

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**February 14, 2023**



**MARCUS BYRD**

**HALEY PETERSON:** We'll go ahead and get things started. We would like to welcome the 2023 Charlie Sifford Memorial exemption recipient, Marcus Byrd.

Marcus, welcome. Just a little while ago you got to meet Tiger Woods. We just want to hear some opening comments about what that interaction was like.

**MARCUS BYRD:** Yeah, it was a pretty special moment just to kind of actually shake his hand and like meet him in person. Seen him a bunch when he had his tournament at AT&T at Congressional and always was a huge fan obviously. So to just kind of look at him face-to-face and actually realize he's human, that was pretty cool.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Kind of going off that, do you have any specific memories from following him around?

**MARCUS BYRD:** Yeah, I just, I remember one day when I was going out there with my dad, like we always did, I was had on the whole Tiger outfit, red shirt, black shorts, I had a picture I wanted him to sign when he obviously going to the first tee so he was pretty busy, just kind of walked by. So I just kind of used that as kind of a little motivation, just told my dad one day when I make it to the Tour, he'll have to sign my scorecard anyway, don't really need the signature right now. That was just kind of a thing to keep pushing me forward to getting to where I am.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Had a busy start to the year and a busy month ahead, winning back in January at Torrey Pines and will be playing Honda later on because of that. How's your game and what confidence have you earned?

**MARCUS BYRD:** The game's definitely feeling good right now. Playing at Torrey Pines under those conditions right after the Farmers, it was definitely a huge advantage to kind of prepare myself for the next few weeks, playing at Genesis and then obviously the Honda is a very tough course as well.

It was good to kind of see where my game was at, how I can improve some things I can get better at. Just looking forward to a good tough couple weeks and learning as much as I can.

**HALEY PETERSON:** We were speaking earlier that you're going to have quite the support group to come out to follow. Who are some of the people you're expecting to follow you around on the course this week?

**MARCUS BYRD:** Yeah, my mom, my grandmother, my aunt, my sister. They've been pretty

much my life line over these last few years. My mom is one of the most strongest, she's the strongest person I know. So it's going to be real special having her follow me around this week. I'm just looking forward to having a good time, smiling, hanging with them. Being on the road, I don't really get to do that as much so it's going to be pretty awesome.

**Q. Who's caddying for you this week?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** This week it will be Cedric Lamar. He caddies for David Lingmerth I think right now. He's been out on Tour for like 25 years. It helps out to have some experience this week and really kind of guy who kind of coached me around and I'll be able to navigate this course this week.

**Q. How did you guys get together, get hooked up?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** Actually I was talking to another caddie, Nick Jones, and I mentioned Cedric. I reached out to him. We knew some people we had in common and some people from back home in DC and it just kind of fit natural. It was kind of a last second thing really. It's been awesome these last couple days, we talked on the phone before like I said, seemed like it would be a good fit, I'm just looking forward to it. It seems like he knows his stuff and we're going to have a good time this week.

**Q. Have you heard from friends and people back at Langston and back in DC about this opportunity, what does it feel like to you to represent them in this whole thing?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** I have, more than I can count honestly. The support system that I have back home and over these last few weeks have been absolutely incredible. It's part of the reason why I work so hard at what I do, it's because at that it's not just my dream, a lot of those guys have had the same dream and for me to be able to be the person to carry the torch for them, it's an incredible feeling. It makes me happy to know that they support me back home for sure.

**Q. You mentioned the support system that you have here. Does that help you feel at ease or does that make you more nervous when you're out on the course?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** Makes me feel at ease, for sure. I know my mom, she's not going to stop loving me no matter what I shoot out here this week, so that helps.

Yeah, it's just having that comfort of being able to look over my shoulder and see the people who care about me the most. It's just they get to see me live a dream that I've wanted to do since I have a kid, so it's definitely going to make things a little easier.

**Q. And you mentioned your mom as one of the strongest people you know. How does she motivate you to be better each day?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** Yeah, just watching what she had to overcome. My mom, she got into a



car accident when I was 9. She's actually disabled and her whole left side is metal. She was in a wheelchair for a year and had to learn how to walk again. Just for her to even be standing next to me and for her to be able to keep a smile on her face and still do the things that she does, it's the most inspiring thing for me beyond anything I could describe. Just having her here and knowing that she wants to be out here to support me, it means more to me than anything.

**Q. You've had a chance to play this course a few times now. What is your assessment of the course, what are the challenges for your game specifically, and are there any holes that look good to you?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** So I have got to play the course a few times. I think the main thing is just picking out good targets off the tee and getting used to the greens. Obviously being from the east coast, our greens are a little different, grass is a little different. It's just picking good targets, getting used to the greens, getting used to chipping and putting on them. And favorite hole I have to say right now is probably 18, I like to hit a little fade off the tee and it just sets up pretty good for my eye and it's the finishing hole so why not.

**Q. Out of all the experience you've had the past month, which would you say has had the most impact on you?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** That's a tough question. The most impact. Probably just being on the range and seeing a lot of these guys and just kind of hanging out, watching what they're doing, see how they practice, that stuff means a lot to me because they're all here being where I want to be in the near future. Just trying to take advantage, soak it all in. Going out to play this morning with Billy, that was a great moment for me. Makes me feel a little more comfortable being around this atmosphere and just learning things that he was able to teach me today, it was awesome.

**Q. What's the best piece of advice that either Billy or Tiger bestowed upon you today?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** The first thing Billy just told me was you've got two back-to-back weeks out here, it's just about getting comfortable, especially this week there's going to be a lot of distractions, a lot of the things going on. He just told me you're good enough to be here, just believe in it, you're going to have a good game plan, work on the things you need to work on, take your time, just get comfortable. That was the main thing for me. That's kind of what I'm going to keep in mind as I go throughout this week is enjoying where I'm at and knowing that I belong and doing what I need to do to get through.

**Q. Did you bring it up to Tiger that he stiffed you on that autograph?**

**MARCUS BYRD:** No, no, I haven't brought it up yet, but I'm sure he'll hear about it. I still want to make sure I earn that. Hopefully we can get that to happen this week.

**Q. Marcus, being here and being the Charlie Sifford exemption recipient and being Tiger's tournament, I just wanted to ask you about the role of representation. You alluded to it a little bit about being able to inspire people at home. Just talk about the role and what you see as your opportunity to inspire people to get into the game of golf.**

**MARCUS BYRD:** Yeah, that's what it's all about, right? It's about the game being inclusive and about giving kids hope. That's what I've always dreamed of, to make it to the PGA TOUR.

To be able to sit here and see little kids who look up to me. They have a dream and they want to be able to kind of do the same things I'm doing from where I'm from. It means more to me than just being a professional golfer. It's changing lives. You know, for me it's just having the opportunity to do that. Companies like ISCO and ADP and Stout, they've been amazing in helping me to pursue my dreams and my goals.

Just to be able to show these kids that you can be just like me in these shoes. That's what it's all about. It's about bringing more people to the game and making it more approachable. I think when you get more people that look like me and more people who can spread that, spread the love of the game that way, that's more important than anything else and I think that's what the game of golf is really about.

**HALEY PETERSON:** On that, unless there are any others, we will wrap it up. Thank you, Marcus, for taking the time to talk with us today and we wish you the best of luck this week.