

**PRE-TOURNAMENT  
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: ESTEBAN TOLEDO  
Wednesday, October 30, 2013**



**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** We have Esteban Toledo in the interview room. Esteban, great season for you thus far, your rookie year, you have two victories and you're right in the thick of the Rookie of the Year race. Going into the final event, just a few thoughts about coming here to TPC Harding Park for the first time.

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, it seems like it's going to be a great event. I think the tournament director and the Champions Tour is doing a great job putting all this together and for us, the Champions Tour and the Top 30 players, we're honored to be here pretty much really. It seems like it's going to be a lot of fun this week. I think we are in the race for the Rookie of the Year at the moment and I think we put up a good fight all year and I think we entertain the fans and I'm pretty sure everybody's excited about who's going to win or not.

I had three goals in my life this year, finish in the Top 30 and win a tournament, and last one is win the Rookie of the Year, which is pretty tough right now. But we give it all to the fans, we give it all to the board who's going to decide that and I think we had a wonderful year. I think everybody's put a lot of time and to put all things together as a player and we know each other pretty well, so we know where we stand. I think for me it's I've been really working all year to get that. I know for me it's going to pre-Qualifying School and then going to the final, which is probably one of the toughest tests I've ever been in my life. Nothing gave me anything, so going to the Qualifying School was probably one of the toughest things. Now I'm in the position where I could win Rookie of the Year and I am excited for me, for my fans, for my family, for the Champions Tour because we work all year through the fans, through the tournaments, charities and stuff, and it's an honor for me to be here.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Talk about your game coming into this week.

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** I feel great, I'm hitting the ball well, putting well. My coach is with me this week and my family, my brother who came from Mexico and his friend, Jimmy. It makes everything easy for me. I'm going to put up a good fight this week, I feel great about it, and I'm just very, very happy to be in the Top 30 on the money list coming into this week. I really want to win the big cup that is on the 1st hole, so I'm going to put up a good fight this week.

**Q. We talked like the week or two before Newport this year and you said that this was what you wanted to do, all the things that you just said, and you did it pretty much, at least two out of three so far. What sort of personal satisfaction do you take from setting a goal and actually reaching it, and those being very difficult goals?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** It's exciting for me. I knew going to the Qualifying School it would be the toughest time for me and it wasn't that easy, not when I went to the Qualifying School and made it. Now I have a tougher test, come up here and play with the best in the world still and compete against Langer and Couples and all these guys.

I set up different goals, I set up a different mentality, I set up a lot of things that I've never done before. One of those things, I tried to enjoy myself. This is a wonderful ticket to play on the Champions Tour and to be able to be part of the charities every single week, every single tournament, it's pretty awesome. My caddie and I put a lot of hours on the golf course, playing Mondays and Tuesdays and Wednesdays and pretty much there was not even one day off for 25 weeks. So I knew it was going to be a lot of challenges in winning and it's what we play for, to win tournaments.

I'll be honest with you, I wasn't really sure if I was capable to win. Coming from the Tour school and come up here to play with the best in the world, it's pretty tough. But as soon as I won in Houston, I knew, I told David that I was going to win again and I know I will win again. It takes a lot of discipline, a lot of practice, a lot of time away from family. And I play for my fans really, that's the ones that make me play golf and it's pretty awesome, the accomplishment that I done all year.

**Q. Esteban, how much do you think your story, your individual story of coming from where you came from to succeed at this game connects with people, and is it doing so in a new way now that you're on this Tour?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, you know, every player has a different story. I have my story, very tough where I came from, not too many people know where I came from, and to believe myself that I can -- that I was capable to play on the Champions Tour, capable to win and capable to finish on the Top 30 and win Rookie of the Year and help charities around the country, I mean, I really never thought -- I never had those dreams. You know, you think about it, but doing it is two different things. Now that -- I remember John Minnis, who died, he was kind of like my father to me, who told me if you work hard and you have the discipline, you can have anything you want to do, and I think it was the greatest advice he probably ever gave me. To be able to come up here and win tournaments and holding the trophy is the greatest thing I've ever done and that's pretty awesome because of all the discipline I have through the year. And I'm surprised myself I'm in the running for Rookie of the Year, which is tough, but at the same time I believe I can win this or I wouldn't be here. I'm not afraid to finish second, I'm not afraid. If Rocco wins, I think it's a good man, good for the Champions Tour, good image, good role model for young guys coming up here and playing; so is Duffy, a bunch of guys up here. I'm just very happy. If I win, great. If I don't, I still gave it my best shot, so I will be very happy.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Esteban, his name is John Minnis, M-I-N-N-I-S?

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Correct.

**Q. Esteban, your dreams early on though were to be a world champion professional boxer, right?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** I was dreaming about it, always winning fights and stuff, but this is different. When you put the gloves on in boxing, you see a lot of people and you fight for yourself. In golf you fight for yourself as well. The only difference is I used to use two gloves, now I'm using one.

I think from boxing is the determination that I had before and the determination when I go out there on the first tee, it's pretty much the same. I get very nervous on the first hole like anybody else when I play with Tiger. They ask do you get nervous? Of course, otherwise I'm not a human. It's a determination that I think every player has and you go out there and perform the best a player can, and boxing is the same thing.

**Q. Do you take some of the things from boxing and apply it to golf right?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Absolutely. It's a mentality, it's a discipline. Maturity is a discipline to have when you go now against the golf course and play against 81 players, tough players, it's pretty much the same, you're worrying about one shot at a time. It's pretty much what I've been doing all year, just play my own game.

**Q. Do you follow boxing anymore or --**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Of course I do, it's in my blood, it's something that I always want to do. I had an operation and I quit, which I'm glad I quit because I would be broke at the time, but now I'm enjoying myself. This is what I do, you know. This is golf that I love to play and I love to help people and nobody's going to stop me to help people, kids especially and my foundation. So I'm going to go and do what I want to do, so I'm going to give it my best shot this week.

**Q. Was it a disappointment after Atlanta where you came so close and we talked afterwards and the fact that you bounced back relatively quickly after that, what do you make of that? Is that your background enables you to bounce back from a disappointment, because you know a lot of people would not have bounced back like you did?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** You know what, I look at them as learning situation. I lost to a really good player, Bernhard, and I don't think I failed. I think it was a great education to bounce back like a guy who finished 2nd and came back and said wait a minute, I still can do it, just because one tournament. I learn a lot. When I play with Tiger, I learn a lot from Tiger. When I play with Bernhard, I learn.

Yeah, I was disappointed to be honest with you, but I learned, I learned how to handle the situation, I learned how to handle the people. When I was in the same situation in Houston, I took it. I knew that what I believe in my mind and my heart to be able to win, whatever happened in Atlanta, it was gone in my mind because I learned, I learned how to lose. Now I learned how to win and I'm not afraid to finish 2nd. I went to playoff with Kenny Perry and Goodes and Gene Sauers. So sometimes when I lost my first time in boxing I learned, so I went back again and I knew how to win. Same in golf. I can go out there and learn from my mistakes so I can move forward and that's what I had done.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Esteban, good luck this week. Thank you very much.

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Thank you.