

JOSEPH BRAMLETT

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Joseph Bramlett into the interview room here at the Fortinet Championship. Stanford graduate, local favorite making his fifth start at this event.

Joseph, if we can get some comments on being back.

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: It's great to be here, yeah. I'm very, very excited to get this new PGA TOUR season started. Yeah, I'm only about an hour and a half from home, so I definitely am enjoying some nice NorCal vibes. And yeah, I love the golf course, love the place and I'm ready to go.

JOHN BUSH: What is it about this course that you like so much, Joseph?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: It just feels like northern California golf to me. The grass is what I grew up on. I love the trees. When trees frame holes for me, that is just -- always helps me kind of strategize, it feels comfortable. And the greens are really demanding so you've got to hit it in the right spots, you've got to manage your speed. It's the type of golf course that if you play well, you can get it going pretty low, but if you hit a few bad shots, you're penalized for them.

JOHN BUSH: And you're coming in obviously with a lot of momentum, winning the Korn Ferry Tour Championship to secure your membership for this year on the Tour. Just take us through that win, winning by four shots, and what that does for your confidence.

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, it's massive for my confidence. It was my first win out here on either the PGA or the Korn Ferry Tour, so it's something I always believed I was capable of doing, but to actually prove it to myself and get it done, especially on such a demanding golf course with so much on the line, was really, really gratifying. I've done a lot of reflection this week and it's just, yeah, it felt really, really good.

JOHN BUSH: And you're coming off of a season with six top-25 finishes, not quite over the hurdle of advancing to the Playoffs, but now with this momentum, just talk a little bit about how excited you are for this season.

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, I'm extremely excited. Some of the interviews we did last week, they were asking me about my game last season. While my FedExCup ranking didn't reflect what I would like it to, my skills got a lot better last year. I got a lot more speed off the tee, my wedge game is dialed in a lot better and I've become a more consistent putter. So for me, looking through it through that lens, there's a lot of optimism coming into this year.

To finally prove to myself that I can win at this level as well, I feel a lot of positive momentum.

Q. Can you sort of take us through what the back nine in particular was like? You obviously knew going into the day you had a good chance to win. I believe you shot 30 on the back nine.

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah.

Q. What was that sort of -- talk about being in a zone whether, it's basketball or golf or whatever, what was that like given how much was on the line and as you kind of got rolling there on the back nine?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, obviously it was a lot of fun. That's the situation that we all practice for, we all train for. You're crazy nervous but your game feels like it's in a good place and you have a chance to achieve something, so it was just extremely exciting to be in that environment.

Trey was pushing me all day. He was playing fantastic, I think he was 5 under through 12 and I birdied 9, 10 and 12 just to stay three back. So I really felt like I just had to keep the pedal down and I think that just propelled me a bit just to keep going and not think about how many birdies in a row I had made or how far under par I was, I was just trying to get one more. Then I'd get one and try to get another one and it just kind of built up that way. Yeah, before I knew it, I was on a really great run and I had control of the tournament and it was time to close.

Q. And when was it, maybe later that night, a couple days later, a week later that you sort of could convey the emotion of that, the emotional significance of that win given the context, your journey, the injury as long as you were out? And you've had chances, you've played well at many events, but as you said, you hadn't won. Given everything you had been through, what does it mean now as you look back on it?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, it means so much, man, to be honest. It started setting in very soon after we finished, just sitting around in the trophy ceremony because Victoria National was the last tournament I played before I hurt my back. You know, I left Victoria National, went to Utah and then never teed it up in Utah because I got hurt before the tournament started. That finish to that golf course and that place in general I've spent a lot of time thinking about and to stand there and get the trophy was just extremely exciting to feel that journey kind of come full circle in a sense. Yeah, it meant so much to me because I didn't know if I would ever have that chance again. There's so many days that the rehab was going tough and I wasn't making the progress I wanted to make and you just never know if it's actually all going to all work out. To get to that place and finally close the door and win a tournament and do it there, it just felt so special.

Q. And one last follow if I can, given that, how is your back? How much work do you

have to do to stay healthy these days?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, my back is doing great. I was going to knock on wood, but to be honest, I don't know. As things come up we have to deal with them, but my back is the strongest it's ever been, my body is the strongest it's ever been. I've got about 20 minutes every morning that I've got to do in terms of mobility to get everything loosened up and ready to go and I've got to stay on top of my mobility at night. I've got a few tendencies with my golf swing that I like to fall into that I just always have to monitor and if I stay on top of those things, my practice is unrestricted. I won last week and that was my 10th week out of 11 competing, so I think from a health standpoint that proves that I'm in a really good place. I feel strong and excited and still young enough to keep going.

Q. Following up with what Ron was asking you on your back, how different is your injury to what happened to Patrick Cantlay and how much inspiration have you been able to gather from what he's been able to do since coming back?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, so from a medical standpoint, I don't know exactly what Patrick had. I think he had some kind of low back like pars fracture or something, but I might be totally wrong on that. I just know that both of us had very extended low back injuries that kept us out of the game for a long time.

I certainly kept an eye on him as he was making his comeback and he started to have pretty solid success very early. What that did for me was just confirm that the game I had before I was hurt is still going to be there as long as I'm able to get healthy and I'm able to get the reps in and practice appropriately. And then to see him kind of rise towards the top of the PGA TOUR and win the FedExCup last week as well is just, it's awesome. It shows that just because you had a low back injury, which at one point in time would have ended your career, but these days with medicine and what we can understand about the body, we're kind of able to work through and continue a nice, long, healthy career with.

Q. You won the Korn Ferry Tour Championship and I know you did really well, nearly won the one at the King and Bear. What do you think you need to do against the top players to have as much success as you've been able to have against the Korn Ferry level?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, I think it's just a progression of my career. You know, you kind of have to do this in stages. First it's junior golf, then you've got to get up to amateur golf, then collegiate golf and then professional golf. Even in professional golf you have to have success on the mini tours to make it to the Korn Ferry Tour and you have to constantly build your way up.

For me, I've just tried to target some of the areas of my game that have held me back or I've needed to get more solidified in and I think I've done that. So just kind of continuing to work on the same stuff.

Like I said, my skills got a lot better last year and I'm very excited about that. Now I have three years of PGA TOUR experience under my belt as well, which I think is a really big deal. I'm getting more comfortable, I'm understanding the golf courses better. I really just think it's a slow progression. I wish there was a specific answer I could give, but I think it's just a matter of time, frankly.

Q. And is there a particular area you're targeting in the 2021-22 season to improve on?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, that winner's circle.

Q. Okay. And how important is this season and how much have you already -- are you a goal setter? Have you made some goals that you want to achieve this season?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Yeah, to be honest, I am a goal setter. I have not sat down and come up with a list of goals for this season just because there's been such a short turnaround. I kind of gave myself permission to just enjoy the win last week. It's been a pretty long journey and it was just such an emotional high for me that I really wanted to savor that and enjoy that.

Yeah, actually my caddie has a little email out to me, my coach, my agent and my team and we all have a little brainstorming thing we're going to do next week. I haven't put together the goals yet, but it's all going to be towards onwards and upwards, continuing to try to get better and move my way up.

Q. I joined late, maybe you already mentioned this, but how did you go about celebrating last week?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: I mean, I spent three days on the couch like just not doing anything. I had been on the road for 11 weeks, I'd been home three days all summer, so just sitting on the couch felt really good. Yeah, we went out with some friends, got some sushi. Yeah, caught up with a few friends I hadn't seen in a while. Yeah, it was very low key, which is kind of my style, but it was perfect.

Q. Last one from me, do you need to get a lot of tickets this week? Do you have a lot of people hitting you up to come out here and watch you?

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: There's hopefully going to be a lot of people to come out. I've got a lot of friends that are trying to come out this weekend and they're trying to see if they can get off work and whatnot. Yeah, there's been quite a few people reaching out, which is going to be really nice.

JOHN BUSH: Joseph, that does it. We appreciate your time and best of luck this week.

JOSEPH BRAMLETT: Awesome. Thanks for having me, man.