

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
July 25, 2023

TONY FINAU



HALEY PETERSON: Good morning, everyone. We'll get things started. We would like to welcome our 3M Open defending champion, Tony Finau.

Tony, we're going to start off with just some opening comments on what it was like getting that victory here and having the whole family here for the first time for your win.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it was amazing. It's nice to be back. Minnesota's a place that I have great memories coming back to. Having my family there last year walking on the green I think was one of the highlights really of my career up to this point. That was the first win I've had with my family there, so that was an unforgettable moment and one that will live in my memory forever, so that was cool.

And it's nice to be back at a place where I started to play a lot of good golf and have notched a few wins even since I left here. It's just great to be back.

HALEY PETERSON: Sticking with the family theme, this week will you be staying on the back nine house near here and getting some fishing in with the family?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, 100 percent. We do fishing like once a year I would say and it's here in Minnesota, so we'll be doing that again, no question. Just hanging out. It's a great area. It's pretty low key out here. We're away from the city, which is nice. So many lakes around, so you've got to take advantage of that I think with getting in the water and fishing, so we definitely will do a lot of that.

HALEY PETERSON: This one last year kickstarted where you had back-to-back wins on the week. What was it about your game feeling last year and how's it feeling entering this week?

TONY FINAU: Yeah. Well, last year going in I think I just finished 25th at The Open Championship, I made the cut on the number and made an important putt just to make the cut. So I took some confidence from that I think right into this week last year.

This year, a little different. My last couple starts have been missed cuts, so I'm not in the form that I would like to be defending this week. But every week is a new opportunity and I'm hoping that this will start another trend of great golf for the rest of the season.

Q. Tony, I know you talked about last year, the putter change being a big key to kind of help you get on the winning ways, then you rattled off four in maybe 20 starts or so. Was there anything mental that clicked maybe aside from the putter that helped



you rattle a few of these off then in consecutive order?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I think winning just breeds confidence, and after I left here I had a lot of confidence in what I was doing. And that confidence, I've been able to just again notch a few wins since I came here last year, but it all started here.

I think it was just confirmation that I was on the right track and doing the right things. Sometimes you go through a little dry spell of scoring or of winning and you can start to question a little bit if what you're doing is actually the right thing. It was just confirmation that it was this year -- this time last year and so that was huge for me. Now I've been able again to just win a few times even since then.

Q. Tony, since that win in Mexico you've had some struggles over the last few months. What changed since that last victory?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's quite a funny game we play, isn't it? That's the best golf I've played this year and haven't been in that form really since. It's hard to put my finger on it. I'm still working at it, trying to get in the best shape of my life and still trying to do the right things.

The game presents challenges at every turn no matter what, no matter what stage of your career you're in. I'm at a stage where I have had some nice wins but haven't had the consistency that I would like to see from myself over the years.

Again, this time last year I was able to change the way that the year was going and trended -- started to trend upward right into the Playoffs and I'm looking to do some of the same starting this week.

Q. What specifically have you been working with on with your game coming into this week?

TONY FINAU: Well, to me, just more getting in better playing shape. I've been working out a lot more than I have, I've been working on my body more than anything else. We're at a time in the year where I think the body can get tired and just fatigued. We play a lot of golf up to this point, a lot of high level golf with the elevated events, the major championships, takes a toll on your body. So I've tried to just be in the best shape I can to make sure I can make a push in the Playoffs and this would be a good time to play some good golf.

Q. The weather forecasts are calling for 100 and humid, the bad air with the Canadian wildfires. How do those conditions, do they affect players?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I think just it's easier to get tired faster. You have to hydrate. I know that that's extremely important when it's hot and humid, you've got to stay hydrated.

I think it puts a lot of emphasis on your caddie, he's got to carry more water, sometimes more fruit and food. You've just got to eat and stay hydrated.



As far as challenges on the golf course, the golf course is going to dry out extremely fast, so if there's no rain in the forecast or no rain on the golf course, it's going to be extremely firm and so firm golf courses will present challenges that way as well.

Q. How much are you thinking about the Ryder Cup over the next couple weeks?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, the Ryder Cup's always has been on my mind from the start of the year. It's a goal of mine. I would say any American golfer playing, it's a goal of theirs to be on this team, that hasn't changed.

But I've been in this type of position before, you know, where probably on the outside looking in. Going to have to play some good golf over these next few weeks and make my case.

The good news is I've been in this position before, I've made the teams before and hope to show some good form to make my case for myself over the next few weeks.

Q. Do you feel like you played well enough to be on that team or do you feel like you need to show something over the next couple weeks?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I think if winning and experience holds a lot of weight, then I feel like I've done enough. If consistency and form is the formula that the captains are looking for, then the answer's probably no. That's how I see it, I'm looking at it.

But the great thing for me is the picks aren't tomorrow, the picks are still in about a month. I've got four tournaments to make my case if there is a question and that's what I intend to do.

Q. Sorry if you were asked this at the beginning, did you get the same house this year on the water with the fishing?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, we didn't get the same house, we got a house close to it. I think we're on the same lake. I'm not crazy superstitious like that where I've got to get the same house and everything's gotta go the same for me to win again. Never really been that way. But we are in the same area here in Blaine and again, I think we'll be fishing on the same lake.

Q. And what do you just remember from the last two holes on Sunday last year? On 17 you kind of get that bounce --

TONY FINAU: Yeah.

Q. -- that jettisons you back. Can you take me through that hole and then just kind of coming up 18?



TONY FINAU: Yeah. Well, I know I never felt adrenaline like I felt here. Coming off 16, I just made a putt for birdie to go up by four shots and I happened to look at the leaderboard walking up to 16 green and I was in total shock. I was chasing the lead all day, I was three to four shots back it seemed like all day. Even after I made a birdie it seemed like I would still be a few shots back. I just made three birdies in a row on 14, 15, 16 and next thing you know I was leading by four shots. So there was quite the adrenaline running through my body and I think it was evident on that very next shot. I hit a 6-iron about 230 yards into the wind, so it gives you an idea of how much adrenaline I had.

But I got the break that I needed at that time and I feel like there's always a shot that you can look back on that maybe started a spark in your season or in the win that you had and it was definitely that shot on 17. That ball could have ended up anywhere and it would have put a lot more pressure on me going to 18 to seal the deal. It ended up right next to the green, I pitched it up to a foot and was able to win on 18.

Definitely a lot of emotions. The greatest part was that it was a good emotion again after walking off the green and having my kids there knowing that I won the tournament. That was the first time that they were able to do that was something I'll never forget.

Q. Justin Thomas is playing here for the first time in search of the points. When you've gotten in slumps in your career before, how have you gotten out of them?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, you just continue to play and believe, that's all there is to it. But J.T.'s an extremely talented player and one of the best in our game, arguably the best of our generation. I have full faith that he's going to snap out of it.

I played with him last week at The Open the first couple days. He's playing some quality golf, he's getting some tough breaks. Hitting a couple more errant shots than I'm used to him hitting playing with him, but this game is so fickle, you're never as far off as you think, and he's definitely not. He hits so many great shots even over the last couple days that I played with him.

J.T.'s going to be more than fine, he'll find his form. It's crazy in our sport, you know, how fast we forget how great someone like J.T. is. But you get to appreciate his talent and what he's accomplished to this point in his career more when he's going through a slump like this.

He's done amazing work throughout his career, he'll continue to do that and continue to win tournaments in bunches as we move forward.

Q. Tony, I remember a couple months ago you saying that you stuck to a consistent putter grip for the first time throughout the year. I'm wondering as the results kind of go up and down, does it become hard to kind of stick with a consistent theme like that?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's extremely difficult to stick to your guns sometimes when you you're



not getting the results that you feel like maybe you should be getting or just not trending in the right direction. You're always trying to tinker and say, well, am I doing this the right way, am I going about this the right way.

But that's the one thing that I know I've tried to stay patient with myself with is my putter and that specific goal. So it was same goal I made this year and I'm sticking to it and hopefully it pays dividends towards the end of this year.

HALEY PETERSON: Perfect. That's all the questions we have. Tony, thanks for taking the time for joining us and good luck this week.

TONY FINAU: Thank you.

