

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: DAVIS LOVE III
November 16, 2016



JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome the RSM Classic tournament host Davis Love III into the interview room.

Davis, seven years now in this event. What a wonderful event it is. All the good it's done for your foundation as well. Just talk a little bit about being back again this year.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, yeah, it's been a great seven years. RSM has been an incredible partner. They've motivated us to get better and better every year and they've chipped in more and more every year, committed through 2020, so it's an incredible journey. It's hard to believe it's been seven years. The tournament get a little bit bigger, a little bit better every year and we're thrilled to have our friends in town again with this great weather, so looking forward to a great week.

JOHN BUSH: Speaking of your friends, you've got one right here with us. Just comment a little bit about this season and what holding this Cup means to you.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it came in this weekend and I didn't take it out on the course with me on Monday or today, but I've had it with me pretty much everywhere else. My grandbaby had it in her little tent yesterday in the house and we've been enjoying having it around.

But it's been great to let Zach see it, and Kooch and Sneds, to share that experience. We kind of lost our big text messaging and our connection over the last couple weeks. We had it rolling for a month after the Ryder Cup, but it's kind of started to fade out. So this is perfect timing that Jimmy Walker had the cup a couple weeks ago and then I've got it. Got some guys back talking about it around here this week. So we're excited to, one, have the Cup until the next Ryder Cup especially, fun to have it here this week.

Q. You've had some time to think about it now, what you've accomplished, what the team accomplished at the Ryder Cup. Has it sunk in and do you feel a little bit different now than maybe you did in the immediate aftermath?

DAVIS LOVE III: No. It was very emotional then, you know, that day, that night. Every time -- I mean, I could be talking to you guys or to friends or watching it on TV, I still get emotional. I think if I sat down and watched the whole thing, it would really all come out I've only watched the very end, but I can't tell a Bubba Watson story or a Ryan Moore story without the emotion coming out. It's still exciting.

It was a long six years for us as Ryder Cuppers, you know? It was tough to take losing time after time. It was tough because I wanted so badly to help Corey, you know, over in Wales. Just every year it seemed to pile on more and more on the players, so quite a relief. Very

exciting.

Obviously we had an incredible team that ended up being six guys with Bubba at the last minute, but we had an incredible group. Tiger and Steve, Jim and Tom just helped me immensely. That was the challenge that they gave me, we would like you to be Ryder Cup captain again. I said, The only way I'm going to do it is if you guys help me more. I wish we had a video or a tape recording of things that were said in our early meetings, and that was one thing I said was I will not do it unless you guys promise to help me more.

You could tell we all pitched in and we pulled together for a year and a half. I think we gave the team a little bit more of a sense that we were organized and prepared and supportive of what they needed and I think it showed a little bit more, especially on Sunday. I think Sunday we did a great job of supporting our 12 guys that were out there playing. I mean, Brandt will come in here and tell you that he won because Bubba walked with him. Little things like that. We knew better how to support them all week in preparation the weeks before, but especially when we sent them out there to play, we knew how to help them out a little bit more because it was a lot of pressure on them.

Q. A little lighter question on that note. Where is the strangest or most unique place the Ryder Cup trophy's been since you guys won it?

DAVIS LOVE III: They say that Jimmy Walker is ahead of me on his Instagram social media posts and his little Ryder Cup Tour, so I'm going to have to step it up a little bit.

It's been in the back of my pickup truck all over the island riding around. But I think that probably the strangest was my grandbaby ran off with it into her little tent in our house. Put the lid on her head, if you saw the picture on Instagram.

I don't know where Jimmy had it. It has a little bit of a smell of Pappy Van Winkle Bourbon right now for some reason from last night. Amazing at our house last night, hundreds of people there for the pro-am draw party and everybody wanted their picture with the Cup. They've all had their picture with me but they wanted their picture with the Cup. I cannot put it down. I actually put it down for a few minutes last night on the podium out front, and I turned around and came back and people had it and were taking pictures with it. I know it's not me, they want to take a picture with the Cup. It's been neat to have it everywhere I've been.

Q. Davis, of all the things that you guys tried, the task force, the different approaches, is it possible to pinpoint one that you think worked the best or was it a combination of everything?

DAVIS LOVE III: It was a combination, but I think communication I think is the biggest thing. I think in years past we -- there was a captain, as Phil said several times, there was a captain that did his own thing. Then you play the matches and you get another captain, he would do his own thing. I think now we're communicating amongst former captains and

former players. We have a system and we frankly sat down and said, this is what Tom Kite did well, this is what Lanny Wadkins did well, this is where Davis screwed up and here's what we need to do to build on all that.

Paul Azinger really started something of kind of a system of getting his players prepared and ready, and we really didn't grab ahold of that and use it year after year after year. That's what Phil was basically saying, we need continuity and consistency. But communication. Zach Johnson called me about a month before the Ryder Cup and he said, "I just talked to Tiger Woods for 59 minutes." He said, "He has never called me his whole career." That's the difference. Tiger's calling Zach to talk about the Ryder Cup, about the Ryder Cup, to get organized, to get a game plan going.

So when the team, and we're a bigger team than 12 guys, we took 25 guys to Jack Nicklaus' house during the Honda. When the team communicates, is all on the same page and everybody's doing their job, then you can be a little bit more prepared and successful. That's all Jack told us to do is just be prepared. He said, "There's no secret to it. I was the most prepared when I showed up in a major championship. You guys be prepared to play, and if you're the better team, you'll come out ahead."

I think just we communicated a lot better as captains and then as teammates leading up to it so we were comfortable when we got there.

Q. Do you have like a manual or a computer file with best practices, do you have all this stuff like written down and codified somewhere?

DAVIS LOVE III: I think Julius Mason does. He's a lot more organized than me, as most of you know. But yes, The PGA of America, when we set this ball in motion, there is a committee now, three officers of the PGA of America and three, that would be Tiger, Phil and I for right now. We are the -- we are the gatekeepers right now. We've got the book.

And that's the thing, whoever the next captain is, we're going to hand off to him here's what we've done the last two years, here's what we want to keep doing. And we've already had one conference call, we've got another in a couple weeks to dissect what we did this time.

I've already pointed out to them and they've pointed out to me a few things where we may have not been as organized or as prepared or better ideas going forward. Obviously we need to talk about the selection process and the timing and things.

But yeah, we've got a book. We've been watching Europe. Darren Clark's been around for a long time. He was very prepared as a captain, he knew their system and he's going to hand that off to the next guy and I'm sure help out whoever the next guy is on their side, so we learned from them a little bit.

Q. Davis, did watching some of that action, especially on Sunday, does it get you excited to play again? And secondly. Tiger stepped into a totally new role. What do

you think was his biggest contribution?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, it definitely makes me want to play. Watching these guys play, I was excited. Then going out to Vegas and watching some of my friends play really well out there and beat me again, guys like Lucas back up there at the top and Chris Kirk and hanging out with them made me just excited. I like riding on the cart and being the coach, but I would rather be in the game.

But Tiger was just amazing. Again, all of the assistant captains did their job and helped out in different ways. Tom Lehman obviously was a different role than Tiger Woods. Tom was Mr. Minnesota and helping us get organized on the ground out there. He was our ground game. In the political terms, he was our ground game in Minnesota and knew everybody and knew everywhere and helped out a lot on that side down to helping us find a good hotel and a good restaurant.

But Tiger's role was more strategy. "Here's where I think we failed the team Sunday of the Ryder Cup in '12 and here's my ideas for pairings. Here's my idea for a Sunday lineup. Here's the backup plans."

But he really was a guy that behind the scenes, which is hard for Tiger to do because they would all call me and say, "Hey, Tiger called me, he said I'm sitting out on Saturday." Might be a little early for that. But Tiger was so into it, he was so motivated to help, it got to the point where we were asking guys, you know, all right, he's so excited, don't just listen to him because he'll tell you one thing one day and one thing the next. But he had a great system. It really helped us on Sunday. We had already talked about Sunday pairings so many times that when the crunch time came, we knew what we were doing.

The coolest thing he did was at 11:51 on Saturday night he texted me, he goes, "I don't think I'll be able to sleep, there's no more pairings to make." It was his way of saying our job is done, we've just got to go out there and let them play tomorrow.

But I changed his role a couple times, asked him to do different things and he jumped in and did it. And it's amazing when you say, "No, Tiger, that's not the direction I want you to go, I want you to go this direction," he would just change directions and do it. And it tells you something that Stricker immediately asked him to come help at 17 and he wants to do it, and that's what the guys said. "This is so good, Tiger Woods is calling me on the phone and he's going to the Ryder Cup and he's driving the cart around."

You know, Patrick Reed, it was a big part what Patrick Reed did that Tiger Woods was his guy. Everybody had their role, as I said. Jim Furyk was watching different people than Tiger Woods but that was for a reason.

Q. Goodness gracious, Ryder Cup win, bring it back to the U.S. of A, Hall of Fame coming up. What are you asking for for Christmas?

DAVIS LOVE III: Some quiet time. Yeah, it's been amazing, like this tournament, I get way too much credit for having my name on it. Everybody else on the other side of this building are the ones that do all the work.

But it's been a fun year. It's nice to be a part of so many successful things and just to be a part of that team was exciting. But Matt Kuchar and Brandt have said it this week, and Zach, every team we're on is just a lifetime experience. To be on another team was just incredible.

Tim Finchem and I, I've been on the board a lot, we've been talking about the Hall of Fame for a long time and I've been trying to get him to let me out of it and he wouldn't let me out of it. I still feel like that's Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus and Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, that's not Davis Love. But it is an honor to be included in that list and I'll be proud. I will cherish putting some of my memorabilia in there for my kids and grandkids to see.

Q. Switching gears now to this weekend, there's a lot of guys that have come up playing this course and have experience here, but has it surprised you that some of the guys like you, Zach and Matt who come home and sleep in your own beds at night, you've placed up towards the top, you just haven't won it yet?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I've been very surprised at that. I told Brian Harman that. He said, "Why are we playing two courses?" Because it's even more of a home field advantage. You know Plantation course better than anybody. Even the SEC kids haven't played the Plantation course.

You would think, but there's also some added pressure. Expectations go up, responsibilities. Like everywhere I've showed up for RSM this week, right behind me is Zach Johnson. He's team RSM. He has a lot of responsibilities this week, he has a lot of friends and family in town, and like me, probably has people staying at his house and things going on, so a little more challenges.

But it is nice, I wouldn't be surprised if this is the year. We've got a lot of guys that are playing well that have played here a lot. I'm playing with a couple of them that ought to have some home field advantage. Even though Brandt doesn't live here anymore, he's spent a lot of time here. Hopefully this is the year one of the local guys knocks it off.

Q. Were you supposed to play Safeway?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes, I ended up withdrawing from Safeway and Mexico. My overambitious plan.

Q. Too soon?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. But I think the same, Tiger and I had the same thing happen to us. We had some momentum and then we got so wrapped up a couple weeks in the Ryder Cup and then we got hit by a hurricane that we didn't really get the practice schedule we were

quite planning the week after the Ryder Cup.

I think I was dreaming a little bit that I could play four weeks after surgery, but if you would have told my doctor back in July he's going to come back and play two events before the end of the year, I think he would have been pleased with that. So I wanted to play Safeway, but that was ambitious. I wanted to play three in a row, but after playing Vegas, I knew that I couldn't do three in a row and make it through. But I'm getting better every week so hopefully by January I'll be a hundred percent.

Q. Have you thought about how you're going to fill your time next year without the Ryder Cup?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah. My son Drew in kind of an interview conversation said, "Sometimes we feel like we've lost our parents for a year and a half during the Ryder Cup." So I've got time to make up with family and friends and business. But there's plenty to do. I just, I'm going to miss the -- but I've got to get ready to help Steve, I guess, for Presidents Cup and probably need a Hall of Fame speech, so that may take up a little bit of time.

I'm going to go play golf. I'm going to go back to the regular Tour and a couple Champions Tour events and hopefully work on my game and get another season under my belt.

Q. You've been here since you were 15 years old. What does this tournament mean to you and to the community, and how proud are you of how much it's been built up?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's just this community has supported me. Sea Island, I always say that Mr. Jones gave me six shirts and a golf bag and sent me to Q School. My golf career started right here at Sea Island. My dad obviously teaching here.

So to come back and give back to the community's been a blessing. Almost \$5 million to charity and probably over \$6 million after this year, economic impact. There's so many times, so many things happen. The new ownership of Sea Island, everybody thought Sea Island was struggling and then we had a golf tournament pop up, and now seven years into it everybody's seen Sea Island continue to grow and be successful. Now after a hurricane, everybody thought we were wiped out, trees are down and you would never really know it. The island's back up and running. Just nice to show the world how great a place we're living in and give back to a community that's given so much to me over the years. You know, to see Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer all have their own tournaments, it's nice to be in that group.

Q. How much longer are you on the board and what's the first thing -- what do you think is the top priority for Jay?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's amazing how fast he's been moving. I guess Tim's kind of a lame duck, but Jay's off and running, restructuring, building his own team.

Jay's priorities are the same as ever. We've got over the next two years a lot of sponsors to re-sign to keep the ball rolling. TV is coming up negotiation in a couple years which they're already working on. He's got a big challenge ahead of him and I think it was Randall Stephenson said one of the great challenges is taking over a great company and making it better, so Jay's got that challenge ahead of him.

Deane handed it off to Tim and Tim ran really well with it for 20 years. But Jay's taking over a very successful business and the challenge is to keep it going. I look forward to working with him. I worked with Jay all the way back to his tournament director days and he's got a lot of friends. I think that's the biggest thing. Like Tim keeps saying Jay's got a better skill set than I had when I took over the job. Business-wise, he's learned a lot, but I think his relationships are just incredible all across the board on the Tour. It's going to be easy for him on that side, but I think business-wise he's got some challenges head of him, he's going to have to work hard. But he's got a great team already put together.

I'm excited, I think I've got this year and next year on the board. Tim really wanted me to run again just because he knew he was going out and Jay was starting over, and again a little continuity and consistency. A guy who's been to 50 board meetings is nice to have in the room, so it would be nice to help Jay out.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVIS LOVE III: I wish, I would be leading.

Q. Along the same lines, I think you were on the policy board when Tim took office and you were on the policy board when Tim stepped down.

DAVIS LOVE III: I hired and I fired him. No, I was on the PAC, pack, I was chairman of the PAC, so I was observing board meetings when Tim was hired. But his first years as commissioner I was on the board and we've become very good friends because of that and because of obviously I've been there along, long time. He's taught me the business of the Tour basically. He really wanted me to be on the board when he went off and in the transition.

JOHN BUSH: Davis Love, thank you for your time.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you.