

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
February 17, 2018

BUBBA WATSON (-10)



GENESIS OPEN

MARK WILLIAMS: Thank you for joining us. We would like to welcome tournament leader through 54 holes, Bubba Watson, at the 2018 Genesis Open. Bubba, you have a one-shot lead, 10 under. Just talk about your day. You have a couple wins here in '14 and '16, you're obviously very familiar with this golf course and you love it and you got off to a great start today.

BUBBA WATSON: Yeah, for sure. We guessed right on No. 1 today trying to get the right yardage, the right club for the wind and everything. It calms you down real fast when you tap in for eagle. You start out really hot, and so you just kind of use that momentum and go from there. Then making the putt following it up on No. 2 to save par, that just is a lot of momentum going forward.

Knowing how difficult this golf course is, my whole thing was trying to hit greens, somehow just hang in there wherever I was. Then I chipped in, I started making putts and we were around the lead or leading at that time and we hung on, especially around No. 11. After No. 11 it's all into the wind for the next five or so holes. So those are very difficult holes so I was just hanging on for dear life and just trying to stay around the lead or now above the lead, so it's good.

Q. Bubba, what is it about this place that just brings the best out of you, and how's the body feeling after last night's tough basketball win?

BUBBA WATSON: The history, you know. This golf course stood the test of time. Nobody's talking about changing it unless they mention a major involved with it. They added a tee on No. 2 a long time ago, a few years ago, and we never played it because No. 2 doesn't need it. So when you think about history and not messing with the golf course, today, this day and age you can't build a golf course like this. It stood the test of time. It's the only golf course that has a perfect par 3 with a bunker in the middle of it. You know, it's just a beautiful layout and it's fun to play. You've got to hit shots from every different angle, you've got to move it right to left and left to right, so it's just fun. Then the greens are the equalizer so it makes me look I putt as good as the other guys.

Q. How about last night, how's the body doing after the game?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, that's nothing, we just ran up and down the court. Some guys wanted to try to win MVP so I was trying to pass it and let them have their fun and their moment, and I was just trying not to get hurt. I'll go ahead and say it, when I saw Tracy McGrady come at me, all I thought about was -- none of you guys but the bad golfers in the world, when they stand on the tee and they see water to the right, where's their ball go?

Way to the left. So when I saw him, all I saw was, this is my moment to get hurt, this big tank is about to hit me, and I was like just knock it into the stands, just don't touch me. So it worked out, he didn't touch me so it was good.

Q. Guys were just talking about how much patience this golf course requires. You mentioned it, how well it's designed. Do you consider yourself a patient person?

BUBBA WATSON: Oh, for sure I do. Haven't you seen me in the last 12 years?

No, it's just the golf course. The tougher the golf course, the more focus I have, right? The tougher the difficulty of the shot, I've been able to focus better. When I get my mind on something, I can focus and do pretty well at the game of golf.

Kind of like last night when Tracy McGrady was coming at me, I was focused on not getting hurt and I didn't, so it worked out. When I get focused on the game of golf, the more difficult it is, the more challenging it is, it seemed to work out in my favor over the course of my career so far.

So this is one of those golf courses, a six-inch bounce one way or the other. I hammered a 5-iron today on No. 11, 235 front edge downwind, so I was hammering drawing this 5-iron and it landed two feet short of the green and bounced backwards three feet, so I backed it up. So it flew 234 and backed up two feet, which I think it's because of the grass so it just makes you focus on hitting it in perfect shots and trying to play it to perfect spots so you can make pars and save your round or whatever. That's a long answer for no focus, basically short answer.

Q. Did you talk to Tracy after that play, or was there any trash talk? And secondly as a follow, didn't Angie tell you not to take it to the paint, wasn't there some instruction prior to the game?

BUBBA WATSON: Well, he's got like just under 800 blocks for his career so I gave him one more, you know? There was some funny comments. After the game Paul Pierce was ragging on him saying, "Why are you still in the game?" He said he was trying to get a 10-day contract, so I gave him a block so he could add to that. After the game he was changing and I was talking to him and his son was there. He said, "That guy right there is one of the top in the game of golf." So I looked at his son, I said, "Do you know what golf is," and he said, "Yes." I said, "Do you know who I am?" He said, "Nope." But it was just fun. Like I said, it was just, it was a blast. I wanted to see how good he was, see if he could miss it. He hasn't played in a while.

Q. As a follow, didn't Angie tell you not to take it into the paint?

BUBBA WATSON: Again, I don't focus very well and I don't listen very well either if you ask all my schoolteachers.

Q. Did you lose focus on that air ball?

BUBBA WATSON: No, they were supposed to cut. They didn't cut. I was like alley-oop. I said it. Y'all didn't hear it?

Q. Didn't hear it.

BUBBA WATSON: Must have been ESPN, the volume went off for a second.

Q. What did you decide on the shot into 1 today?

BUBBA WATSON: I had 203. Well, Teddy said we had 203. To clear the bunker we had 190. We weren't sure which way the wind was going, if it was slight down, just crossing. So I decided to hammer a 7-iron and draw it, so that means the wind's fighting the draw, slowing it down so I had to draw a little bit more. It hit perfectly where we wanted to hit it, and obviously we didn't expect it to take the run up the hill and get that close, we were just happy it didn't go in the sand. When I heard the crowd roar, I was like, maybe it's close enough I can make it. So that's what we decided, it was a 7-iron.

Q. Having gone a couple years without winning, I just wonder if you could just talk about the feelings you have and does the level of confidence or whatever you want to call it return quickly?

BUBBA WATSON: If I win, yeah, the confidence will be up, but until I win, the confidence won't be 100 percent I guess, will be 99 percent.

I did interviews already, y'all are last, that's how it works out. What I said is the goal adding these tournaments was to have a chance to improve, to have the trend going the right direction, get the reps in, have the ability to get back and compete with these great young boys that are phenomenal at golf. So tomorrow if I lose, I showed myself that I could get there. If I win, it's the same thing, I showed myself I could get there.

So the trend, like I said, I've been saying, CareerBuilder I think I was top-10 in greens in regulation, I think I was leading greens in regulation and missed the cut. Putting wasn't very good. And then the other tournaments, Phoenix and I think Pebble, I was around top-10 in greens in regulation, so the putts just didn't fall. This week I'm making some putts, chipped in, hit some good close iron shots where I could tap them in.

So the trend is going in the right direction and that's what I'm looking for. If I don't win tomorrow or if I do win tomorrow, I'm still going in the right direction to hopefully have more Sundays, more Saturday nights talking to y'all. I hope that answered somewhat of your question. I kind of forgot what you said.

Q. Bubba, other than just "it's just golf," how do you explain the ebbs and flows of form in golf? How do you explain how one week it seems like you just don't have it

and the next week it seems like you're playing better than everybody else?

BUBBA WATSON: When you're talking about this level, these great players, the PGA TOUR's the best in the world and so you're talking about a guy that won last week, right? Great player. He can hang with anybody on any given day, but he just won last week. I don't know, did he make the cut, miss the cut? Okay, there you go, so he missed the cut. I don't check leaderboards unless I'm up on the top, so I'll check it tonight. Snapchat that.

So he celebrated, right? How many years has it been since he won? He locked his card up for a couple years, he's getting to go to Maui, there's a lot of things that happen, there's a lot of friends and family that want to talk to him. Then somehow four days later you've got to tee it up again. He's like, I'm still celebrating my victory and y'all are on to the next guy. Tiger Woods is here, y'all are on to L.A. and he's still trying to hold his trophy up.

It's the same thing I've done when I won a major, it's the same thing other people have done. Y'all move on quickly and we're still trying to hang onto our trophy. Every week is a new golf tournament, we don't ever have a break on the PGA TOUR anymore so you don't have time to keep living the dream and have that three-month break where you can celebrate your victory. So to keep it going week after week after week is very difficult because of the fact that we're traveling, some of us have families, some of us have other things, and y'all give up on us on Monday morning.

Q. What about going that other way, going from where you don't feel like you're in tomorrow, you don't feel like you're playing well to where all of a sudden it comes back to you?

BUBBA WATSON: You have to look at it, your team has to look at it and see if your form's in the right direction. You can't look at what y'all write or people say. You've got 24-hour Golf Channel, they've got to fill the air somehow. They've got to fill in about my air ball. Y'all have to look at your stats. When I can look at my stats and my ball-striking is where I want it, I could care less about hitting the fairways because there are certain times you're trying to drive No. 10 you miss the fairway but you make birdie, right? So you can't look at that stat.

You can look at your iron play, you can look at your putting, look at those stats. My iron play's where it needs to be, I need to get better with my putting. We've worked on it, got to get the ball to drop.

Yes, the confidence is moving forward, you can see that. That's something you can look at and see, so that's just going to give you confidence. When you're top-10 in greens in regulation against the best in the world, obviously that should give you confidence, and if it doesn't, then you've got other things to work on.

MARK WILLIAMS: Thanks for your time, Bubba.