

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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BILLY HORSCHEL



HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Billy Horschel to the 3M Open.

Billy, making your tournament debut. Want to start off with just some comments about overall first thoughts of the tournament?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I've watched this tournament on TV the last two years and heard some of the feedback from players and they rave about the golf course and the condition that it's in.

It's been unbelievable. Just playing the front side, the condition of the golf course is impeccable. Talking with some of the tournament staff when I got here yesterday, telling me of the amenities that they have for the families and the kids and everything, that's something that makes the tournament really special. Obviously taking care of the players is one thing, but if you take care of our families and our kids, that puts it in a different level. So 3M's done an unbelievable job from just the two days I've been here and everything else I've heard.

I guess the only thing is that, I mean, it's really hot. I wasn't expecting the temperatures to be this high. I mean, holy buckets, it's a scorcher out there, it really is, and hopefully it cools off this weekend.

HALEY PETERSON: Is the family with you this week?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, yeah, they are coming up. They land in a couple hours, I go pick them up at the airport. They've still got another month before they sort of go back to school. I haven't seen them in a couple weeks, and when I committed to this event, my wife, Brittany, goes, you know, maybe we'll just come up to Minnesota. And it made sense to come up to this event to check it out and have a good time. Hopefully they bring me some good luck this week.

HALEY PETERSON: You mentioned you got to play nine. Was it the front nine or the back nine and what are you seeing with the layout of the course and how it's matching your game?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I played the front nine early this morning. I think the fairways are somewhat generous. You can push driver a little bit and be aggressive with the driver.

The green speeds are, I mean, just super fast. And maybe it just seems that way because we've been over in Scotland and England the last two weeks playing on green speeds that are a lot slower than we have here in America, but the condition of the golf course I think it's



awesome. I think there's some really cool holes on the front with the layouts and everything. I've been told the back side's even better, so I'll check that out tomorrow morning in the pro-am.

And like I said, I'm excited to see this course in an actual tournament aspect. The winning score is sort of where I like the winning score, maybe a little bit higher than I think is an ideal winning score, but it sort of fits my game in the sense that if I can get my game going and play well, I like where that winning score seems to end up every year.

HALEY PETERSON: We've seen you across the pond repping the beard, but what's the story behind growing it and what's the feedback you've gotten?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, so there's no story. I had two weeks off after Travelers and just wasn't going to shave and decided -- I think maybe my wife. Brittany, mentioned you should just grow the beard back, see if that changes up the game a little bit. Maybe that's why I just didn't shave. Kept it the last couple weeks, and I'm not going to say it's been -- it hasn't changed the game, but the game hasn't gotten any worse, that's a benefit.

Yeah, I think I've got a lot of great responses from it. People are very sort of shocked, they don't recognize me at first because it's a completely different look. But I do say I did have it back a couple years ago and I haven't really grown one since but there's a lot more gray or white hairs in there than it was last time.

My kids have seen it on FaceTime and they told me I needed to shave it last night, which I'm not going to. But we're going to see what their response is when they see me today. I know my Colbie, my middle one, when I had it in the past she used to always just rub my face and just touch it, so I'm expecting some of that later today.

HALEY PETERSON: Most importantly, your wife likes it?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: As of right now, yes, she does. I'm sure like any female who kisses a guy with a beard, you do get poked in the face a little bit with the whiskers that we have, so hopefully it's not too bad for her.

Q. Following up on that, if you were to have a really successful week this week or next week, would you keep the beard?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, the beard's going to stay around for a little bit. I don't plan on shaving it anytime soon. I'm hoping that the game starts to turn around, I start playing well and I'll keep it. I do like the way I look with a beard a little bit, it does change the way I see myself.

But I guess the only time I would know I would have to shave it is if maybe a Ralph Lauren photo shoot that I have to do in the fall. I don't think the beard -- not that they would be against it, but I've just never done a photo shoot with them with a beard, so I would shave it



for them if that's something they want to do.

So yeah, the beard's going to stay around and hopefully the game picks up and start playing well and I can say it's because of the beard.

Q. Clearly the next two weeks 70 is on everybody's minds, that can cause a lot of stress. How do you manage that and the pressures that come along with needing to play really well this week and next week?

BILLY HORSCHEL: That's a great question. My game hasn't been well this year. It's actually been a lot better the last month. The signs, the results haven't shown that, but for the people who have watched me play from my team and from family and friends, they can all see that I'm playing a lot better.

And it's really close, it just hasn't -- I just haven't gotten the momentum on my side, I haven't made the putts to get things going my way.

But I'm not -- I sort of consciously sort of realized I may not make the Playoffs this year about a month, month and a half ago and I wasn't going to worry about the FedExCup Playoffs. As much as I want to be a part of it, as much as I love being in that arena and trying to win another FedExCup trophy, I just couldn't stress about that anymore, I couldn't worry about it anymore.

I'm fortunate enough I've got a card for the next three or four years based off the wins I've had the last couple years. It's not going to change my schedule next year at all.

The designated events, yeah, it's going to be, you know, a little tough to get into those because I'm not going to be automatically into those. I'm going to probably need some sponsor exemptions or get my world ranking up higher again to be eligible for those events at the beginning of next year.

But I'm not stressing about it. If it happens, it happens. If it doesn't, it doesn't. I get a month off at home before I go over and play in Europe for about four or five weeks. So I'm more focused on trying to get my game and get the game back to where I want it to be, get back to playing quality golf, get back to being in contention to win tournaments. If I can do that these next two weeks, hopefully I can qualify for the FedExCup Playoffs. Because obviously that still is my goal, but like a lot of guys, I'm not too stressed about it. Other guys have to worry about it based off, you know, their card situation going into next year.

Q. And you've been around for many Playoffs. When the cut was initially announced at 70, do you think that it was players like yourself thought it would be as daunting of a challenge, as significance of a cut as it was?

BILLY HORSCHEL: You know, at that time, no, because I was playing well. I was like I'm not too worried. I've always been inside the top 70 every year since 2013. I've never not



been outside the top 70 I remember that I can think of, so I wasn't really too worried about it. But now that I've looked at it, it is a really daunting task. You have to play well to be able to be in the top 70.

I think talking with some guys and, you know, I was a part of those PAC meetings at the time and I was part of the top players group discussing some of these changes. You know, I think we all thought 70 was a good number. Now looking back at it and talking with some guys, we're thinking maybe that number needs to be a little bit more, maybe it needs to be around 100, maybe it needs to be around 90. I don't know if that's been talked about at PAC meetings, I don't know if that's even been discussed or if there's even a chance of that being changed next year. Knowing how the Tour works, they're not going to change something within one year the majority of the time. They're going to give it a little while.

But I think just, I think it would be probably a little bit better if that number was a little bit higher. But at the same time I understand why we have 70, 50, 30. Yeah, we'll see how it works out. But yeah, that 70 number is a lot daunting now sitting in this seat not playing good golf to where I was a year ago when I was playing really quality golf and I never worried about that at all. Yeah, it's a little bit of a daunting task to all of us now.

Q. When we were in Ohio about a month ago, you had said that something had clicked the last month where you felt like your game was really trending. It may not have showed the results yet, but is there something that you look back at that week in Ohio that you think this is something that I learned about myself and this is helping me go through the rest of the season?

BILLY HORSCHER: Yeah, I think, listen, that week at Memorial was a tough one, there's no doubt about it. But I think for me that turning point was how I handled that round on Thursday. I don't know, I think I shot 84. I can't remember what I shot, I know it was in the 80s, because it had been a stressful time up to that point. You put a lot into this game of golf, you work hard, you try and do the right things, you're doing everything you can to try and get better, you're not seeing any results, it wears on you. And my team was aware of it and I had shared where I was in a mental space.

But I think just sort of maybe sharing that with the public -- not something I planned on doing, it just happened -- I think it sort of just sort of rebalanced everything, recentered everything, sort of started from scratch. From there I felt like I've been in a lot better of a mental spot, a lot better clear mind. I think, like I said, the results don't show it, but I've played a lot more quality golf since then.

So yeah, so that Thursday round, that Thursday media session afterwards where I just sort of shared where I was mentally and confidence-wise with the world sort of was just getting it off my chest. As I told a lot of people, doesn't matter if it's sport or life or anything else, just being able to share that with people and getting it off your chest, it goes a long way into moving forward.



And then at the same time, getting all the responses I got from all my family, from all my friends, from all the people who reached out to me from other parts of the world and other, you know, jobs, everything else they are in, yeah, that was such a touching moment and sort of, like I said, just brought me back to, you know, where I needed to be mentally going forward.

Q. Billy, one of the things that you said that day was that as crazy as that day was, it didn't feel like you were that far off. I'm just wondering mentally where you're at now and some of the work you and Todd have been doing trying to get things tight?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I mean, I didn't feel I was that far off even though I shot 84. I feel a lot better about my game. I think after Travelers, after the U.S. Open, after Travelers I came out and it was that first time all year where I felt like my game is really close, it's not far off.

Even though I've said that all year, I'm not one of those guys that can sort of trick myself into feeling like I'm close, I have to honestly know it. At the end of the day I'm a realist, I can't sort of fake a lot of things.

So we've done a lot of great work, swing-wise we've hit it really well. We've just sort of made a couple of subtle changes over the last month. My big miss that has been an issue all year has sort of gone out the door. Just haven't been as sharp with my short and mid irons as I need to be over the last month or so. At the same time, I'm not making any putts, which doesn't matter how well you hit it, if you're not making any putts, it's going to be tough to play well.

I feel really good with my game. I feel really good mentally where I am. I feel it's just, you know, it's a matter of time. I feel like I'm knocking on the wall and I'm beating down this wall and it's just a matter of time before it falls. Hopefully it's this week and it sort of sets up a great run going into the fall, play some great golf the rest of this fall and jump starts me or can carry that momentum on into next year.

Because, you know, I love playing golf. I want to win tournaments, I want to compete with the best, I want to win majors. I'm getting into an area of my career where there's not much -- there's still a lot of time left, but there's not as much time as there was 10 years ago. So I want to make sure that I give myself the best opportunity to achieve everything I can in the game over the next five to seven years.

Q. You just mentioned it, but I know how much you love this game, the passion that you have for it. Over the last couple months, I guess I'm kind of trying to explore the relationship between having fun on the course and success on the course. Do you think it's more of you have success and then you have fun, or you need to have fun in order to have success?

BILLY HORSCHEL: That's a great question. You could ask a whole bunch of different



people and they can say choose one or the other, you get a split room.

I can have fun off the golf course. Practice-wise, I can have fun, I can enjoy the grind, I can enjoy getting better, I can enjoy all of that. But when it comes to competition, I'm only having fun if I'm playing well, it's just as simple as that.

And I can have fun out there, but I've tried that over the last few years and I've realized trying to be in a good frame of mind, trying to be in a jolly good mood, trying to be, hey, let's just go out there and have fun out there on the golf course and see what happens, like that hasn't ultimately led to my success in my career or the success over the last several years. It's more or less when I'm playing well and I'm having success on the golf course, that's when I'm having my fun. That's when it's really fun on the golf course because I think what happens is it shows that all the hard work you're doing is translating over into the heat of the moment into competition. That's what puts a big smile on my face is all the hard work I do away from the competition days, away from tournaments or at tournaments and then you can translate that into a competition and you say, man, that was really fun.

Obviously I'm enjoying the grind off the golf course, but when you can do it on the golf course in the heat, that's an exciting moment. I think a lot of us would be in a similar mode of that.

HALEY PETERSON: Thank you, Billy. We hope you have fun this week.

BILLY HORSCHER: I will, I promise you.

HALEY PETERSON: Appreciate the time as always.

BILLY HORSCHER: Thank you.

