

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**February 24, 2021**



**WILL ZALATORIS**

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**MARK WILLIAMS:** We'd like to welcome Will Zalatoris into the interview room here at the World Golf Championship Workday Championship at The Concession.

Will, thanks for joining us, making a little time. You've had a pretty good season -- pretty good is a little understatement, but four top-20s this season with a seventh at Farmers Insurance Open was the most recent one. Just talk about being here at the WGC event. It's your first start in a WGC and what your anticipation is and your opinion of the golf course. I'm guessing that you've had a look at it so far this week.

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, they played NCAAs here my freshman year. Unfortunately, we missed, but I watched a lot of the coverage and yesterday I got my first taste of it. It's an incredible golf course. It's in really, really good shape. Pretty demanding off the tee, greens are going to be firm, lots of run-offs, but obviously really excited to be here. Kind of pinching myself a little bit considering a year ago I was here but across the street playing in a Korn Ferry event, so obviously pretty cool to be here.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** I was going to say, it must have been a pretty surreal last six or seven months for you given that you were playing the Korn Ferry Tour and you got your special temporary membership at the 2020 Bermuda Championship and here you are at your first WGC event, top-50 in the world. How has that last six, seven months been for you?

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, it's been fun. You know, I've been just kind of keep doing the same thing. I wish I could tell you something interesting, something that's clicked or changed, but it's just been the same thing for about two years. Same routines, still working with the same guys, everyone across the board. You know, there's 18 flags out there and we're just playing against some better competition. It's been a lot of fun.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** Just before we take some questions, you've had like 18 top-20s in like your last 20, 21 starts, something like that. What do you attribute that consistency to? What part of your game is so special that gives you that consistency?

**WILL ZALATORIS:** I think I've just gotten better all around. You know, the last couple weeks I haven't driven it that great, but I putted pretty well last week, so that's kind of one day I could shoot 68, hitting a bunch of greens and hitting the par 5s in two and two-putting for birdie and then there's some days where kind of like in Phoenix where I one-putted the first -- had 10 putts in the first 10 holes. It's just been kind of all around getting better and shooting good scores just different ways.

**Q. Will, how are you? I know it's quite a lot to process, but first just wanted to get**

**your thoughts on everything that happened with Tiger yesterday.**

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, I mean, I was numb. I was obviously glad to see that he's out of surgery. Obviously it sounds like the car probably saved his life.

So a guy that obviously I think all of us owe a tremendous amount of gratitude towards. He's changed the game for all of us. The guys, I think every single one of us has probably given a Tiger fist pump who's been growing up. Obviously seeing the news that obviously being in an accident, but glad he's okay. I know a long road to recovery, but Tiger's Tiger, you can never hold him back.

**Q. Have you had a chance to interact with him? I know your PGA TOUR career is very new, but have you had that chance?**

**WILL ZALATORIS:** No. I met him once. Typical Tiger fashion though, I was actually playing a college event up in Oregon and Notah Begay was one of the speakers doing a roundtable and Notah called him on the phone and they were trying to get ahold of him and Tiger said, "What do you want?" Notah said, "Just want to say hi, sitting here doing this little Q and A."

Next thing you know Tiger walks up from the back of the room mic'd up and he says, "Well, I'm right here, ask me anything you want." Of course everyone's absolutely insane. I met him that night, but that's basically it.

**Q. On a different note, I hope I'm not putting you on the spot here, but I was curious how familiar you are with the concession and the '69 Ryder Cup that was the inspiration for the course you'll be playing, if you do know about that, and if you do know about it, the follow-up would be would have conceded the putt, would you have done what Jack Nicklaus did?**

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, I actually was reading up on it before I got here. Obviously the U.S. retained the Cup, so I think that was -- considering that there's a golf course that's named off it, it's known throughout golf circles and one of the biggest concessions in golf history obviously, and Jack being the sportsman that he is. Yeah, I definitely would have done the same as long as we were retaining the Cup. If we weren't going to retain the Cup, I think there might have been a little bit of a different circumstance.

**Q. And a very light one, have people told you before that you look and sound a little bit like Owen Wilson?**

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Wow. I've been starting to get that a little bit. I've been getting a lot of doppelgangers, like Mr. Gilmore's caddie or Owen Wilson, I've been getting a lot of that stuff lately.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** Will, I'll just ask you, you had a hole-in-one at the U.S. Open late last year in your top-10 finish there. Since then, what's kind of been the highlight for you on the

PGA TOUR?

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Oh, man, that's a good one. Man, probably I think locking up special temporary status. I thought that at the time making an eight-footer for par in Vegas, I thought that was going to lock it up. I needed a two-way tie for fifth, but I ended up finishing a three-way tie for fifth. I knew what that putt meant, so even though it didn't end up doing really anything, I still needed to go make one more cut, that was kind of something I'll never forget. But then, you know, obviously nice to lock it up.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** And when you did lock it up by making the cut at the Bermuda Championship, how much of a relief was that for you? Did it free you up to obviously play the way that you have? It seems like it has, but how important was it and how much of a relief was it for you at that point?

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, technically it gave me unlimited starts for the rest of the year, but the job kind of wasn't done. I still needed to play some good golf and try to get my card locked up for 2021-2022. Now I'm kind of in a position where now that I'm kind of past -- I know next year I basically got locked up being Top-125 nonmember, I've said this a bunch, just playing with house money. Every week's a chance to get better and a chance to go win a golf tournament and hopefully improve my status and possibly get in the FedExCup Playoffs. You know, on the micro level it's just day in and day out just trying to get better. All that stuff, good golf takes care of all that stuff.

**Q. It's quite a long way off, I know, but I was looking at the Ryder Cup standings and you're in the top-50. I just wondered as long as the journey to that would be for this year, is it something you give thought to and would you qualify something like that as one of your goals or one of your dreams?**

**WILL ZALATORIS:** Yeah, I mean, with everything that's kind of happened over the past year and a half, I mean, last April I was -- we were basically told that we weren't going to be able to get a PGA TOUR card for 2021. Well, we did. I wasn't going to play in the Open, but then because of COVID I end up -- the Korn Ferry ends up getting a start in the Open and I get PGA TOUR status that way.

Obviously it's a massive goal. I'm in a nice spot considering where I've been or where I was a year ago today, but kind of the same thing as I was just telling Mark, good golf takes care of everything. If it happens, it happens, but as long as I keep doing what I'm doing, I know that hopefully some day I'll be playing with the boys representing our country.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** Okay, Will, that's about it. We appreciate you making the time to come and talk to us and all the best for this week, and good golf will take care of itself.

**WILL ZALATORIS:** That's right. You got it.