

ASTARA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP
Presented by Mastercard

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
February 12, 2023

RHEIN GIBSON (-16)



Q. All right, Rhein, you just won your first Korn Ferry Tour event since 2019. Walk me through how it feels. You've had some time for it to set in, so what's the emotions right now?

RHEIN GIBSON: Pretty surreal really. Last year was a tough year, not gonna lie. I knew I was playing well and played well last week in Panama, kind of continued that into this week. I love coming here, I love the place. Just kind of things went my way and I played well and made some putts. Yeah, to think I come away champion is kind of crazy.

Q. You mentioned there was a decision to make, go back to the Finals or play off of your past champion membership. Walk us through that process and how it feels to win in this event.

RHEIN GIBSON: Yeah, it was definitely a conversation I had to have with my wife. I wasn't sure how much more golf I was going to do. Decided not to go to Q-School, thought I'd take a chance on past champion status. Worked my butt off this fall and this wintertime, kind of got my game in shape. I've got Scott Couch to thank for that, out of Canada, he's been helping me a lot. Yeah, the game felt good coming here. I love the place. I knew I could contend and a good round yesterday kind of put me in contention. To go out and do what I did today was just insane.

Q. You shot the lowest round of the week today, 7 under on this course is incredible. To top it off, you ended up with an eagle. Kind of go more in depth on today. What was feeling right? Obviously a lot, but --

RHEIN GIBSON: I don't know. I had a lot of faith in my game, I really did. I was hitting the ball well. Kind of a good solid front nine. I birdied 9, which is nice, and then made an unbelievable 40-, 50-footer on 10 for eagle which kind of separated me a little bit. I saw some buddies just got to 11. I was at 11 on that green and that put me to 13, so it gave me a bit of breathing room. Snuck another one on I believe 15.

Then to do what I did here on 18 was insane. Like I was just trying to get on the green, maybe two-putt, three-putt. I kind of knew by then after getting the tee shot away pretty well I was pretty safe.

Q. How does this win feel compared to that 2019 BMW win?



RHEIN GIBSON: This is pretty vindicating really. That was a little truncated, that event, with being three rounds. We knew going into the third round it was going to be the final round. To get four rounds done, play awesome on the weekend, bogey free on Sunday, I mean, it just takes the cake. I'm over the moon.

Q. How excited do you think your wife, and you have kids, correct? How excited do you think --

RHEIN GIBSON: Yeah, so my son just turned 2 last week. My wife Nancy's at home and yeah, it hasn't been easy this last year, that's for sure. She stood by me and it's been pretty awesome.

Q. Have you gotten to speak with her yet?

RHEIN GIBSON: I FaceTimeed her, but I couldn't even talk.

Q. I hear that you're going back to Australia. So what does it mean to get to go and celebrate in your home country and get to see everybody?

RHEIN GIBSON: Yeah, it's pretty cool. I haven't been to Australia since COVID. I've seen my parents, but not many other people. Pretty excited to get home.

Q. I mean, to win this early in the season, there's a lot of season left, but what's your focus to make sure that you can lock up that Tour card at the end of the year?

RHEIN GIBSON: Man, just keep doing what I'm doing. Like I said, I had a lot of faith in my game and got some good people around me. Yeah, just happy. Try to get back to the Tour.

Q. You said that there was a point where you said am I going to keep playing, am I not. Does this moment make that decision worth it?

RHEIN GIBSON: I think so. I had a lot of good people help me out and believe in me.

Q. I was going to ask about like the emotion, that's great. Just the one son?

RHEIN GIBSON: Just the one. One and done.

Q. Are you going to put him into golf?

RHEIN GIBSON: If he wants to. I won't pressure him, but whatever he wants to do, I'm happy.

Q. What was your decision like to leave Australia and pursue a career with the PGA TOUR?



RHEIN GIBSON: I wasn't good enough at 18 to turn pro once I got done with high school. I wanted to see if I could do it, so college was a good fit for me. Four years to get a good education and my game developed, I developed as a person. Had a lot of success in college, so I thought I'd give pro golf a go. Turned pro in 2009 and been doing it ever since.

Yeah, it's pretty surreal just to pack my life up in a suitcase and come to America and go to Oklahoma, which I didn't even know where it was without an Atlas back then. Got some great people there, my family. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Q. You're considered a veteran out here you, you see the guys coming up every single year, but to win by four strokes, I mean, can you kind of talk about what that means for you and the game?

RHEIN GIBSON: Yeah, I guess I'm old now. All these young kids coming out of college, it's crazy. There's a bunch at home at our club that are amazing, they're out here as well. Just shows that, I don't know, I can still hang it with these young guys, so it's pretty cool.

Q. (No microphone.)

RHEIN GIBSON: Got involved with the guy that helps or coaches Erik Barnes and he's been really helpful. He's in Canada, I've seen him a couple times. We just do a lot of video.

Yeah, it's just kind of sprung into fruition a little bit. It was tough there playing 14 events in a row at the end of the year to try to let it sink in and get results and it just didn't happen. Kept working in the fall and knew I could get back to this circle, so super excited.

