always kept himself very, very fit. It matters out here now, especially as we get older. But he just does it all, he's not afraid of anything. He just does everything. He pitches it well, he does everything well. Then you see he wins so many times. Hale was the same way back then and just won a million golf tournaments out here. And you just go, what the heck? Every single week you go, hey, there he is again. And if he's not there one day, he'll shoot some ridiculously low score to get back where he should have been on the first day he figures. So I don't know how to explain it. They're just better. If that's any, if that makes any sense whatsoever. Like Tiger was way better than anybody in his day. Way better. Wasn't even close. Bernhard's, there's so many good players out here now, if you think about it, Monty, Jimenez and all the -- Jose came, just came out. Everybody's starting to get their stride. David Toms will make noise shortly. Jerry Kelly is out. All these guys were really good and they're going to continue to be good. But the ones that win the most have something. It's that something thing. And they just keep winning and winning and winning, no matter what level it is.

Bernhard won how many tournaments overseas? I don't know but it was a whole bunch. I remember my first event five years ago at Allianz, that's back when they used to announce like Bernhard Langer from this somewhere in Germany, he won this and this and this and this many tournaments. It took an hour, we were always late off the tee. They stopped doing that because sometimes you can't -- and it was 86 tournaments then that he won worldwide. I remember that 86 events in 2013. So he's added a lot. So now it's like a hundred. That's ridiculous. I don't care if you're playing against the junior golfers every week it's ridiculous wins, number of wins. But only the great ones do that. Most of us win a few times and we're pretty pleased about it. But these guys win multiple multiple multiple times.

**Q. Sorry, have to go back to President Trump for a minute.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah.

**Q. You mentioned that people have gotten on your nerves by yelling things at you.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: A couple times.

**Q. But there are some protests planned for this weekend along the river, do you expect that would bother you? Throw you off?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, no, they will have a -- never throws me off. I just get rid of it. But no, that will be all taken care of.

**Q. Are you surprised that you would have to deal with that at all coming to this event?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, people protest things. That's their right to do whatever they want. It's just, it won't get involved with us, it will be kept away, believe me. It will be quite kept away. No, that stuff doesn't, it doesn't really affect the way you do anything unless you let it.

**Q. Getting back to John. Is this as calm and even keeled as you've seen him over the years?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah.

**Q. And will that, I mean, will that help his game or does he sort of have to sort of be in different places to sort of --**

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, I figure it will definitely help his game for sure. I definitely think it will help his game. He has the game. He hits it so good and so solid all the time it's just a matter of around the greens and putting and he's very good at all of that, obviously. Now he's I think he's finding his, he's found his way. Like I said Houston was great for us and him. We need him to play good out here. He draws. Everybody still loves him. He just he's just one of us, really. Just hits it really far and that's, he just John.

**Q. In terms of his length, will it be a bigger advantage for him out here --**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Oh, yeah.

**Q. -- than it was on the Regular Tour?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Well I think it was just the same on the Regular Tour. Back when he was in his day, he was 30, 40 yards longer than everybody. He was like D.J. is now. Those guys out there, or Jason Day or Fowler hits it four miles for a little kid. It's just still an advantage. Out here it's a big advantage. I'm standing back with a 4-iron and he's got 8-iron, I got issues. It's hard to beat guys no matter how good I hit my 4- or 5-iron of the. It doesn't matter how good. So, that's the key and how can you compete with them when he's playing good out here especially if he hits a lot of fairways out here he's going to be tough to handle this week. If he keeps his head on with the putting and stuff, because the greens are the greens aren't easy here, but they're not dumb either. There's a couple good ones. Our first hole has got a really good green on it. But the rest of them are okay. But length is huge advantage if you know where it's going and like I said one of the longest straightest drivers ever is J.D. Stats show it.

**Q. You're in defense of your first Major Championship. How much have you enjoyed the run up a you couple weeks ago you were up at the Mall with all the fans --**

ROCCO MEDIATE: Oh, that was so much fun.

**Q. -- first Champions Dinner last night.**

ROCCO MEDIATE: It was great. It was great. Just to be involved with some of these guys and just to talk to them about it or have them all there last night we took a picture with I think there was 12 of us last night. Right? 11 of us last night. And it was just fun to do that. I get that picture forever it will be cool. All my Watson, Irwin, you know, all of them, all the guys are there. I could name them all. I talked about them a little bit at the beginning about everybody's, one little thing about everybody. And that was fun, because I followed the guys that I play out here my whole life. I played with them, I didn't get to, I played with Tom Watson a bunch and Hale a bunch early in the late '80s, early '90s -- actually not Tom that much, but Hale some and Jay a lot over the years and out here a lot. So, but I paid attention to what these guys did because they were all the best that ever played. Watson was my idol in high school and college. Even coming from home where Mr. Palmer is, I didn't really play golf, I knew him, I got to meet him when I was 19, then he became the guy, but I still love the way Watson played. I said I patterned my speed after him I just never got the other parts like he did.

(Laughter.)

So, but I remember I watched everything he did. And I knew everything he did and the shots and I've talked to him a few times and he kept looking at me I asked him one time I said you won L.A. at Riviera he goes, yeah I think I won that a couple times. And I'm like, really? Just a couple times? So it's just funny. But being hanging around these guys is an honor and you get to learn stuff from them. Because they will talk about it. And I always like to know why, how come you do that better than anybody else and they might give you one little clue that makes you better. They were the best or they are the best but they were the best in their day, they were definitely the best.

**Q. I know you played baseball when you were younger. How did you balance golf practice with baseball practice and any other activities?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: I actually quit playing baseball when I was 15 and started playing golf. So I didn't have to balance. I just dumped it and went and played golf. Because all my buddies quit baseball and started playing golf, so I went with them. Who knew.

**Q. So you didn't start playing golf until?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: 15, 15, give or take and I didn't really like it when I was a kid. My dad would take me up the street where he played and it was like a half a mile from the house or something and he would go, why don't you caddie for me. And I would caddie for three holes and go, I'm done here, and I would walk home. So I never really liked it when I was playing baseball.

**Q. So would you say you got serious about golf at the age of 15?**

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, I would say 17 or 18 I started to really get into it. But I always liked to hit balls. I wish I would have putted more back when I was a kid. But I always liked to practice and then -- that was a long time ago. But I only tried TOUR school back in '85 so I didn't have to go back 10 years later and go, I wonder if I was good enough to make it. And, truthfully, I really wasn't good enough, but I did, the first time through, and somehow stayed for 33 years or so give or take.

(Laughter.)

Who knew. But, no I didn't start until late. I think it was it probably helped because I never got tired of it I'm still not really tired of it. Travel sometimes, but -- leaving the kids, never liked that. But I don't know how to do anything else so I'll just keep doing this for awhile.

JOHN DEVER: Good idea. Defending champion