

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 16, 2021



WEBB SIMPSON

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We would like to welcome Webb Simpson to the interview room here at the RSM Classic.

Webb, you're making your 10th start in this event which holds a special place in your heart, at least in the history of your game. Two playoff losses here, so almost close to victory. What's it like being back here at the RSM Classic?

WEBB SIMPSON: I love being here for many reasons. I have, like you said, I've had a couple chances to win. I feel comfortable on both golf courses, especially Seaside. We're close to the beach. I was able to win the RBC Heritage at the beach. I just love -- I grew up at the beach, I love being near the water, so I feel like I'm just relaxed here.

I didn't grow up coming to Sea Island, but have become very familiar in the last few years with the area. I think overall just being relaxed for us players is a good thing and that's how I feel around this golf course.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: You're entering your fourth and final start of the fall portion of the PGA TOUR season. Just a couple comments on the state of your game.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, so I've had a month off. I've been working a lot on my game. I feel really good. I feel like I had a lesson with Butch Harmon in Vegas and he simplified it for me and just told me these are the couple things I want you to work on, and I've done that and I feel really good about my game. It's nice coming into a place where I've had success with confidence, so I'm really excited to tee it up Thursday.

Yeah, after this I'll get a longer break, but excited for the season to kind of keep going starting in January.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We're in a Presidents Cup season here. The Presidents Cup will be at Quail Hollow in 2022. We're here with Captain Davis Love this week. Your thoughts on the Presidents Cup being played at Quail Hollow this year.

WEBB SIMPSON: It's really exciting. I think the members are super excited. We've experienced a regular PGA TOUR event, a major in the PGA Championship, and this is very different. A lot of members have asked me what is it like and I said it's very different than these other events you've seen. A lot louder, more cheers, especially just being home in our home country.

But I think there's excitement within the city. I think from what I hear, it's going to be kind of a

city takeover in a way, kind of like Melbourne was where the whole city gets behind the event. The big murals, I saw them the other day in downtown Charlotte of Davis and Trevor. I'm really looking forward to it. It's obviously an amazing venue to have it at Quail Hollow.

The question is, if I make the team, can I sleep in my bed or do I have to go back with the team? We'll see.

Q. The years that you've lost in a playoff here or there was another year where you had a chance at the end of getting into the playoff, but you shot really good scores that day and other guys did things -- made birdies down the stretch. When you have a close call like that, do you just say, look, the other guy played great, there's nothing I can do about how many birdies he makes, or do you just always go back and, you know, there was some other birdie I could have made, there was some other putt or some other shot I could have made, but mentally how do you go back and look at those situations?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, that's a great question. I think both of my playoff losses I felt really good about how I played Sunday. Ben Crane made a ton of putts on Sunday, a ton of birdies. I think he shot 63 if I remember correctly. We actually had breakfast that Sunday morning together.

Then Tyler Duncan birdied 17 and 18 to close out his last two holes of regulation and I shot 66 on a tough windy day.

Yeah, to your point, I feel like those -- walking away losing a playoff always hurts, but I didn't lose any sleep Sunday night because I felt like I did my job on Sunday. Brendon Todd was super kind, he said the next time I saw him he thought I played good enough to win and what are you going to do when a guy birdies 17 and 18 out here, which are two tough holes. They weren't too hard of losses where other times I feel like I bogeyed the last hole at Tampa to miss a playoff, that one hurt a lot worse than these here.

Q. Finally, this tournament, you've come back almost every year. The atmosphere or the family atmosphere, missed out on that last year, but compared to a lot of other Tour events, this one seems to be geared for what a player's family can do while you're playing or maybe when you can join them. Seems like there's a strong effort here made to make this about a player's entire family, not just about the player.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I think the area does a lot for that. It's a destination spot all summer for families to come and relax and get a week at the beach. There's so much to do. My kids know this is the place with the candy shop over at The Cloister. They're starting to remember stops on Tour with really fun things they've done. Obviously they have the beach they can go on.

Yes, that's our tension I think as PGA TOUR players is leaving our family. It's really hard. We love what we do, but the worst part probably is we're traveling around the country all

year. For those of us with kids and kids in school, it's harder to get them to travel to us. So I look to any opportunity close to Charlotte to bring my family because, again, it's less time away from them and hopefully they'll look forward to coming.

Q. Have you got your Cam Newton jersey back out yet?

WEBB SIMPSON: Oh, man, I'm happy to have him back. I've missed him.

Q. Obviously there's a lot of talk going around about things that could be happening outside the PGA TOUR, within the PGA TOUR, changes that could come. How much do you pay attention to that and does any of it concern you? Does it excite you? Does it pique your interest?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, it definitely piques my interest in terms of just the Tour progressing and getting better. I think that's the goal from Jay Monahan to everyone who works for the Tour, that we want to continually have a better product, continually have a tour that the best players are competing on for the biggest purses and the biggest payouts and they're doing a great job of that I feel right now.

There's obviously a lot going on with different leagues coming into play, but this is my 14th season I think on Tour and I feel like what we're given the opportunity to do every week is better than it's ever been. Not only when I talk to Jay and Ross Berlin and Andy Padzer, I've talked to Kevin Kisner, who's a great representative for us players because he has a great relationship with these guys, but also he's getting a lot of cool things and ideas brought to the top.

So, yes, there's been quite a few changes in schedule and purses and different tournaments and new tournaments that I've heard about and have seen for next year. I'm excited with where the Tour's going. It's become really a world tour in the sense of the best players in the world are playing the PGA TOUR. So I love that aspect, that you go tee it up at any Tour event and you're playing against the best players in the world and that's a good thing.

Q. As a past PLAYERS Championship winner, if there are going to be some changes made to the Tour structure and future, as somebody who won that tournament, is there anything you feel like they could do to that tournament, as good as it is?

WEBB SIMPSON: Which tournament?

Q. THE PLAYERS Championship.

WEBB SIMPSON: No. Okay. So I'm glad you asked that. I love THE PLAYERS Championship. I feel like people have always asked me should there be a fifth major in THE PLAYERS and I say no because we have our regular season events, we have our World Golf Championships events, which we're only having two next year, and we have our majors. THE PLAYERS doesn't fit into the box of any of those, and I think that's actually a

good thing because if you look at the field representation at THE PLAYERS, it's the strongest field in golf. It's one of the best courses we play all year. So as a player, knowing it's our tournament, it's a great thing because it is an incredible golf tournament.

Now with the announcement of the purse increase again, having the biggest purse in golf by far, I think it stands alone. I'm super happy that the Tour decided to do what it did in increasing the purse. It's a very hard golf course to win on. Even with a seven-shot lead going into Sunday, which was really fun, it was one of the hardest rounds of golf I've ever played.

But I love THE PLAYERS Championship, and honestly, I love all the majors. I hope the majors will see kind of what Jay's done in getting the purse to \$20 million and that's a big deal. Hopefully we'll see the other majors kind of follow suit because as of now it seems like THE PLAYERS is leading in that way among the other tournaments.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Looks like that's it, but before we let you go, we have to ask with Wake in contention to win the conference, got to get your thoughts on their chances.

WEBB SIMPSON: I was really bummed two weekends ago when they lost to UNC, even though I grew up a die-hard UNC fan, but great victory, close victory over NC State last weekend. So I think they're going to get it done. Super exciting time to be a Wake fan.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Webb, thank you so much for your time today and good luck this week.