

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**February 13, 2019**

**BUBBA WATSON**



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**JOHN BUSH:** We would like to welcome Bubba Watson into the interview room, our defending champion, two-time champion here.

Bubba, welcome back to Riviera. Get some comments on being back this week.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Ahem, ahem. He actually told me to be good in this today, too. Now I'm not.

**JOHN BUSH:** Apologies, Bubba. Three times.

**BUBBA WATSON:** I do not accept.

**JOHN BUSH:** Comment on being back at Riviera, the place --

**BUBBA WATSON:** The one thing I've got on Tiger is I've won, here. And you've taken it away. I was three up on him. Sorry.

**JOHN BUSH:** Comment on being back, Bubba.

**BUBBA WATSON:** I love it, I love being back here. This is a cool place to be. I love the golf course. Obviously winning makes you love it a lot more, but I loved it even when I was missing the cuts, so it's always fun to come back here. And I love Hollywood, I loved playing Lakeside yesterday and hanging out with some of the boys, then going to Warner Brothers. That's always a pleasure and an honor to be able to do that.

**JOHN BUSH:** And now with this tournament earning elevated status, a three-year exemption, comment about what that means.

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, the year after I win it, so I guess I have to play better.

No, I think it's awesome. I love what the Tour's doing, I love what Tiger's doing and his people running this event. I love the charities that we're giving back to in the local area and I think it's just an amazing job that Jay Monahan's doing for us and doing for the Tour in general. The fact we're able to get these sponsors and the sponsors are loving it, even playing golf in the rain today, nobody quit, it was a fun pro-am. And I just think what we're doing and coming to, and getting the purses up and making these guys play on Tour for longer, it's good.

**JOHN BUSH:** We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. I think last year you played in the NBA All-Star Celebrity Game, is that right?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yes.

**Q. Anything special planned for this week?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** No. I just went over to the set of Big Bang Theory, learned some stuff yesterday at Lakeside from some of the members there. You know, I don't know if you call them famous or not, but asking questions and learning about life and listening to their answers. You know, it's been fun and that's why I love coming here because I can learn a lot from a lot of people in different walks of life. So that's why I really love coming here and being able to get onset, learn stuff, learning every part of life, the business side, the writing side, the filming side. And then obviously, like I said, asking some questions to some legends in their industry at the golf course yesterday, was very nice.

**Q. Mate, it was here in the past that you somewhat facetiously said you might quit after 10 wins. Obviously that didn't happen. What are your goals now going forward?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** This tour is growing so much, I might as well keep playing, I guess. My goals?

**Q. Like what are you thinking now in terms of the long term?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** There's no specific number to make. For my own personal satisfaction, not anybody else's, just mine, I would love to make the Hall of Fame. Is that two more majors, is that three more wins, 10 more wins, I don't know. There's no set number, right? Well, I don't know it if there is. Don't tell me if there is, I'll get nervous.

Then I've always wanted to be a Ryder Cup captain because that was another form of Hall of Fame for me, being honored to be Ryder Cup captain is another form of Hall of Fame. I count them as equal. So for me that's something out of my control as well, so all I can do is try to play good golf.

Yeah, I mean, my dream was to win 10 times and I did it. I was like, well, shoot, I'm still young, I guess I've got to keep going. Then when I got to 10, I was like man, there's a chance I could make the Hall of Fame. I'm trying some new things, trying to get my life in the right order, and hopefully I can win a few more times and somebody votes on me to make the Hall of Fame or Ryder Cup captain, I guess.

**Q. Speaking of Ryder Cup captain, when did that enter your mind and why?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Sorry?

**Q. When did it enter your mind and what appeals to you about it?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** At a young age. Gosh, I remember shooting -- winning golf tournaments at age 12, that's about the time I really started seeing golf on TV, and Payne Stewart on TV, that's who I watched. Then my senior year of high school was '97, so that's when Tiger, the baggy red sweater, sweatshirt, sweater, whatever it was, pumping his fist.

But going back to any Ryder Cup that I've ever watched, it used to be about a great career, winning a major and then you get picked to be captain. The captain is just the sounding board. We're all out there to play golf but that was an honored position so that's why being a Ryder Cup captain, being on a Ryder Cup team, being a Ryder Cup captain, there's a lot of things that had to happen in my golf career before I could even think of it. So that means being a Ryder Cup captain, I had to win a major, had to win some tournaments, had to be on a team, I had to do a lot of things. That's why for me personally it's the same as the Hall of Fame, because you had to do so many things in your career to get to that point where they would even consider you as a Ryder Cup captain, so that's why it equals the same to me.

**Q. Along those lines, you turned 40 in the last year. How are you different compared to your 30s or your 20s?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Gosh, I'm in a lot better frame of mind. You know, 20 years, we'll say 20 years go by in flash, but a lot of mistakes. You learn from them. I think as we get older, we learn from our mistakes, whatever those mistakes are, in life, on the golf course or wherever we are.

For me personally, I've learned from them. Gosh, I was immature as they get when I made the PGA TOUR and I think hopefully I've gained a couple percentage points towards the right direction, if not all the way yet. So I just think I've learned from all my mistakes. I've tried to correct them, tried to get better at them, which makes me a better golfer, but I want to be a Hall of Fame -- let me clarify, I want to be a Hall of Fame husband and dad before -- who cares about golf.

So for me, I'm energized, I'm energized by watching my son in first grade, watching my daughter grow up, the love that my wife gives me.

I've never putted -- not that you all care about my stories, but I'm going to tell you anyway. I got here late Sunday night, I showed up, had some media and all this stuff with the Jockey introduction and everything. I sat up here for three hours and putted, and the only reason I left is because it was getting dark. That's the only reason I left. It wasn't because I was tired of practicing. It was because I wanted to be here.

So I'm energized. That doesn't mean I'm going to win, that doesn't mean I'm going to make any cuts, that just means I love the game of golf and I want to be here and I'm energized to be here. Really, I've just learned what my true passion is over the last 20 years and cleared up some mistakes that I've made in my life.

**Q. I know you don't have a number in mind for yourself, but --**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Seven. Next question?

**Q. If you look at guys, for example, under age 35, Dustin right now has got 19, what do you consider to be --**

**BUBBA WATSON:** How old is Dustin?

**Q. 34. What do you consider to be an unbelievable level to achieve in this era?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Truthfully, again, all I can do is go for my own self. I thought impossible of the impossible was 10. The reason why I say that is because it was me never having lessons and where I grew up and all that stuff.

But when I look back at it now, we're talking about Tiger Woods has produced the world to play the game of golf at a different level. Jack and Arnie and all those guys pushed it, but he pushed it with television, social media, everything. He's pushed it to a whole new level. Everybody's playing it, everybody's training different. They're calling it training now. Like Tiger calls is training for the game of golf. We're looking at how we eat, vitamins. We're looking at everything we put in our body to get better. And if you're not doing that, then you're already one back, right? You're already one down.

So I got a late start on all that junk, so I just feel like getting double digit wins, 10 wins is a humongous accomplishment because of the stuff that comes with it, right? The sponsors want more of your time, fans, you sign more autographs. Especially these young kids winning early, everybody's calling their name out and there's a lot of people pulling them. So I just think that getting 10 wins is an unbelievable dream to accomplish. For me, I set the dream at 10 and I was hoping to get one, and somehow here we are talking at 12. Tiger's on 13, right?

**Q. Can you see anyone winning 50?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** 50? Gosh, no, I think people would get bored before they get to 50. I mean, that's just being honest. I know I would.

**Q. Bored or rich? I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about --**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, I don't know how people do their finances. What's rich? Money's not making me rich. My love for my wife and my wife's love for me. My kids' smile when I come home. Even when I had 12 three putts in Maui, not that anybody knew that. Yeah, except for me, too. That was the worst ever. Even the people who are rich want to do other businesses or other things, people get bored and want to do something else, challenge themselves in a different way. Look at all these athletes coming to golf, because they want to challenge themselves, really piss themselves off. I don't know why anybody

would want to play golf.

**Q. You seem to play specific courses really well. I think your wins have come on six different courses. What about your game lends itself to specific courses? And what about Riviera do you feel like fits your eye and your game?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** These are my people here, I love Hollywood. I've always wanted to be an actor. I can't remember lines, though, so I wouldn't be very good at it, but I could look cool running down the street. It's something I've always dreamed of, so when I come here and learn, you're talking about learning. It's not like I'm a kid in a candy store. I'm learning, I'm talking to the producers. I'm talking to the writers, interacting with them. Last night, we sat there for a few hours listening, watching them rewrite things and do things. The executives at Warren Brothers -- I'm just learning. I love learning about business. So when I come here, golf is second or third on the list.

As soon as I leave here, I'm going to go to a little Bible study at somebody's house and I'm going to be speaking a little bit. So there's other things going on in my life, and I just love this area. They've always been good to me, it's been fun. The golf course never changes, even though they added tees, we've never played those tees. Hopefully they don't change because I said that.

Travelers has been so good. When they stepped up in Connecticut there, in Hartford, they asked what can they do better. So when you see a sponsor that energetic about a tournament and helping grow the game the way they are, it just energizes you and gets fun. Who doesn't play better after the U.S. Open, right? The U.S. Open beats you up, and then you go to Travelers, and you're like, yes, I can make at least one birdie. So I get energized there.

And then Augusta's Augusta. What a blessing to have one, let alone two there.

**Q. You talk about Hollywood. Do you have any interest in doing that after you get playing?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Yeah, I was trying to plug that right now. I would quit the game today if somebody let's me get in some movies.

**Q. Bubba, it's an honor. Kind of a two-part question. Do you consider the heart of your game old school or new school?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Gosh, that's a great question. I would have to say old school, just play golf and figure it out as you're going. Doesn't matter, swing path, doesn't matter where your feet are lined up. Yeah, I would have to say old school mentality, just shoot the lowest score. I don't care if you miss every fairway, just shoot the lowest score and you'll be all right.

**Q. Could you weigh in on a pretty hot topic regarding equipment, greens reading books and technology? Do you feel that that in any way is diminishing the ability or the skill level where 45-year-olds with great skills makes it more challenging to compete with bombers?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** No. Gosh, you're learning how to train different, so NBA players are shooting from longer range, they're jumping higher. Look at these kids now. I mean, LeBron James, people call him old and he's still jumping out of the gym.

We're developing differently as people because we've learned how to train and focus our abilities on getting better at the game of golf and that means faster clubhead speeds, better technique around the greens, making more putts. I haven't learned that skill yet, but I'm getting there. So I think we're just learning.

Then like I said, Tiger in '97 just pushed golf to a whole new level because it was mainstream TV everywhere, Golf Channel, just all that stuff. That's why he was able to push it to a whole new level. Obviously the 80 wins help, too.

**Q. Bubba, as we know, you're self-taught, and you said you've been working so much on improving your game and I've seen some differences. What are the things and where is this inspiration coming from?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Inspiration is -- I feel like I still have the ability to play golf, I still have the ability to fight and try to win golf tournaments. Freed up the mind. Mentally you get in a good place and everything's rolling in the right direction.

The only thing I've really worked hard on is putting, and I'm trying this, I don't know what you call it, I love Bryson so much, I'm just trying to be like Bryson.

The armlock, I guess, something like that, whatever it's called.

So I'm looking at it, I'm trying it, I'm dabbling with it. Next week I might not putt that way. I mean, I can change at any minute. So for me it's just learning something to see if it does help me one percent. If it helps me get one percent better, then I'm better. I'm just looking at it, studying it. I finished almost dead last in putting in FedEx, but I finished fourth in the tournament. So I can't really say that the armlock helped me. My ball-striking was pretty good.

**Q. Going back to what you said about thinking you could --**

**BUBBA WATSON:** I'm sorry.

**Q. The 10 wins, thinking you would never get there and feeling energized now, what motivates you at this point?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Truthfully, the motivation at this point, honestly, is all for myself. I'm not worried about what anybody says, I'm not worried about praise from anybody, I'm not worried about praise from my wife, I'm not worried about praise from my manager, my right-hand man, my caddie. It's not about praise from anybody, all it is is about me. I just love the game of golf. I could come out of here and never win again, but I'm still going to play the game of golf.

If I retired today, I'm still going to play the game of golf and the challenge is to get better at it and have fun with it, that's what's giving me the energy to go forward because now I'm realizing that I get to play golf and have fun with it, so that's what's energizing me and motivating me to keep going. Knowing that I'm somewhat close. Let's say it took 20 wins, I'm a lot closer to having zero wins to get to Hall of Fame status. Again, it's all for me, it's not for -- I really don't -- them actually calling me and telling me that I made the Hall of Fame is worth it. I don't care about getting in front of a microphone and saying, hey, I want to thank all these people. I've already thanked all those people. I thanked John Solheim. I wouldn't be a pro today without John Solheim and the Solheim family and the Ping family because we didn't have the money to turn pro, so John Solheim is the one that's led me to where I'm at today.

**Q. If Caleb asked for lessons, would you give them to him or say figure it out yourself?**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Oh, my gosh, I'm going to get in so much trouble. My wife, professional athlete, really good professional athlete. She got down to a 3 handicap. "I need lessons," she said. "I need lessons, I need to get better. I'm going to play in the Mid Am."

I said perfect, I'll get you some lessons. That was the last time she was a 3 handicap. Oh, man.

But she loves the game so much, but yeah, you know, it's the mental side of it, right? Then you start tinkering, thinking, doing. But when you shoot free throws, it's just you and the ball, right, and the hoop and you've got to shoot it. That's what you used to do, just figure out a way to shoot it. I don't care if it's through your legs, backwards. I don't care what it is, get it in the basket. That's the way I play golf, I just get it in the basket faster than anybody else.

So once she had lessons, it was a lot tougher than it used to be mentally. The mental part is what does it, right?

**Q. You're only going to get in trouble by telling this story.**

**BUBBA WATSON:** Basically what I'm saying -- my wife's not watching, let's be honest. She's putting those kids down.

No, it's one of those things where I wouldn't give him lessons unless he really wanted them or whatever. But I'm going to try not to give lessons, let him have fun with it. That's really

my passion came just having fun with it. When it starts getting mental and gotta get my feet lined up and all that stuff, that's why putting's so hard for me, it's so structured. I've got to wait five minutes for my putt and then I have to line it up, you're not in the flow of it. Driving, I can just slap the ball, I can just slap my 7-iron, chip it on, and then I get too structured in my putting and that's what I'm trying to get away from.

**JOHN BUSH:** Bubba, if you won this thing three times, you might as well make it four.

**BUBBA WATSON:** All right.