

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 14, 2021



CAMERON CHAMP

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Cameron Champ into the interview room here at the Fortinet Championship. He's making his fourth start at this event and his first since winning in 2019.

Cameron, I know you hated missing last year, but if we can get some thoughts on being back at Silverado.

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, super excited. Like you said, last time I was here I had some very good moments and this is kind of like my home event. Obviously I'm based in Houston now, but I grew up in northern California, Sacramento. I played -- I feel like I played just about every golf course up and down the state. For me this is about as close to home as I get. It will definitely be nice to see my family out this week and see some of our close friends.

JOHN BUSH: And I know this event now means even more to you with Fortinet, your partnership with them, to help the Cameron Champ Foundation. What a special event that was yesterday helping the youth in the area. If we can just get some comments on what that means to you and what you hope to achieve through that partnership.

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, as you said, obviously the Tour and Fortinet was super generous to allow us to have our event yesterday. Again, it's a huge steppingstone for us. That's a huge deal and we know that, and again just super grateful for the opportunity. And again, yesterday was an amazing day. We had a great turnout, a huge support from people we've known since I was younger to new supporters. So for us this is again just the start. We want to -- obviously we have our hopes and dreams of one day what it could become and for us this is, like I said, just another steppingstone into making that a reality.

JOHN BUSH: And Cameron, let's talk a little bit about the state of your game. You're on a small list of players who have won each of the last three seasons. I know that means a lot to you. If you can talk a little bit about that achievement and then also your goals for this upcoming year.

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah. Obviously, you know, last year it was a very up-and-down year. Obviously beginning of the year wasn't too good and I know that. Kind of the end of the year even up until John Deere and 3M, I felt like I was playing good. I wasn't scoring whatsoever, but I was doing all the right things, I was doing what I was supposed to be doing and it finally showed up. And kind of even toward the end of the year I played pretty well in New York. In Baltimore I didn't really play that well, but just it's continuing doing what I'm doing and the results will come when they come. You can't force things out here. Once you start forcing

stuff, you can get very sideways quickly.

Right now my game is, again, it's the best it's ever felt. This week has been really good as far as ball-striking goes, chipping and putting. Obviously I'm very comfortable on this golf course, I love it here. So just super excited for the week.

And as far as the year goes, I'm not -- I have my basic goals for as far as, you know, what I want to do to improve, but as far as that, I'm not -- I'm not going to set any super high goals. Obviously, you know, percentage of cuts, kind of little things where I can slowly pick at, but as far as, you know, saying I want to win two, three, four majors, obviously that's what we all come here to do is try to win every single week. Now, that's very difficult to do, but I'm just going to stay my course and just continue what I'm doing.

Q. Hey, Cam, what was the reason that you didn't play in this tournament last year as defending champion?

CAMERON CHAMP: I don't remember, to be honest. There was something going on personally and it just didn't work out. Yeah, to be honest, I honestly don't even remember what it exactly was, but I know it was definitely something personal and it just didn't work within the schedule.

Q. Okay. I noticed you posted something on social media about stopping at Foothill the other day. Can you tell me about getting back there and what that place means to you?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, you know, I flew in and kind of went and saw my parents, hung out with my parents a bit and they got all packed up. My dad had to stop by the course and I just wanted to stop by and see it. I mean, I haven't been home in just kind of two years, with COVID and all that happened, and then I was busy. We got back playing right away and everybody just had to play, play, play. So I haven't been home in quite a while, so definitely wanted to go back and see it.

The course is -- everything is going in the proper directions that we want it to. The course is improving. Obviously finally now we're slowly starting to get plans approved by the city and there's many different sections that we have to get approved by in order to build things. It's been a slow process, but we have kind of everything drawn up and now it's just about, like I said, getting everything approved and start the construction.

Q. And then what does yesterday's -- how does yesterday's pro-am factor into what you're trying to accomplish with your foundation?

CAMERON CHAMP: It's huge. It's another step in achieving or doing something for others that we have dreamed of, that my family has. For us, again, just to see the support year in and year out and to see people who kind of believe in what we're doing and what we're trying to do back in Sacramento and obviously throughout the country with -- or the Mack

Champ Invitational after my grandfather in Houston, we're trying to make a difference in as many ways as we can. Obviously I'm only one person, my family's only one family, my board is only one board, so we can only do as much as we can, but with the resources and with the people we have that are in support of us, we're going to do everything we possibly can to help the kids, especially in my hometown.

Q. Would you consider a long drive competition much like Bryson is going to do after the Ryder Cup?

CAMERON CHAMP: I mean, it would always be fun to do, but I mean, no, it's not something I'm particularly interested in. I want to stick to what I know and that's -- for me personally, that would again be changing a few things within your swing and equipment and stuff like that. So obviously it would be a cool idea for me and would obviously be kind of fun, but right now it's just not the right thing for me to do right now. I'm just going to stay my course.

Q. I was going to ask some more questions about Foothill. What was your favorite thing about that place growing up?

CAMERON CHAMP: I think just it was a place my grandfather and I can go and play. At the time they had a program and that was kind of what the rough patch financially for my family at that age when I was there, 7, 8, 9. They had a program, it was like 200 bucks a year for kids under 5 or 6 or something like that and I could play as much as I wanted to. After school we would go play as many holes as we could. I could still remember the push carts they had to the little snack shack they had. We would play as many holes as we could. Even to this day some of those holes I couldn't even reach. The max hole is maybe 115, 120 yards. Just a lot of good memories. Obviously to be able to acquire the place and be able to do what we're trying to do again for our community and the kids, it's kind of like a dream. It's something that again we're going to keep pushing as hard as we can in order for that dream to become a reality.

Q. When did you officially acquire it?

CAMERON CHAMP: We did last summer. Gosh, say last summer. And then, like you said, when COVID hit, that was kind of a setback, so probably about a year and a half ago, just under two years.

Q. And what have been the changes that you've been able to implement so far?

CAMERON CHAMP: Well, again for us, it takes -- again to do something right now with the time we're in, especially in this state it takes a lot longer. Obviously we've got the course in great shape compared to what it was. As far as the amount of people that we get out there and the programs that my dad's doing as far as right now, it's great to see. Again, we've finally kind of got over the barriers of getting stuff approved and plans done and things like that, so it's taken quite a while and three or four times longer than we thought it would, but I

think we're again getting close to that final step as far as, you know, knocking stuff down and getting stuff rebuilt back up.

Q. Can you just explain why it was so important for your grandfather for you to give back to your community?

CAMERON CHAMP: My parents just did that at a young age. I used to help out charity events when I was 9, 10, 11 years old. It's just something that my dad -- again, as an 11-year-old, you don't really understand what you're doing. You know what the event is, but you don't know the magnitude of it and what it does for others.

For me as a kid it kind of ingrained in me a way that made it to where it became my passion and it's something that I love. I love helping others, I love doing more for others than myself. I've kind of always been that way even with family or back home. It could be something small. That's just kind of who I am and it's who I will always be and who my family will always be. Again, I'll use as many resources, as many -- as much of my time to be able to make it happen.

Q. And lastly from me, what was your fondest memory from winning this tournament in 2019?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, I just think the magnitude of -- I didn't really care to be here, to be honest. So it was again Thursday I showed up, we hit traffic coming out of Sac through Davis and I got about 30 minutes before my tee time to warm up, hit a few balls, hit some putts and I went and shot 5 under with no bogeys. I think it was just again the stuff that was going on back home with my grandfather and I just -- I didn't care what I shot, I really didn't -- I cared less and that's something I always look back on. Obviously we care to be out here week to week and we want to win, but when you put yourself in a position where it's hard to get out of, it's a rough road and that's kind of where I was at the beginning of this last year.

So that win again with the magnitude and winning the way I did with pretty much everybody I knew personally who was close to me was there on 18 was definitely very -- like you said, it's a moment that I think no matter -- I said it, obviously I won 3M, but it would be the greatest for me moment personally of any wins regardless of how many more times I win in my career.

Q. What's it been like to have fans return this past season and how has that helped you?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, I think all of us, we miss them and we don't, to be honest. I remember when we got back, kind of started after COVID and it was definitely weird. There's nobody there, it's just kind of like we're just out playing to play. Definitely having fans builds the energy and the excitement within the event, you kind of feed off that stuff.

For that time being I remember at Harding Park, I got myself kind of in there a little bit and there's -- I made a few putts that you know there would be stands there, make a 40-footer to get within one or two tie the lead, you get a big roar. It kind of uplifts you and gives you even more energy and you feed off that. I think a lot of us definitely missed that aspect of when you're playing well, the crowd definitely kind of feeds into you and gives you a little more excitement, a little more push and so yeah.

JOHN BUSH: All right. Well, I appreciate that and we appreciate your time today, Cameron. Best of luck this week.

CAMERON CHAMP: Thank you.