

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 20, 2018



DAVID TOMS

CHRIS RICHARDS: Welcome, David, to the Sanford International presented by Cambria. You played the golf course on Monday and Tuesday. What were your initial impressions about the golf course?

DAVID TOMS: Initial impressions were that it was nice and firm and looked forward to a fun week, and we're not going to get those conditions anymore.

But I was surprised how much elevation change that there was on the golf course. I felt like flying in everything looked kind of flat farmland and I get here and there are hills everywhere and some uphill shots, downhill shots. The golf course was in great shape before the weather, so we'll see how much it dries out. Should be a fun golf course to play. There are plenty of birdie holes, but some holes that will be pretty difficult now playing longer. We'll see how we deal with the elements being it's going to get pretty chilly it looks like and windy, so obviously pars will be a good score on most holes.

CHRIS RICHARDS: I know yesterday you took part in another South Dakota activity, pheasant hunting. Can you tell us about your experience there?

DAVID TOMS: Yeah, A1 Al's. We had a great time pheasant hunting. I actually went Tuesday and Wednesday, so had a fun time. The folks over there were very hospitable and were happy to have us there. Went with some other players so we had just some good times, some good laughs.

I talked to some of the other guys, we might stay out there at the lodge for a few days next year. Just a beautiful spot and certainly a tradition around here. I knew when I showed up here at Minnehaha and I walked in the pro shop and there was a bunch of hunting gear, more hunting gear than there was golf shirts, so I thought it was my kind of place.

Q. Could you explain a little bit the importance or the motivating factor that the Schwab Cup plays this time of year for you guys?

DAVID TOMS: Well, I think this late in the year for the guys that have a chance, a really good chance at it, certainly you think about that and you want to play great every week. But, you know, when you only have 25, 26 tournaments and you play the majority of them, I think most guys, you know, they're ready to play their best golf. Most guys are rested, and every time that we feel like we're playing too much golf, we have a week off. I think most events guys are pretty focused from the beginning of the year until the end. And then with the Schwab Cup coming to a head, I think you start -- if you're one of those guys that has a chance, you start to focus on it a little bit.

Q. What are the attributes that are going to be important this week for the guy who ends up winning it?

DAVID TOMS: Well, I mean, obviously making the putts is always key it seems like, but the rough's up here a little bit. You've got a lot of tree-lined holes, so you're going to have to be accurate. And then who deals with the conditions the best, with the breezy, cool conditions tomorrow and obviously the course being wet. Hopefully that will improve every day by Sunday afternoon, but certainly all these three-round events are sprints so you have to get off to a good start the first day and hopefully I can do that.

Q. What's it like for you guys when you're playing a place for the first time, first type of tournament with, you haven't been here at all, you haven't been to Sioux Falls, you haven't been to this course, you're not familiar with this course.

DAVID TOMS: Well, I mean, I think a guy like me that's only in his second year, you don't feel like you're behind some of the other guys that have been playing an event five or six times. So, a course like this -- at least last week we had been there many times before. It might have been 15 years ago or 10 years ago, but you had played the golf course and you knew what to expect.

Here, we don't really know what to expect for scoring. So you might look at the leaderboard a little bit the first day to see how things are going and where you might want to be more aggressive if scores start going low. But at the same time, we all start from scratch and we don't know what to expect. It's always an interesting thing to see how a golf course will play and see how certain holes will play and if you can attack the course or not.

Q. So who's going to win it?

DAVID TOMS: I guess whoever has the best score. I mean, obviously you've got certain guys that have played well all year and have a lot of confidence that have won golf tournaments recently, so those are the guys that you would expect to be up there because they're playing with a high level of confidence.

But on a golf course that we've never played before, it might suit a player or two that hasn't played that great this year so far that might be looking forward to playing here. We'll see, but obviously it will be competitive, it is every week. And it's hard to handicap the field; there's so many great champions out here, you don't know how things will go.

CHRIS RICHARDS: This is your second year on PGA TOUR Champions. You've talked about it being a sprint. How long did it take you to make that adjustment, and also, what's it like playing out here with guys that you've played with for two, three decades?

DAVID TOMS: Sure, that's a great question. I think on the PGA TOUR the first couple of days, especially the first day, you just don't want to shoot yourself out of it and not even be

around for the weekend, whereas here for the Champions Tour you can play very aggressive. It's okay if you get yourself in trouble and you knock yourself out of it the first day, you can always go play great the next week.

So I think guys just really tend to be aggressive on some holes where you would never do that on the PGA TOUR. You feel like you really have to get going. So that's been fun and it's been an adjustment for me, but I'm starting to feel a little more comfortable with that.

And then as far as playing with guys that I played against for a long time, it's just nice to reunite with them, to be around them, guys that you might have looked up to that came before you on the PGA TOUR that helped you along the way with advice or where to stay, what to do, places to eat, things when I was very much starting my career. So it's just good to reconnect with those guys once again.

CHRIS RICHARDS: And then in some cases you're able to go pheasant hunting with them?

DAVID TOMS: Oh, yeah. I mean, just do fun things that help pass the time. A lot of times when you don't start an event until Friday the first round and you come from another event and you get here on Sunday, I mean, the weeks can get long. So just having a nice thing to kind of get away and maybe distract from golf a little bit just really makes you look forward to the week starting on Friday.

Q. Can you talk about the relaxed atmosphere that most of the players have talked to me about?

DAVID TOMS: Sure.

Q. Just a different feel?

DAVID TOMS: Well, it is different. A lot of us travel by ourselves. A lot of the caddies all stay together, some of the players stay together. It's completely different than the PGA TOUR where you might have your group or your posse, so to speak, where you have all your coaches and your shrinks and your dieticians and your life coaches and all that. You know, I've had a life coach for 26 years, it's called a wife.

It's just a different atmosphere really, it's more laid back. But once you start the tournament, it's very competitive, very similar to playing the PGA TOUR for 25 years. You want to do well, you want to perform. If you put in the time, you want to see what that means and how it translates into how you play. So certainly the weeks are more laid back, but once you get inside the ropes and the competition starts, it's very competitive.

Q. Talk about the Ryder Cup, it being next week. We were upstairs listening to Monty and Corey.

DAVID TOMS: Yeah.

Q. This really looks like it might be one of the strongest groups of teams we've ever seen in the Ryder Cup.

DAVID TOMS: Yeah, it will be competitive, it will be a lot of fun. I'll enjoy watching it on television. I actually played that golf course right before the Senior British this year. My son and I went and played it with a couple friends. It's tight, like they were talking about upstairs. The rough will be up, there's water hazards everywhere, a lot of risk-reward.

I think it's great for match play and great for the Ryder Cup. I think it will be a fun venue for everybody to play. You'll see a lot of aggressiveness and then you'll see times where one player will try to get the ball in play and the other guy can go for it, much more so than any other golf course I've seen in a Ryder Cup for a while. If the weather holds and it's good, I think you'll see a lot of fireworks over there.

Q. I don't know if they figured out what the odds were upstairs.

DAVID TOMS: I don't know either, but I think you throw all that out the window when you have a Ryder Cup. It's about who plays the best, who makes the key putts, who gets momentum from the very beginning. They're all great players, both teams, and they play against each other a lot and they know each other, so I think it will be a great competition.

Q. Is that camaraderie that the players all seem to have, I don't know how to ask this question, does that kind of take away a little bit from the competitive fire that the Ryder Cup always used to have when Monty was playing?

DAVID TOMS: I don't think so. I think with the focus on it so much from the media side now and what goes into it, it's a two-year process for the captains and they pour their heart and soul into it, they're going to want to win. Regardless if these guys see each other on a weekly basis, they're still going to want to win and I think you'll see -- you'll see Patrick Reed doing his thing and then the European team coming right back at them and all the guys. So knowing the personalities of some of the American players now, they have a lot of fire, I think it will be a great competition.

Q. What's it mean for the game to have Tiger back, not just relevant but playing?

DAVID TOMS: Sure. Well, I think the focus on it, the attention that it gets, the fan support and the people that will pay attention to the Ryder Cup and the PGA TOUR and golf in general now that he's back that otherwise might be tuning into soccer or some other sport, I think it's great for the game and it trickles down to all the players across the world, so it's great to have him back.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you very much, good luck this week.

DAVID TOMS: Thanks.