

Korn Ferry Tour

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Ben Griffin

Press Conference



Q. So Ben, 3-under today is a good result, get into contention tomorrow. Your thoughts and describe to us a little bit about your round.

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, you know, I didn't get off to the best start today. Made a bogey on 1. Couple holes starting out were playing a little difficult I thought.

I was patient again just like yesterday and just kind of waited. I made a lot of pars in a row. I actually hit a going to second shot into 8, par-5, and had an eagle putt and ended up three-putting for par.

But I was still focusing on myself and just trying to play my game and waiting for the birdies to come. Finally on the back nine I rolled in -- hit one close on the par-3 and then started rolling in a few bigger putts and was able to kind of -- I think I'm tied for the lead now.

Q. Yeah.

BEN GRIFFIN: So put myself back at the top where I want to be.

Q. How do you feel being here in Bogota after three days here?

BEN GRIFFIN: It's been great. I love this country. The fans, it's been an amazing experience playing in front of all these people. I met so many kids out there that followed along the whole round. It was really cool to have them kind of by my side. They were pulling for me. It was kind of random that they pulled for me, but I really appreciated it and I think it helped me play a little better, too.

Q. So a lot of good scores today. What's going to be the key tomorrow?

BEN GRIFFIN: You know, same thing: Just got to have fun importantly, though it's always a grind playing at the highest level trying to win.

So my biggest thing is having fun. I've got a great support team back home, great sponsors that are all by my side.

I'm just going to stay patient again and keep doing my thing

and see what happens.

Q. Tell us a little bit about your story last year.

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah.

Q. You quit the golf for a while.

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, so last April I played my last event, I played a two-man event with one of my good buddies Jake Shuman. Literally the next Monday right after the event I went into my dad's office and filled in for employee that had recently resigned.

I basically was doing property management for a few weeks. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. My mom was a loan officer. She told me I would be good at it, so I went ahead and accepted a job mid-April. I had to spend a little time studying to get my license.

By the beginning of May I was in the office starting to go work a little bit. Kind of grinded all the through May, June. Learned a lot. The thing about what I was doing is it takes a long time to build business and build a book.

I was on a team which helped me get a lot of exposure early. It was the Robby Oakes Mortgage team, and I was really want to thank him for giving me that opportunity this summer.

Worked for a couple months, and then -- well, probably about three or four months, and then end of July kind of had a couple opportunities.

Lord Abbett, my sponsor on my shirt, the CEO came to me and was very generous to help support my career in a comeback. I couldn't be here without him, and I'm just so thankful and blessed to be able to be here and be able to compete again.

For a while kind of had lost my dreams a little bit. Didn't know what was happening. We were dealing with COVID. It was hard. So I had to make money on my own for a little bit, and then just be been very blessed to meet the right people that have wanted to support me.

Here I am today, and hopefully I can make a nice run



tomorrow.

Q. Did you expect this start of the season, because it's pretty good right now?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, you know, I had a really good fall. I've been working with my coach, James. He's base out in L.A. He's been helping me a ton regain some feels from high school and college.

We had actually done a lot good work leading up to when I stopped playing golf last spring, but we picked right back up this fall. All to work that I put in with him is starting to pay off.

My mindset is just in the right place. I'm doing the right things off the course and really trying to take advantage of this opportunity, because the game of golf, it's getting younger and younger every year.

You see these guys coming out really crushing the tour. I want to be a part of that. So I know this is my time to kind of really focus in. I'm just doing my best to try to get there.

Q. Going back to the story about last year, can you talk about the emotions or the thought process of having to walk away.

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, honestly I was burnt out a lot. Golf was hard and I wasn't making enough money to support myself. My parents have been always supportive of me, but I never wanted to ask them for any help through COVID and towards the end.

I wanted to start making some financial decisions on my own, and that's kind of why I had to go work. It was one of those things that I wasn't confident in myself to make it all the way to the Tour back then. I didn't see myself doing it. It was really weird, but I was going through one of those times; it was dark.

I was just trying to figure out what I wanted to do, where I saw myself. When I was working, I thought back a lot to what I was doing in professional golf in college, high school, when I was playing well what was I doing? When I wasn't playing well how could I have played better?

So working actually opened up my eyes a little bit to what I needed to do to kind of make it back out here to make a push. I'm just happy to be here right now.

Q. What was like the moment that made you decide, I need to get back out there? What was that moment? How did you know that it was time?

BEN GRIFFIN: It's kind of a funny story. So I never had to wear like a jacket and tie when I worked, but I like to. I wear a button down and jacket to work for the most part. My dad always told me to dress up.

So I dressed up one day and started driving to work and accidentally drove to the golf course. I was like, What am I doing? A couple days later, my grandpa had been battling with some things from a health standpoint and he passed away.

He was one of the big people involved in me getting into golf, along with my dad. He got my dad into golf and helped me kind of growing up learn the game and everything.

And in his obituary he said, Hit them long and straight. When I saw that and after I had accidentally driven to the course, I was like, Man, maybe I need to give this another run. Lord Abbett, my main sponsor, they had offered me kind of early on to come back to golf. I was just burnt out and that's what I told them. I wasn't ready to make a comeback.

Eventually a couple things kind of click and couple things happened. I accidentally drive to the course and now I'm thinking I need to be a golfer again.

So I had a lot of people on my side. There are a couple people out in Missouri that supported me in my comeback, too. So basically end of July I kind of just got the feeling I needed to come back and give it another try, so I practiced in August for a little bit.

Really kind of took some time to transition out and get my mind set, and then cruised through Q-School and been playing well this year. I'm just hoping to kind of keep it going.

Q. Was it hard to leave your job?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, it was hard. I mean, I was early on, and, you know, I had really good co-workers and they were really nice to me and they wanted me to be very successful in the business. I want to thank them for everything. It was hard.

One person in particular, Karen Lorbacher, (phonetic), she taught me a lot of stuff. When I decided to leave, I mean, it was disappointing because she had spent probably a month and a half really training me to learn everything that I did.

Her and Robby Oakes, the guy who -- my boss who got me the job to begin with. I mean, it was hard, but I had a

couple things telling me I needed to go back. I was still young at the time, had just turned 25, and, you know, there is no better time than the present.

I knew I needed to get back to golf and give it another shot.

Q. Have you heard from anybody this week? Is your phone blowing up down here?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, social media has been a little hectic. I had to mute a couple things. Yeah, you know I've had so much support. Even the country club I grew up playing, I left that club when I was 12, and during the financial crisis my family, I needed to play public golf for a little while, and there's a lot of members that have reached out this week from when I was a kid, some who I haven't seen in several years. They all sent me a picture saying, Go, Ben.

There was probably 12 of them from, (indiscernible) Country Club back home. That meant a lot to me. They sent that after the first round and motivated me to kick it into gear.

I'm just so fortunate to have so many people on my side, and I'm just hoping to continue to do my thing and do the right things to try to create a story.

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