

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
October 10, 2019



DAVIS LOVE III

Q. What brings you to the SAS this year?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, the schedule worked finally and I was out all summer, couldn't play in the Playoffs or even before the Playoffs, I couldn't play on the regular tour. The goal was to play regular tour all year long and then do the same next year and try to break Mark Brooks' record of most PGA TOUR events. That got shot down in May with another surgery, so who knows if that's still an achievable goal.

So I wanted to play and I've heard great things about this course and this tournament and the hospitality, so nice to be back.

Q. How far behind Mark Brooks are you?

DAVIS LOVE III: Roughly 40.

Q. That should be achievable.

DAVIS LOVE III: He said he would caddie for me in the record breaking one. And I saw -- I was in Houston earlier this week and I saw him, he's caddying for J.J. Henry, and he better get ready.

Q. Has that been on the radar for a long time or did you just sort of notice it?

DAVIS LOVE III: Our friend, Helen Ross, clued me in a little bit and I was doing some Ryder Cup interview in Vegas. I said, "This is my 700th event," and she said, "You've got nine British Opens," or something that didn't count. "You've already passed 700." Like Jay Haas has more than what it says, or Mark Brooks because the British Open didn't count. I don't know where it was earlier, in the 600s. She clued me in on it somehow.

So I've kind of been watching it. It's kind of -- anything you can pick on Mark Brooks is picking on him, so I jumped on that. But Jay, they were talking about Jay playing at Greensboro to get to 800 a while back. It would be fun to try to break that. That's a lot more at 55, that's a lot more tournaments.

What I need to do is figure out how to play good in one of these tournaments right now. I was at Houston, like I said, for a couple days and I'm thinking, I don't need this big old golf course in the fall when it's wet. And I played L.A. and played with Furyk four days in a row in the rain and cold in L.A. and I go, "What are we doing?" We were battling. And I come out and I get paired with Fred Couples. I need to figure out how to win out here.

Q. Do you think you might come full time?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, it's coming.

Q. Pretty soon?

DAVIS LOVE III: Pretty soon. It's hard. I just caddied for my son at Q-School last week and saw those kids. You know, I'm not on the Presidents Cup captain team, but I'm still talking to them about what's going on. I like -- you know, spent a couple days in Houston and I just love being around those guys and trying to figure out, you know, who he's going to play with who on the teams, how it's all going to work. Hopefully, we'll help Stricker next year some as well.

I like being out there a little bit, but I know that there's going to be courses that I can play and courses that I can't out there. Like I said, the whole goal for this -- start of this season, which obviously was more than a year ago, was to make it all the way through the regular tour one more time and see if I can make the 125. And I got off to a good start, I had a couple good fall events and played good in Hawaii, felt like I was making some progress. I actually had some FedEx points at one time.

I would love to get in THE PLAYERS one more time. The Masters is great and I'm in the PGA and you can always go to the U.S. Open qualifying, but you have to be in the 125 to get in THE PLAYERS and that was kind of the goal.

But I was trying these six events that I played. This is my sixth, whatever, in the last couple months, was to try to get in the Playoffs. It hasn't worked out well, but you never know, maybe this week.

Q. So is that on your mind this week knowing that this is a chance for you to continue your season?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. Well, Jimmy Gaberson (sp?) just told me Top-10 gets you in the next round, but I probably need more than a Top-10 to get into the next round. So who knows. I do have a bag for the second stage of Q-School, so I'm at least set for a job in the first week in November. That's the next big thing after this.

Q. You've been (inaudible) goals on the PGA TOUR, but when (inaudible) big difference on the Champions Tour?

DAVIS LOVE III: Putting. I said it to all these guys for years. I felt like if I putted well enough to win on the Champions Tour, I could win on the regular tour, and I did at 51. I still feel that way on certain courses because these guys putt so good. I come out here with a three-day race and I feel like I put too much pressure on myself to get going. I've gotten off to a couple decent starts, but generally I feel like I'm always behind. It's almost like, you

know, a points race and I feel like I'm behind all the time and I just can't relax and play. Hopefully, Fred will relax me.

Actually, my only decent round this year was with Fred at Dick's. I'm just not freeing it up and playing. I don't know the courses that well, it's kind of my first lap around. I've had a lot going on outside of trying to play and a lot going on this week. In fact, today's my practice round.

So I'm putting myself a little bit behind the eight ball not knowing the courses. So I think next year and -- you know, I played Hualalai and I played a couple places, but I think as I go forward I'll get more comfortable with it. But it's the same thing as on the regular tour and the Ryder Cup, I'm trying too hard, I'm just getting in my own way a little bit. Expectations.

Q. Did you surprise yourself when you won the one at 51 or did you feel that you were playing well?

DAVIS LOVE III: No, I was playing well enough. It's a lot like what Tiger went through for so long, I just couldn't get any momentum because I kept getting hurt or having a surgery. I figured out in another interview that I've missed well over two years just rehabbing in the last six or eight years.

So I have not -- like I said about Tiger, if he plays a full season, he'll win. I feel like if I could play a full season and get some momentum, I could get back on my game. And I was getting there. Like I said, this past PGA TOUR season I felt I was getting there. I played well in Hawaii. I went to Singapore after that, I hit the ball really well in Singapore and played good, and I felt like, all right, I'm on my way.

Then I don't know what happened, brought on another foot problem and I've had hip -- a couple hip surgeries, a couple foot surgeries, a neck fusion. I've had a lot of stuff going on since I guess 2010, you know. It's been kind of a start-and-stop battle. I think if I could get some momentum, I would love to be healthy and play Hilton Head, you know, and Greensboro, some of the places that I've done well at in the past.

Q. Do you expect to see more Tour players play beyond 50, which could affect this tour at the same time?

DAVIS LOVE III: I don't think so. You know, Fred and I said that at 28, 29, 30 hanging out with Raymond Floyd, "I will never play the Champions Tour." Oh, yeah? You will. And he was right.

I just didn't think we would last that long. I remember when Jay Haas told me he had played for 21 years on the Tour, I was like, holy cow, how can you play that long, and he's still playing. And I played, whatever, over 30 years.

But I think when you look at Tiger, for example. These guys hit it so hard, they work so

hard, I just don't know if their bodies are going to hold up as long. It just gets harder and harder and harder to be a top player. I see more and more guys, the injuries or the energy running down. The Tour's tough now. You see that -- my buddy Adam Wainwright, they're calling him old. What is he, 36 years old? We're going to get to that point where 40 is a long way to go. And these kids are starting -- look at Rory McIlroy, he's been playing forever. Tiger started at 20. A lot of these guys are starting young.

This tour -- we just had a player meeting. This tour continues to grow and continues to be a great opportunity. So I think it will be a goal for a lot of guys. Guys just don't want to give up playing. Physically, if they can do it, they're going to play.

Q. You've seen different generations and you talk about 36 and all that, but this new group, Hovland, Wolff and those guys, it seems like even younger even better now. Do you see that and what is it?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's the -- wherever you want to start. Greg Norman made golf cool, and Fred Couples and then obviously John Daly, and then Tiger took it to the next level.

I remember when golf was not on Sports Center. It just wasn't on there. Now it's Tiger Woods and Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka and Justin Thomas. All these guys are superstars. In the world of sports, everybody knows who they are. And the game, it's just cool to be a golfer.

I went in the gym yesterday. Randy Myers had 10 junior golfers running up and down working out. That was unheard of when I was a kid. I never saw 10 juniors at Sea Island. It was me and my brother and maybe hotel guests. Now, they're literally everywhere.

Huge opportunity to play. Look at, I was going through Q-School with my son, how many sites there are and how many people are trying to make it to the Korn Ferry Tour to make it to the PGA TOUR. It's just, it's a big professional sport now. And obviously the money. The money's unbelievable.

Q. Do you think we'll see Phil out here regularly?

DAVIS LOVE III: Phil likes to play, he likes to compete. I don't know. He said no to a lot of things and then changed his mind, so I would -- I bet he would be like me, at 30 or 40 he would say no and then when it comes time.

It's fun to be out here. My wife literally said it in the last couple days, she said, "I'll go to a Champions Tour event, I don't want to go to a regular Tour event." She doesn't know anybody. I know everybody out here so it's fun. I've had a great time the last six weeks hanging out with all my friends.

I think Phil -- you don't want to give that up. Even if it's 10 times a year, you want to come see your buddies and play the golf courses you like. So yeah, I think if you're healthy, I think

that's the big thing is if a guy's healthy, he's going to play. Obviously there's a lot of other reasons, retirement plan and keeping your brand out there, there's so many things that this platform gives us to keep playing.

Q. You mentioned about the Presidents Cup. I know you're only peripherally involved, but what do you think the chances are that Tiger will end up playing?

DAVIS LOVE III: I would see that there's five or six for the captain to pick from and he's one of them, so I think they're good.

He and I have talked a lot about who's going to play where. I think that's his thing is who's going to be ready to play. And if I'm looking at it, I'll say, well, how many are you going to play, how many is Rickie going to play, how many whoever else is on the list, Patrick Reed, I guess. How many is Patrick going to play. I want guys who are going to be ready and ready to play.

I would say his chances are as good as Rickie's or Patrick's or anybody's on that. I'm sure his list is -- well, obviously he's got four and he's five or maybe he's six. I think it's pretty good.

If Michael Jordan can run up and down the court and pass the ball, I think I would want him on the team. If he says he's healthy, I would probably want Michael Jordan on the team, so I think that's probably what the players would vote for.

And what we as a group have been doing is we've been taking a lot of player input and trying to make pairings. So if Tiger Woods is going to pick Tiger Woods and he has a partner for Tiger Woods, then I bet he'll pick Tiger Woods. If he doesn't have a good partner, you know, like say he has an alternate shot guy that's perfect, then -- but if Rickie has -- you know what I mean? If Rickie matches up with this guy and he could play three matches and Tiger can only play one with that guy because he's the captain, I think that would factor into it, too.

My conversations with him have been very strange. It's like, wait a minute, we're talking about you and you have to make the decision. This is too weird.

And we knew it was coming. We asked him to be the captain, to do it, you know, knowing that this would probably -- this would probably happen.

Q. And obviously the tournament would love to have him playing for promotional reasons?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. If he doesn't get hurt, he probably makes the team. If his knee wasn't bothering him, he probably would have made the team. That's the other way. We looked at several guys like that over the years. Like we projected if he played a full schedule, here's how many points he would have made, he would have been in there. So

what was your question?

Q. Does that fulfill any promotional pressure to play?

DAVIS LOVE III: No, no. He wants to play. He wants the ball. He definitely wants to play. And, you know, what he told me all the way back before '16 is, I want to be assistant captain and I want to play. That's his attitude. Phil's like, I don't want to be assistant captain because I am going to play. I'll make the team, don't worry about it.

Now, I think Tiger's the same way, he wishes he had made it, but he wants to play. I would say it would be hard for me to do both. Tiger, I think it would be easy. He's a different personality. He's not going to let one thing affect another thing, he can focus on what he needs to get done. And I've watched him help us several times; he's super prepared, too. What I know from talking to him and the Tour, he is on it.

And I think all of us have done better since '14 getting together. It shows that he's still talking to captains that aren't going. He's keeping the system going.

Q. You've been a part of policy board and stuff. Now with the PLAYERS Championship being able to show every shot of every player, did you ever imagine it could get to that and what does it say about this tour that that seems to be the way it's going?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's amazing. I remember wondering what the front nine of Augusta looked like and now they show every hole. It is incredible. And you talk about being able to go all the way to betting on individual shots because they're all going to be on TV, it's unbelievable, the technology. You know, from stats, TrackMan is just -- the technology is unbelievable. I get mad at my app if I can't find the score, like I know he's hit the shot, why didn't it pop up? Used to be we had to wait, get a phone call to find out what happened on No. 7. Now when Dru gets done, I go, what happened on No. 7? Shot unknown?

Q. That's never good.

DAVIS LOVE III: He asked me the same thing a lot, how did you triple bogey that hole? Missed the putt for double.

Q. Davis, you talked about your role with Steve Stricker next year in the Ryder Cup. What do you see that being at this point?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's been fun to watch the last, whatever, the year to go festivities. He's great. He was unbelievable at Presidents Cup. He and I always compete for who's going to get teary eyed first, but he did a great job.

You know, the players just absolutely love him, look up to him, love having him around. Nicki, who generally doesn't like to go to functions, just to be -- she likes to caddie, you

know, and take care of her family. She was incredible. She had everything under control and was super calm and organized.

So I think they're a great team. Plus, up there obviously he's going to be the local favorite and I think it's all lined up for him. If he asked me to help, I'm going to be excited to watch him again. I mean, that team played unbelievable in New York and he was a big part of that. He had them ready to go and fired up, great pairings. It was fun to watch.

Q. You talked about playing with Fred, who just turned 60. Can you explain the enduring magic of him with fans or just people in general?

DAVIS LOVE III: Same thing as me watching him play, you know, '84, '85 and then I came out. He was the first guy I wanted to hang out with. Freddie's the coolest guy out there.

I remember Scott Verplank at the Ryder Cup going, "What does Freddie do?" I go, "He's cool and the players want to talk to him."

We just do the work and Freddie goes out and hangs out with the players. He's just always been a friend to everybody and fun to be around, and he knows every sports question you ask him. The fans, they love to watch him play. He makes it look so easy. It's like watching Gretzky skate. It doesn't matter what Fred shoots, you just like watching him play. It looks so natural and easy.

We know inside he's grinding, and he hits a lot more balls than people think and he's been a lot more hurt than people know, but he's just out there always looking like it's a walk in the park and people love to see that.

Plus, he wins a lot, so they like that, too. Fairly good looking, according to my wife.

Q. Favorite story you can share about him?

DAVIS LOVE III: It's probably been shared before, but I had the RV for a long time. So one PGA there wasn't a great choice of hotels, so he said, "Can you get me one of those RVs, Love Man?" I said, "Yeah." We had them back to back and Fred got there before me. Actually, I think I had won the week before and I was late coming. And so anyway, he gets there and the guys are going to put him in his bus and they go, "But your satellite card is messed up, so we're going to have to get another one tomorrow." He goes, "Well, what's the code to Davis' bus?" You know, we can't let you on Davis' bus. "Oh, yeah, I have to watch TV tonight."

So I get there and Fred's in my bed watching TV when I got there. I go, "What are you doing?" My TV doesn't work. "What am I doing, am I going over there?" So that's Fred, he has to watch his sports any way he can get away with it.