

KIRK TRIPLETT

CHRIS RICHARDS: Before we get into what we're really here to announce, I want to give you a similar opportunity as Bernhard, just your thoughts on Tiger when that news came out yesterday.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yeah, to echo Bernhard's sentiments, my feelings would go out to anybody who was in a tragic crash like that, but especially Tiger. Having played most of my career against him, trying to beat him not very successfully, but I've always admired his skill and I know he's had a lot of struggles lately with injury and some things off the course, but his ability to bounce back from whatever gets put in his way has always been tremendously impressive.

I don't know, some people just are tested more than others, so he's certainly got that ahead of him. Certainly best wishes to he and his family. I just hope we see him playing golf again.

CHRIS RICHARDS: You got your bag here, Dedication to Community. Can you please tell us about that organization and your partnership with them?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yeah, I think many of you may be familiar with the fact that last summer when we returned from the pandemic to play, I showed up at Firestone with a Black Lives Matter sticker on my golf bag, which at the time was -- there was a lot of activism among athletes. The NBA was returning and players were finding a voice. I felt that that was something that was compelling to me, and it generated a fair amount of interest.

So I have four children and my youngest son is African-American. So the events of the summer and the spring, especially George Floyd's death, really got me thinking more and more, thinking more and more.

I have twin boys that are 25. When they got their driver's license you have that talk with your kids about what happens when you get stopped by the police. You know, here's your driver's license and your registration and you do what the police officer asks you to do.

So my youngest son, nine years younger, right, I'm having that same conversation with him a few years ago and same thing, show them your registration, show them your license and you do what he asks you to do, right? But there was just a different level of urgency. Like you do what he asks you to do, right?

We had that conversation kind of more than once and it just struck me that that is something that needs to be addressed. That's not fair that I have a different conversation with my African-American son than I have with my two Caucasian sons.

So it really, with no golf to play and nothing else to do and following these news stories, it really compelled me to want to act or bring this issue to light in a place where it doesn't always see that, so I started with the Black Lives Matter sticker.

Later in the year I did lots of interviews, lots of media telling that same story of how I got to this place of why did I do that, what compelled me to act.

Later in the year one of the board members from Dedication to Community is Donnie Shell, the Hall of Fame football player from the Pittsburgh Steelers, I believe in one of my interviews I wrote that I Googled "what can a white guy do about racism or about social justice." Donnie Shell sent me an email and he said, "I've got an answer to your question. You can join the athlete platform at Dedication to Community."

So after a couple of conversations and meeting Mr. Williams and talking to him, and I'll let him detail more about what they do, but basically they're in that zone between the community and law enforcement and how those two groups interact and how those two groups can understand each other better.

So for me it was a natural fit of, okay, my interest in this social justice aspect of law enforcement and how do we make people feel safe when they're with the police, right, these guys are addressing that. They asked me to be a part of it and to talk about it, and I'm really looking forward and thrilled to have a chance to be a part of it. It's kind of a long answer to a short question.

Q. When you put on the Black Lives Matter sticker, what sort of reaction did you get from players, from fans?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, it was all across the board. I guess I put it on there without thinking a whole lot maybe. I kind of put it on there because, okay, this is how I feel and I want people to maybe start a conversation or understand.

Bret back there, he saw it first and he comes over to me about 30 minutes later and he goes, "Well?" I go, "What do you mean?" He goes, "Well, you have to say something about it." I go, "Yeah, I hadn't really thought of that." But that was pretty easy, all I had to do was tell my story, because that's how I ended up there.

The reaction was I would say 90 percent supportive from sponsors to tournament people, the media staff, media interests. But like my wife said, she said, "Don't read Twitter tonight." So, you know, there was some stuff. There was a few things, and I saved a few of them because kind of interesting. I guess I expected that, but I guess I'm just always surprised that people will reach that far out and say some things. But overall it's been fantastic.

Q. That was a natural springboard to this it sounds like?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Right. Well, it's from a guy who was so frustrated and didn't know what to do, so I did that, right? To me, again, my interest is what situation could my son find himself in with law enforcement or the police, and is it his responsibility to make sure that's a good outcome or is it our responsibility. I think it's our responsibility, and that's what Dedication to Community is addressing is how does law enforcement perceive the community that they are protecting and serving and how does the community perceive law enforcement, and how can we improve that relationship?

Q. If I can follow up on that, that 10 percent negativity, if you could talk to these people one on one --

KIRK TRIPLETT: Then it might go down to two percent.

Q. Kind of just address --

KIRK TRIPLETT: Mr. Williams has more to say about that and more experience in dealing with those kind of people, because typically those people are anonymous, right?

I got one letter, and I just have to share it because it was just listing all the different lives that matter. And I get that and I understand all of those things. I'm talking about a singular issue. At the very bottom it said, "I hope you make lots of bogeys" with four frowny faces. This is a handwritten letter that came to my house.

When you see stuff like that, I guess you know you're on the right track. I don't know how you would have a conversation with that person, but at least you could. And there are players out here that we've talked about race since this happened, and I've been playing with these guys for 40 years and we never talked about race one time. And the conversations have been good. Some players are like, "Oh, gosh, I can say something about it," because it's not something that you would normally sit around and talk about.

I think that's sort of my point, that I think everybody was ready to have some of these conversations and it's okay to have them in the golf world. The golf industry, the golf world, it's a tremendous demographic. There are great people that play the game, it's a well-educated group, it's a group that's already bent on charitable pursuits like the Conquistadors in town trying to make their community a better place.

That's what I'm trying to do, I'm trying to make my community a better place and use golf to do it.

QUENTIN WILLIAMS: My name is Quentin Williams, I'm the founder and CEO of Dedication to Community, and it's a pleasure to be here with you all and with Kirk.

What Dedication to Community does is we educate society about how to build stronger relationships. It's a really simple model. We do that through a curriculum that we developed that gets us to this place of harmony, reconciliation, connectedness. We train law

enforcement across the nation, really across the globe, and we also train and educate society, community members through high school programs, driver education, faith based, you name it, including incarcerated populations, all about how to build relationships, because at the very essence of what we are as human beings is we are interconnected. If we could get that interconnectedness to work properly, all the other issues that you see would really go by the wayside.

So listening beautifully, learning, understanding, acknowledging our history, taking action, being vulnerable. So taking action through vulnerability, courage, purpose, power and pain, if we do those things right, if we do them properly, then we'll build trust, healing and reconciliation. It's such a simple model conceptually, but it ain't easy because we have to do it every day. You know what it's like to build trust.

So that's what we're about. We were very blessed to be brought -- to have Kirk brought to our attention because of the interviews he was doing because of his story, his experiences. And our person, Donnie Shell, reached out to Kirk and Kirk with open arms embraced him and said, you know what, this sounds like a good idea.

Then we had a session with Kirk's family and we just told them what we were about and how we do what we do. From that point on, this is the result.

Kirk, he moves on stuff, he takes action, so we like that. We're about action, we're not about discussion. Awareness is great, but without action, it means nothing. So this is all about action through the simple methodologies of education and using that recipe for reconciliation.

Q. When the story came out with him with the BLM sticker on the bag, do you remember that story at the time?

QUENTIN WILLIAMS: I remember it because one of our staff members sent it to me. They sent me the ESPN interview that he did. When I saw that, I was just blown away because we hadn't heard anybody from the golf industry talk about this issue quite like Kirk. It's because of his experiences, because it's in his home and it's because of the person he is. He's an open-minded individual.

So with all of that, it was a perfect storm. And when Donnie reached out to him and Kirk embraced him, we knew we had something special that would pioneer in some arenas that hadn't ordinarily been addressing these issues.

So this we see as something that will pioneer society, not just sports. That's a big deal. If golf does this and does it well, that means that everybody else will have a mandate to do it, there will be no choice.

Q. I want to ask you, I asked Bernhard about it, you've come up there in years, 40, 45, 50. What have you done over the years to keep yourself in physical shape? What

things have you learned over time? What are you doing that you didn't have to do when you were 30 just to stay tournament ready?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yeah, I always stand face-on in a press conference and I never get to the side so I don't see how bad I look.

I think I can best explain that, I was taking a lesson in my -- I was probably in my mid 40s. Same guys I've always worked with, Laird Small up at Pebble Beach, and he's trying to teach me some stuff. We're talking about the way these kids are swinging and I said, "Look, I do not want to get better, I just want to get not so bad so fast, right?"

I think that's the thing as you're an older player, that you recognize that, hey, there's some physical stuff that's getting away from me so how do I combat that, where are the other inefficiencies in my game.

Well, I've got to make sure my short game stays sharp, I've got to think my way around the golf course better, maybe take a few less chances, have a few easier pars and wait for the birdies to come. I've got to be able to continue to practice and I've got to enjoy practicing.

I think most of us, the reason we're still out here, we don't mind putting the time in. But to be able to practice is one super important thing, you've got to be healthy, so that's the number one thing. Can you maintain your mobility, can you maintain your physical skills through practice.

I think my focus, instead of being 20 percent physical and 80 percent technique and golf practice, is rapidly approaching the other aspect. It's more important for me to get a stretch, see the chiropractor, have the massage, continue to do the exercises that allow me to swing if not as full as I used to, then pretty close.

Q. Are there courses or holes from 20 years ago that you look at, I can't make that shot anymore, or you attack things --

KIRK TRIPLETT: I'll tell you what, from that perspective I flipped on the TV and I'm watching the L.A. Open, which has always been one of my favorite courses, Riviera. I see where guys are playing from and I just -- even though I watch the young kids do it, like my son's an aspiring professional so I play with he and his friends, even though you watch guys hit the ball 300 yards in the air, 315 in the air, when I turn it on and see it happen at a Tour event or at a course where I'm familiar with where I know exactly where my ball would have gone, it's like wow. The skill level that these guys have is just incredible. I'm in awe of the regular Tour players, absolutely in awe.