

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**November 18, 2020**



**WEBB SIMPSON**

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**DOUG MILNE:** Webb Simpson, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. You're making your ninth starts here at the RSM Classic with a lot of strong history to back that up with four top-10s in eight starts, two of which were runner-ups, including the near miss last year. Just some thoughts on what makes this event, courses, et cetera, so especially good for your game.

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Yeah, I think just being on the coast, near the coast. I've always loved coming here, loved going to RBC Heritage. I grew up, you know, going to Wilmington, North Carolina, I just feel like while it is a work week, I just feel at ease on weeks like this a little bit more than normal. Just love this area.

My family's coming down this weekend, so we always kind of make it a family affair. Love both golf courses. You know, the first year they went to two courses I couldn't play that first year, but heard great things about Plantation course, obviously always loved Seaside course.

I think a week like this the wind typically blows a little bit, you've got to drive it in the fairway, and I've always just felt comfortable playing both courses.

You know, obviously had a couple close calls, but I have good feelings. Even though I lost in a playoff last year and lost a playoff to Ben Crane back in 2011, I have great memories here.

**DOUG MILNE:** And you're coming off a great season '19-'20 with your sixth and seventh wins and off to a really good start this season with two top-10s, both of which in majors, including your 10th last week at Augusta. Just kind of assess the state of your game as you're heading into this week.

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Yeah, I feel like what I've done better the last couple months or I guess month and a half is drive it better. You obviously have to drive it well at a U.S. Open to play well, and last week and even ZOZO were probably my two best driving weeks I've had as a pro.

Haven't really changed a whole lot, just working on hitting it a little further; slowly, not as quick as Bryson's done it, but seeing some good results. Anytime obviously you drive it in the fairway, you're going to have better weeks. There was some good rough at the ZOZO Championship that I was able to avoid most of the time and last week at Augusta the rough was longer than normal. Guys were having a little bit of issues out of the rough and I drove it pretty straight. Obviously at Seaside -- Plantation's a little more open, but Seaside you have to drive it well, especially out in the open where the wind blows, there's some trouble out

there. I'm excited that that part of my game has been solid. If I do that well this week, I think I'll at least give myself a good opportunity.

**DOUG MILNE:** And I've got one last question and then we'll take a few questions from our guys on the line.

Obviously with Davis the tournament host, just a unique special event. We had him in yesterday and he talked about -- you could just see him glowing, seeing how excited he was having the star power and the people who just don't miss this tournament. You kind of talked about it, but just how special this is especially with Davis' name attached to it.

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Yeah, Davis has always kind of looked after me. He was my favorite player growing up. He went to UNC; my dad, mom, everybody went to UNC in my family, so I was always a huge Davis fan for many reasons.

When I got on Tour, he's always been great to me, giving me advice when I needed it. I played for him in 2012 at Medinah, so I've always been a massive Davis fan. He's so generous. I think what most players think of him as is someone who's really generous and humble.

And he's done so much for the area here, the island, the golf courses and the event. I know Davis Love Foundation is just so proud to be part of this event, and it's made RSM proud to be part of this event as well.

So I think guys play here maybe their first time, they're curious what is it like, but from my knowledge players have a great experience here. I tell people who have never been, I say you've got to come, it's one of the best weeks of the year in terms of the area. It's just a nice area, great facilities. So I'm happy for Davis that the field is as good as it is.

**DOUG MILNE:** Yeah, they come here and they move here it seems like.

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Exactly.

**Q. Players always talk about the week after the Masters you have to decompress, and Hilton Head's a good place to decompress. I'm curious, do you have to decompress as much after last week considering the fact that there were no fans there last week and maybe the buzz, energy wasn't zapped from you as much?**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Yeah, that's a good question. I think I felt pretty tired as normal on Monday, Tuesday, maybe not as much. I do think the fans do have something to do with it; not in a bad way, there's just a little more going on when there's tens of thousands of fans every day. You've got to kind of zero in and focus a little more on what you're doing. So there's definitely, we were missing that this year.

But Augusta does bring stress on you I think more than any course we play with the

undulation, the greens, the water around so many holes. And it's the Masters, so there's just a lot going into it mentally. So Sunday night you get -- sometimes you're so tired you can't sleep. That's how I was Sunday night after -- I wasn't in contention, but I had a good four days. Sunday was a challenging day with the wind coming in kind of mid round, so I had a hard time sleeping Sunday night just because I was exhausted. And last week we woke up at 4:00 three out of five days, so less rest last week than normal. Yeah, this week I feel a little more relaxed just being on the coast, I guess.

**Q. And when you get there, when you got there this year, does your mind go back to how well you played last year or does it go back to the playoff loss?**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** No, it goes back to having a chance to win. Hats off to Tyler Duncan, he birdied 17, 18 in regulation, he birdied 18 on the second playoff hole, and so when you lose to a guy who does that, I actually left last year, I wasn't that disappointed because of the way he won.

Now, if I had bogeyed a couple holes coming in, I would have been very disappointed. But I felt like Sunday last year played tough, I think I shot 3 or 4 under and I felt like I played well, birdied 15, 16. Yeah, so I'm not -- definitely not living in the past in terms of the playoff loss, but more of just hey, I've had chances to win here, I'm going to use that as confidence to help me this week.

**Q. Are you playing again the rest of this year?**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** I'm done, this is it.

**Q. Do you put anything different going into your final tournament of the year? Is there anything different as you go in?**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** I think there's a temptation to kind of live in next week where I don't have to think about golf, but I'm really trying to push myself this week to be fully here, fully present and know that a break's coming. So I'm going to hopefully give it everything I have for one more week.

**Q. Just curious what you made of last week from the standpoint of, you know, Dustin setting a scoring record, there were a bunch of other scoring records last week as well. Do you put that down to the time of year, just that's the direction golf is headed, and I'm curious where you think it goes from there in terms of the Masters and Augusta.**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Yeah, Brian, I think the biggest indicator last week of why the scores were lower were soft greens. Paul and I, my caddie, we've talked about it for a long time. Any week, no matter how long the course is or how windy it is, if greens are soft, scores are going to be low.

And example, I made eagle on Thursday on 2. I landed a 5-wood a yard short of the hole and it went to five feet. Normally if I land it there, it's going to one-hop into the patrons. There were so many situations like that where -- 15 on Friday, I landed a 5-wood a foot from the hole and it stopped, or four feet from the hole, but it released one foot. So I think the scores were indicative of the soft greens.

I also think a little bit golf is heading that direction. We're seeing scores or records broken a lot, but I think that's how sports naturally evolve. I mean, I think athletes in the NFL, NBA, NHL, these are faster, bigger, more capable athletes than ever and I think that's a good thing. I think people are figuring out sports science and I just think sports are evolving as they should. Nicklaus' generation were probably better and hit it further than Hogan's generation. I think you're seeing that a little bit with Dustin shooting 20 under. But I said at the start of the week, if conditions are what we think they're going to be, Tiger and Jordan's records are in jeopardy of being broken.

**Q. Just a quick follow, kind of a different question: How different was your preparation going into last week versus a normal spring Masters and what adjustments did you make? Did it have any impact on maybe how you prepare going into next year?**

**WEBB SIMPSON:** No, I didn't prepare before the week any differently. I kind of wanted to get on site before I started thinking through what am I going to do differently this year than what I normally do in April.

I would say the biggest difference for me and for most guys was the speed of the greens, especially Thursday, Friday. Some of these downhill putts that we normally have that were lightning fast guys were leaving short. That was my ninth Masters so I've got eight years of tournament play there where I know certain putts and tendencies and you kind of had to relearn the feel and the speed of the greens as you're going. Actually felt like I putted better on the weekend when they got faster just because it was more of what I'm used to there.

**DOUG MILNE:** Webb, looks like you are a free man. We appreciate your time and best of luck this week.

**WEBB SIMPSON:** Thanks, Dougie.