

GREG NORMAN

DOUG MILNE: Greg, tournament host, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. I felt like I was here this time last year saying 30 years, wow, and here I am a year later, 31 years, 19th consecutive year here at Tiburon. Obviously the longest running postseason event on the calendar. Tribute to the success of the event overall, I would imagine. Just some comments on being back here for 2019.

GREG NORMAN: Well, I can't say I'm exhausted about making the comments, but it's just a compliment to everybody really. We've got a great staff of people behind the scenes that do a phenomenal job to make the players comfortable. The players make themselves comfortable by being who they are and making the amateurs comfortable and the amateurs want to keep coming back, so it's a pretty cool circle.

Yeah, like you said, to have the longest running, and we've got another three years minimum to go because we just resigned QBE until 2022, which is a testament again to the tournament. So very, very proud of a lot of people for doing the work that they've done.

DOUG MILNE: You've had a chance to get out, see the course. Just some comments on that and kind of a little assessment of your game.

GREG NORMAN: Well, I knew the golf course was in great shape because we just finished redoing it. And then I saw a little bit of the LPGA, I watched that because I wanted to see how the golf ball was reacting on the greens and on the fairways and I knew we were going to come in here with a golf course in great shape.

Yesterday's rain was probably perfect timing. If we don't get any more rain, I think come the weekend the golf course will be back at -- this golf course is very difficult to play when it's firm and fast like it was last year, but it needs a little bit of moisture in there and I think right now we've got just the right amount of moisture.

DOUG MILNE: With that, we'll take a few questions from you guys.

Q. I don't know when the story will come out, but as of now, Presidents Cup, good start for the Internationals. Just your thoughts? At the least it looks like it's going to be competitive and they could win it.

GREG NORMAN: I think it's great. I think what Ernie did, I think he had the decision of making it the four-ball instead of the foursomes first up was great. Probably a few lingering things with the American team, whether it's jet lag or not knowing Royal Melbourne as well as some of the International players, would have messaged down to the guys who hadn't

played Royal Melbourne. They had been there probably over the weekend before so they would have got to know the golf course a little bit better.

But it's an information highway about that golf course. You need to know it and you need to know the little nuances of what it's all about. I think when the Americans arrived, there was a hot northerly blowing and now it's like a cool southerly blowing. It's probably highs in the 50s, going from 100 to 50. It will stay that way and then it will eventually warm up so the wind will start switching around the other way. Now the golf course is going to play completely different on Saturday and Sunday than what they just played today.

So I would say right now obviously advantage to the International Team, but you don't poke the bear too often, right, and the American team is a bit of a powerful team so maybe that might have woken them up a little bit. Today obviously the foursomes are going to be critical. If they can hold their own or even win a point, the Internationals, then they're going to be hard to beat.

Q. Obviously when it comes to an event like this, it's a more relaxed environment. What's the thing that you want the players to get out of an experience like this?

GREG NORMAN: Well, first of all, all I care about are the amateurs the first two days because they really make it happen. We get such positive feedback from them. Right after this event they already start booking into next year's event, so our retention rate is extremely high and that tells me the professionals are looking after them. That tells me they're having a good time.

So once they get through this, the pros can go do what they need to do and they partner up with their best mate and go out there and be professionals, right, win the tournament.

Again, you know, the amateurs are important, but then I start getting the feedback from the professionals come Monday. Believe it or not, I do get a lot of handwritten notes from players. Not all the players, but some players. It's pretty impressive in this day and age that they do that and it tells me a lot that they do love the event and they're looking forward to coming back in another year's time.

Q. I was thinking along the lines of, for example, I just spoke with Harold Varner and he talked about being paired with Bubba last year and some things that he got to learn from a player who's been out here. Have you heard any of those stories?

GREG NORMAN: For sure, yeah. No, I think it has a lot to do with the players, who they want to play with four or five months out because you can either kick off your 2020 season by either winning this or coming close to winning this or picking up some tips. I've seen players come in here not playing well and leave here performing extremely well for the next three or four, five months.

So sometimes it's easier to fix your game when you're playing and you're playing with a

friend because you have a parachute there. Somebody's there to help you, so you're actually a little bit more -- have a little bit more freedom in your mind and your body. Okay I'm going to practice this shot for the next two days because it's under pressure and it's in tough hole locations and some tough greens to get at. So it's really a good testing bed to do that. I've seen it happen to quite a few players coming out of here.

Q. Anybody that stands out in particular?

GREG NORMAN: No, not really, but I will say that I've given chances to young rookies like Rickie Fowler. When he came here, I wanted everybody to see Rickie. I thought Rickie had a huge runway ahead of him, and inviting him to the Shootout at such a young age for him, I thought it was really important. The same thing I've done for Viktor and Matthew.

Now there's other rookies as well, but these two young kids are the next generation, right? This tournament's been around 31 years and they're 42 years combined in age, so, you know, it tells us a lot about the history of the game and what you can and cannot do. I think it means a lot for Matthew and Viktor and the younger generation to be able to say okay, I got three decades of golf ahead of me because this tournament's three decades old. So at 21, if you really map out your future, you're looking into your 50s, which is great.

Q. I was thinking yesterday after listening to Matt and Viktor do you wish at times that you were just their age now and starting to play or are you happy when you came through?

GREG NORMAN: Look, everybody can look back and say, "Well, I wish I was playing today," but, you know, I came through in an era that was unbelievable. Nicklaus came through in an era that was unbelievable, Hogan came through in an era that was -- we're all fortunate to be in the right place at the right time for whatever reason.

Would it be cool to go up against the guys from every generation, every 15 year spanning golf and take the top-5 against the top-5 against the top-5? It would be really cool. In our prime, you know, because we had no back-off. We knew we were who we were on the golf course and we were confident to beat anybody on the golf course. It would have been cool just to test yourself against them.

But you see it. I can watch TV and watch players hit balls and I can tell you who's going to be the guy who's going to last the longest because of their technique and their approach and how they focus with their eyes and their demeanor. You'll say that guy's got it or that guy doesn't have it, he's going to have to work on this to get to there. I think, to me, I love where golf is now because it's so spread out on a global front and it's going to just make the game healthier and healthier in the next 15, 20 years.

Q. How many courses do you have in the works in the Far East?

GREG NORMAN: In the Far East?

Q. You were doing some there?

GREG NORMAN: Yeah. Well, I've got -- we've opened four or five in Vietnam. We have five under contract -- we have five under construction is the other way around, I think. I think we have four open, five under construction, eight under contract. That's just in Vietnam.

Japan is starting to fire up and it's all because of the Matsuyamas as of the world and all the Asian influence that's been coming on hard and fast, even on the LPGA Tour, right? The exposure, the PR that's getting over there, everybody now wants that next generation of young players.

We just did something in Cameroon at the opening of the golf course there for four young Asian players and all four of them was like, wow, these kids are like 18, 17, and technically they're perfect, they've just got to learn how to play.

But you've got that wave of these young kids sitting out there that you never see. We see it in Mexico as well, too. This wave of young kids are looking up to people like Anser and Lorena Ochoa and stuff like that and they're going I want to be that person. It's coming and it's continually -- will continually come from. I love it because we see it through our golf course design business and we hear it from the people in each country; okay, we want to have an academy to do this, we want to be able to do this, can you bring the next whoever through.

So there's a lot of inspiration out there to pull people through.

Q. You've got LiveFest in a couple of days, there's been a lot of buildup for it. What are your thoughts as this is 48 hours away or whatever?

GREG NORMAN: Well, I think it's fantastic. You know, it's been a couple of years in the making obviously. I think more from the local feedback that we're getting, everybody -- what we did here at Tiburon is one thing, what we do for the community is another thing. We get the feedback from the community in that this tournament just gets elevated more and more. The 5k when we started doing that, right? Now we're doing the concert after the gala dinner like tonight. Now we've got the LiveFest. It just keeps evolving from a hospitality play for the community. That's what I love, because the community really has supported us tremendously well for 19 years here. If we can give them back, and for us to be sold out as quickly as what we sold out for 9,000 tickets is pretty impressive. That's a big statement for this community.

Q. Not to take away from this week, but after you saw Tiger win most recently, what was your initial reaction?

GREG NORMAN: Winning the --

Q. Winning in Japan.

GREG NORMAN: I think it's great what he's done coming back. You know, it's not that easy when you go through surgeries to get back to where you were. He's not -- he's swinging great, but he's not -- he's swinging within himself, which is much better to see. So therefore, he's learned a lot about what the old swing did and what damage it did on his body because speed and power is going to break down somewhere sooner or later. Everybody only has so much in their joints to deliver and if you have that constant wear and tear on it. So he's done a really good job of refining that and slowing it down. He's not really out there trying to pound it past these young kids now, he's out there hitting a lot more fairways. He's a lot more consistent, his swing is a lot more rhythmical and that will go all the way down into his putting stroke, so kudos to him.

Q. And since you brought up injuries, we're seeing, I mean, three of the top-10 players in the world had knee surgeries of some kind based on how they've constructed their swing. Are we going to be seeing more of that when guys are going to be trying to send it 350?

GREG NORMAN: Well, of course. I mean, you look at all the power players in the world, Nicklaus has got a bad back, I've had a bad back, bad knees. I've had 13 surgeries because of golf. Actually, 12 because of golf. It's because we put so much load on our body. You're swinging the clubhead at 126, 127 miles an hour like I used to do with those old heavy pieces of equipment we used to play with, it tells us something's going on in your body when you're doing it thousands and thousands of time on a repetitive basis, no matter how fit and strong you are.

But I think the technology with health and wellness with the players has really elevated. I think they listen to their coaches, they listen to their trainers, they listen to their physiotherapists, so they build their own physical program around their own body, because that's the right way to do it because your body's your fingerprint.

I wouldn't work out like DJ works out and I wouldn't work out like JT works out. I work out because I know what works for me. So everybody's independent on that and I think the longevity's there.

But to answer your question, yeah, when you're putting a lot of power on and you're loading up your knees and your facets and shoulders and those joints -- the joints are the joints, the muscles give you the strength. If you've got flexibility plus power, those joints are going to take a hammering all the time.

DOUG MILNE: Thanks for coming in. We appreciate the time.