

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**November 16, 2021**



**DAVIS LOVE III**

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**JACK RYAN:** Like to welcome Davis Love III into the interview room at the RSM Classic.

Davis, obviously our tournament host. So, Davis, if I could just start with an opening comment from you on how excited you are to be here again at the RSM Classic.

**DAVIS LOVE III:** Well, we're excited that it's close to back to normal this year. It's been fun the last couple of months watching our operations team and our foundation team and the Sea Island team actually build a tournament again.

It was a little weird last year. Obviously the whole world's been weird for a year and a half, but nice to have the fans back, nice to have our sponsors back. RSM already had one pro-am event and several events outside, but several fun events at night. It's moving along and we're excited that things are back to normal and our community is going to get to come out and participate this year.

**JACK RYAN:** Another thing that was missing last year was you in the field. Not able to participate last year, but you're back this year. How's your game feeling and what are your expectations for the week on the course?

**DAVIS LOVE III:** Well, my expectations are certainly better than my wife's, Robin's, who thinks I'm going to withdraw again. I've had a long year with a hip replacement and had a bad thumb through some Champions Tour events, ended up not finishing the first playoff event in Richmond, but I'm feeling very well. I'm an old and creaky golfer.

Randy Myers has had me in the gym a lot the last couple weeks trying to get ready. Jack Lumpkin says I look pretty good on the driving range.

Monday and Wednesday pro-ams were key for me getting some time on the golf course and trying to keep score. But I'm hitting the ball pretty well and I know my way around these golf courses, and if I can block out everything else that's going on, I might maybe be competitive. I don't have any huge goals, but just want to enjoy the week.

And obviously missing it last year was tough. I know I'll probably get a pretty good pairing on Thursday, Friday with some fun guys, so I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. Davis, last year's hiccup aside, after 12 or 13 years, has this tournament gotten to the vision that you had for it when you first created it, and if not, how much further do you think this can be enhanced or elevated beyond a pretty good fall tournament, FedExCup points, the winner gets to the Masters, which didn't exist the first year?**

## **Where do you think you're going right now?**

**DAVIS LOVE III:** Yes, we've grown into a bigger tournament than we envisioned in the beginning. Obviously the fall has become more and more important. Guys have realized over the last few years that you need to get some points in the fall if you want to win at the end. They put up a stat last week how close the points are for the 125 or for the Top 30 and every point counts during the year, so it's important for guys to get to play. Obviously we see that in our field this year. I don't know numbers-wise, but it looks like our best field we've ever had.

Yeah, it's grown a lot. My brother Mark and I sat down and said maybe we could have a tournament and what do we want it to look like and we said we want it to look like the old Callaway Gardens event that's family friendly like Hilton Head, one that everybody likes to come to and has a great time while they're there, show off Sea Island, show off our community hospitality and have the guys have a fun week, and the wives and the kids and the families.

Again, that's why it's great. This year we're more back to normal. We've got not just Tour players here playing on TV with no fans, we have the families are back and all our friends from RSM and our other sponsors are back. It's grown a lot more than we ever expected and going to go over \$25 million to charity this week, exceeded expectations, but that's what happens at Sea Island and with a great team in our foundation office.

**Q. You mentioned Callaway Gardens, but is this also kind of parallel to the old Disney World tournament where that would be the last tournament to make the TOUR Championship, the last tournament to get your card under the old system, but it was still a kind of relaxing week for most of the guys unless they were grinding, unless they were 126?**

**And bringing the families, do you guys see this as a nice reward for the families being on the road as much as they are and now they can come to this atmosphere?**

**DAVIS LOVE III:** Yeah, I remember Justin Leonard's kids saying how they were ranking Sea Island in their events and they liked going to the Greenbrier event and they liked going to Disney and they liked going to Sea Island. It's nice to be in those kind of rankings where the whole family looks forward to coming to the tournament.

I know Webb Simpson and Kevin Kisner and Charles Howell, it's more than just a golf tournament to them. It's a family trip. Now we've got new young families like Trey Mullinax can't wait to get to Sea Island, can't wait to go to Southern Soul Barbecue, can't wait for his kids to see the ocean. That makes it even more special for us, not only do the guys like coming here and competing and playing the golf courses, but they love bringing their families here and creating a seaside tradition as our tagline says. It's become a tradition now on Tour. It's hard to believe it's 12 years of it.

**Q. Davis, congrats on all your success there. Just was wondering if you could put on your Presidents Cup hat for just a quick second here. What role do you think Tiger is going to have in that Presidents Cup? I know it's early, but could you foresee him being -- helping you out as an assistant captain?**

**And then secondly, Phil is in the news a lot these days. He's winning a lot on the Champions Tour, he's got a great record at Quail Hollow. Could you foresee Phil actually potentially even playing on that team?**

**DAVIS LOVE III:** Yes, I'll just say yes to all that.

I put my Presidents Cup hat on walking across the driving range to get to the press conference because Andy Pazder from the Tour stopped me and told me four or five Presidents Cup things.

We're totally focused on Presidents Cup. We're excited about Charlotte. Johnny and Deborah Harris were here this weekend and ran into my wife, Robin, and said, "Make sure you remember that we have a guest house and that you can come up anytime you want." They made me an honorary member of the club, so we're definitely focused on the Presidents Cup hat.

You know, Tiger, I think we pushed -- it would have been a great captaincy for Tiger to continue on. At the time we were discussing it, he said, "No, I'm playing really good, I'm gonna make the team, and I enjoyed Australia being playing captain, but I want to be a player on the team." So his role is whatever his role wants to be. If Tiger calls me up and says, "Hey, you're kicked out, I'm taking over," that's Tiger's role. If he wants to be an assistant, you know.

I would hope that he comes back and starts playing and can make that a goal, to be on the team. He was a big part of our Ryder Cup. It took us a while to get him to the point where he would engage. Obviously he had a rough start to the year, but once we got him in the loop, he was a big help and a lot of fun for the Ryder Cup and for the team. Obviously the guys were going to see him down there in south Florida all summer, but leading up to the Ryder Cup, obviously he had a watch party at his house. He can do whatever and I know he'll be a big part of it.

And then Phil, I told Phil, "Hey, we don't know what's going on with some of these players," leading up to the Ryder Cup. Brooks was hurt. I said, "You better be ready to play, not put a radio on. Last minute, we may need you."

I think Charlotte, yes, I would look at Phil right now more getting ready to play. I think he can have a big year on the PGA TOUR. Obviously when he pops out on the Champions Tour he's a favorite and I think he's got the best winning percentage on the history of the Champions Tour. He hasn't won as many as Hale Irwin, but win-per-start, he's doing awfully well like Furyk. I would look for Phil as a player right now, yes, more than anything.

**Q. Davis, what did you learn about being captain from your role as assistant captain at the Ryder Cup this year?**

**DAVIS LOVE III:** We learn something every time we do it. Unfortunately, we learned a lot in pairs. We thought we were making some really good progress with captaining decisions, assistant captains, everybody's role. Obviously we had some guys not playing well in pairs, but we also -- me -- gave the captain some bad advice in spots and we didn't -- we weren't prepared for some things over there. We learned a lot in pairs. We learned a lot watching Tiger talking to the guys that were down there, the assistant captains and how Tiger ran that team.

And then Stricker, he did a lot of things differently at Whistling Straits than he did at the Presidents Cup in New York. We learn something every time we do it. I got to know Patrick Cantlay a lot better and Xander Schauffele and Collin Morikawa. It was a big week for me. I watched almost every shot Dustin hit during the week. And Dustin and Brooks and Jordan, they know what they're getting with me and I know what I'm getting with them, but it was great to make contact with Patrick and Xander and Collin and Scottie. Scottie's playing here this week. I'll spend some time with him.

And that's why I want to play out on the regular tour some next year is because I've got a good foundation with some of the young guys and I want to keep that going. I want them to have access to me. I don't really need the access to them, but I want them to be able to walk up to me on the range and stop me, like guys are doing this week, and talk. That's why I need to be out there.

Yeah, but I learned a lot from Steve. Steve will be a big part of this Presidents Cup team as well, as will Zach Johnson and all the guys that were at Whistling Straits.

**Q. Following up on what was just asked about Tiger at the Ryder Cup, give me one thing, what's one thing that he did that really impacted a decision or helped the team.**

**DAVIS LOVE III:** I think one, he knows a few of the players really well so he can give a little bit more insight. Tiger went from a guy we didn't know to now he's a leader and an inside guy, so he has good information on some of the players that we don't know.

He was really helpful in captains' picks. I think for me in '16 and then as an assistant captain, he's very helpful in strategy and pairings. He's a tactician, he watches a lot more golf than I do, so he has a lot of information.

What I'm amazed with him and with Phil, with Jack Nicklaus is the incredible memory of things that happened in the past. I will go, "Yeah, I played the Ryder Cup in '97. That was at Valderrama." Tiger and Phil remember every shot and what everybody else did. Phil was a great assistant captain. He was entertaining as always, but when you say, "Hey, what happened when we did this," Phil just remembers it immediately.

To have that, I need that especially. I can set a goal and a tone and here's what we want to do. Those guys remember how we did it in the past and help me get to the point.

One of the great things Tiger does is, "Would you please make a decision?" That's really good for me. Like quit waffling around, you know what you want to do, let's make a decision and stick with it.

It's great, we all have different personalities. Obviously Zach, Steve Stricker, myself, Tiger, we're all different people and have different perspective on things, but we've all come together and come to a common theme and a common goal and it's great to have that corroboration. Tiger's a great leader for us on and off the golf course obviously.

**JACK RYAN:** Davis, those are all the questions we have. We appreciate your time and good luck on and off the golf course this week. Looking forward to a great week.

**DAVIS LOVE III:** All right. Thanks, guys, for tuning in.