

**PGA TOUR PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**23 October 2019**

**JAY MONAHAN**  
**TY VOTAW**



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**CHUAH CHOO CHIANG:** Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Chuah Choo Chiang from the PGA TOUR communications team and thank you very much for your attendance at the inaugural ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP at Accordia Golf Narishino Country Club.

We are honored to have with us PGA TOUR commissioner Jay Monahan as well as PGA TOUR executive vice president Ty Votaw. I would like to invite Commissioner Monahan to deliver his opening comments, but we will have the translation first.

**JAY MONAHAN:** Good afternoon, members of the media, and thank you very much for your presence today. On behalf of the PGA TOUR, I'm delighted to be here in Japan as we approach the historic first tee time of the inaugural ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP.

For many years the PGA TOUR has longed for the opportunity to stage our first official PGA TOUR event in Japan and I'm looking forward with great anticipation to the first tee shot being struck tomorrow morning.

For an event of this magnitude to take place, we're very fortunate to have many passionate people who have helped make the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP a reality and I would like to acknowledge the immense contribution of Yusaku Maezawa.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to ZOZO CEO Kotaro Sawada for his support and long-term commitment to the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP. Sponsors provide the foundation for any sport to grow and the PGA TOUR is privileged and honored to have ZOZO as our partner in Japan.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to the Japan Golf Tour Organization, which is our sanctioning partner, and our host venue, Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club, for their immense contribution to the tournament.

This week we have a great field comprising of more than 50 PGA TOUR winners, five FedExCup champions, 14 major winners and nine Presidents Cup team members. I am convinced sports fans and television viewers will truly savor a week of world-class golf.

Finally, we would like to thank you, the members of the media, for your commitment and dedication to golf as every word and every image published or broadcast go a very long way to promote our sport around the world.

Thank you and have a great week ahead at the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP.

**CHUAH CHOO CHIANG:** Thank you, Commissioner Monahan. We'll go to the Q & A now. If you can raise your hand, we'll get a mic to you.

**Q. For the commissioner, with how popular golf is here in Japan, when you said there's been a desire to have a tournament here for a long time, I'm wondering what the roadblocks were and what the process was to get past them to finally have this event.**

**JAY MONAHAN:** I think -- well, the roadblocks really are it goes back to the schedule and where there is the opportunity and the right opportunity, but having been here in 2001 at the EMC World Cup, I was working at EMC at the time, I said to many people that I've never seen an event like that event. Twenty-five thousand people out at the course on Monday and the passion that golf fans have here is exceptional.

So there long has been a desire as we committed to bring the PGA TOUR to Asia, in Malaysia, in China and ultimately in Korea. There just wasn't an opportunity at that point in time to bring an event to Japan because you need to have a great sponsor and a great partner and set of partners, and this all broke clear, I point to two incidents or two moments.

One, 2016, when we established our office in Tokyo -- we have a great leader in Masa Ishii, who's leading our efforts here -- gave us an opportunity to really know the corporate community and more closely connect to the golf community. So that was obviously a very big moment for us.

And then when we met Maezawa-san and the team at ZOZO, it was very clear that this was the right partner that was going to not only embrace this championship, but as they've talked about, bring a coolness and bring a smile and a happiness to the experience here that we're very comfortable with.

I never had a doubt that and we never had a doubt that what you saw yesterday morning would be anything other than that. You're going to see great crowds here and we're really excited to see how the players respond to it. I'm sure you've heard, but I think very early in the week there's a lot of excitement for what's in store over the next four days.

**Q. Jay, with the change of the schedule last year, this year, are you sensing among the players that there's an added importance now for the fall events and specifically these three events in Asia where players can really get a jump-start on what is really a large portion of the season now?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** I would say that looking back over the last several years, Rex, you've seen with the fall, more top players playing and playing more often, and I think with these three events in Asia and the quality of the fields, we're seeing that trend continue.

But I think if you're a player and you're looking at your schedule, having come off the change

of last year and thinking about where you were as you headed into the FedExCup Playoffs, certainly consideration is going to be made to making certain that for these first 11 events, strong events in the '19-'20 calendar, that when you come into January, you've given yourself an opportunity to get ahead or put yourself in a solid position. That's really why we went to the wraparound schedule when we did; I think it's prepared us for this moment. And it's not just these three events. There's some really strong -- all these 11 events are really strong.

**Q. Two parts of the same question. Participation in Japan has gone down over the last 15, 20 years and at the same time ZOZO has been bought by Yahoo Japan. How confident are you that they'll remain a sponsor in the coming years?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** I'm entirely confident. We had a nice dinner last night with Sawada-san, the incoming or the new CEO, and the company has made a long-term commitment to this championship and all indications are, and you see it in the way that the tournament is being presented, that this is something not only are they committed to over the next six years, but I would like to think that they're going to be with us well beyond given the importance to not only their brand, but the pride that they take in their home country and the game itself.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you, Rory was in here earlier and he was saying he won't even use any CBD products because they might have traces of THC and he would fail a drug test. In view of the Matt Every suspension, is that something that you would look at, if a player applied for a therapeutic use exemption, or is it a blanket ban and is it something you're considering changing?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** Well, on CBD, I think we've been very clear with our players that because CBD oil and CBD as a product is an unregulated product, it essentially is a supplement, with it comes risk. So we've been very clear with our players and tried to communicate that risk to our players. But ultimately we're not -- we don't determine what is a banned substance and what's not, we rely on WADA for doing that. So we'll continue to stay very close not only to that substance but any potential substance that would come on or come off the list.

But I'm not surprised to hear our athletes, because you've heard it from athletes in other sports, say that that's a risk that they're just going to prevent entirely.

**Q. Now that you're going to have the first official PGA TOUR event in Japan, has there been any preliminary work to add another country that the PGA TOUR has not been to, to add another inaugural PGA TOUR official event in a country that the PGA TOUR's not been to?**

**TY VOTAW:** I think right now we're pretty pleased with what the mix of our international events are. Certainly at this time of year, one of the concerns that we would have in looking at adding an event at this time or another market at this time is the effect of what doing so would have on the quality of fields here and the sponsors that have committed the resources to make their events as successful as possible.

With that comes an expectation of quality fields, and if you added a fourth or a fifth, that may happen over time, but I think we want to make sure with this being the inaugural and only three years at CJ, Korea, and our long-established event in China, we want to make these events the strongest they can be.

If a market opens up or interest opens up because people have seen what the success here has been in the Asia Swing, we'll look at it at that time, but it probably would require some shifting of our fall schedule in that regard, but that's not in the foreseeable future.

**Q. So you've mentioned about the commitment for ZOZO and PGA TOUR, but what about the golf course, do you have any plans on changing next year or maybe down the line?**

**TY VOTAW:** Well, we're looking forward to the inaugural tee shot being done tomorrow at this golf course and I think that we're excited to hear the players' feedback about how they feel about this golf course. We are committed to this golf course. We want to see how it plays out and it's something that we have some flexibility around, but it's also something that we're looking to stay here so long as the feedback from the players is positive.

**Q. Question is about the departure of Mr. Maezawa. He was the initial person who set the event with you. With the changes with the new CEO, will remain ZOZO as the main sponsor or you will have other sponsors?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** ZOZO, when we announced this tournament, ZOZO announced a six-year commitment to this tournament (15-second audio omission) by the number of their people and the resources that they put behind it.

I think once you start to -- when you look at it from their perspective, when players start tomorrow and this event is broadcast to 226 countries and territories, when you've got this field of 78 that's so exceptionally strong, when you've got a crowd and a fan base that's really bursting through the television as excited and enthusiastic to welcome the first PGA TOUR event, I think that the value and the attention that this will bring on a worldwide basis is certainly going to make a big impact on their business and their brand.

As Ty just said, this is a start. You launch these events and you do everything you can in year one to figure out how you grow and make it better in year two, and we couldn't be more thankful to have a partner like ZOZO that is looking at this event from that perspective.

If I could just add, when we make a commitment to bring a new event to a market, that's a commitment that is permanent and our intention is to never leave Japan, to always have a PGA TOUR event in Japan from this day forward.

**Q. Jay, a couple of players -- actually, a couple on each side of the Presidents Cup, Adam Scott comes to mind, Matt Kuchar -- said they hope Tiger picks himself. I know**

**you told us a while back that you had not discussed this with him or tried to put any pressure on him, but personally, do you hope he does? Do you hope he does pick himself?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** Well, I'll just tell you that we had dinner last night and spent some time with him after his pro-am round with Maezawa-san and I didn't raise that topic.

When you pick Tiger and you pick Ernie to lead their teams, you know that, one, they're the right leaders and they're going to make the right decisions for their teams. You know, when you start getting into things that are personal, I think there are a lot of fans throughout the world that would love to see Tiger play in the event. If he were playing in the event, we all would be really excited to see him play in the event. But I think the fact of the matter is he's the captain and if he's playing or he's not, he's got a team of players behind him just as Ernie does. I think it's going to be really exciting to see it all unfold.

**Q. So we have the Tokyo Olympics next year. How would you reference this tournament for the Olympics? Is this going to be something that you compare to for the Olympics or is this something separate?**

**TY VOTAW:** We think it's a great complement to what's going to happen next August for the Tokyo Olympics and we were excited to be able to bring a PGA TOUR event in advance of the Tokyo Games. I think if you look at what the reaction on Monday was for the Challenge, the practice round yesterday, what we're anticipating the crowd size based on our ticket sales so far this week and the ticket sales for the Olympics golf competition next year, I think it all reflects an enormous amount of interest in golf played at the highest levels, which is what we're bringing to the marketplace this week and what will happen next year in the Olympics.

So we see the fact that we can be here with this event in advance of the Olympics is going to be good for the Olympics, and then when the Olympics happen next year, it will be good for the long-standing history of this event going forward.

**Q. Jay, as excellent an event as this is shaping up to be, I'm wondering if you could tell us what happened to the one it replaced, the CIMB Classic? Why did that fall by the wayside?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** Well, I think there are -- there are a number of reasons an event will not continue. When you look back to the success that we had with CIMB, it was our first event in the Asia Swing, we had a great run together and we get to the end of an agreement and if you're not able to extend, you're not able to extend. And they were a great partner. We accomplished so much with CIMB and I think it got to the point where it just didn't make business sense for them to continue.

And so that creates -- you can look at it as it's a loss, but it also creates opportunity just given the demand that there is for new events to come onto our schedule, which goes back

to the point I was making originally about what led into this event. You've got to be prepared and have people on the ground and markets that you think you can one day host a tournament at so that when an opportunity like this becomes available, not only can you add it but you can add it in such a profound way as I think we've done here and we'll prove over the next six years.

**Q. So golf in Japan, the players playing, it's starting to go down. What are your thoughts about that and ZOZO's role in that, your thoughts towards the Asian market?**

**TY VOTAW:** Participation was referenced in an earlier question. I think it's one measurement. It's not the only measurement that reflects interest in a sport and in a sport like golf. In an earlier answer I mentioned how enthusiastic and how big the crowds were on Monday and Tuesday this week, Tuesday in bad weather, and what we're anticipating this week. We think that reflects a high level of interest in our sport.

**JAY MONAHAN:** I would just add that I think everything, when you ask that question about participation and you look at it in its context, I believe there are 3,100 golf courses in Japan and 6.7 million people playing the game.

So to be back here with the first PGA TOUR event in 2019, to have golf in the Olympics in 2020, I look at this as a really important moment and opportunity for us to make a meaningful contribution to the growth of the game here in Japan, which was part of the calculus for us being here in 2019.

**Q. You mentioned that you had evening with Mr. Maezawa. Did you talk a little bit about space or his dreams to go to the moon?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** He's obviously very passionate about that and it did come up. The amount of study and thought that he's put into that commitment and the amount of work that he's going to do preparing for 2023 I think certainly was inspiring for Ty and I as well as for many other people that were at the table.

**Q. Jay, how do you think the driver testing is going? I know you're a fairly good golfer. What are your latest thoughts on where the CT limits should be?**

**JAY MONAHAN:** I would say that the program itself is off to the start that we expected it to be off to and I'm proud of the work that our team has prepared to implement the program. I think it's the kind of thing you have to look at over time.

You know, in terms of my thoughts, we're going to convey those thoughts to the USGA and the R&A, who are the ultimate arbiters of where that will end up, and we are in constant and regular communication with both organizations and certainly we were before we implemented the driver testing program.

**CHUAH CHOO CHIANG:** Thank you, everyone. I want to thank Commissioner Monahan and Ty for your time here and have a great week, everyone.

**JAY MONAHAN:** Thanks, everyone.