

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**CHARLEY HOFFMAN**

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We would like to welcome Charley Hoffman into the interview room here at the Genesis Invitational. Charley's making his 17th start at the event tied with Matt Kuchar for the most of any player in the Fed Ex Cup era. So Charley, qualifying for the event through the Aon Swing 5 after the Phoenix Open, what did it mean to come off the course there and realize you're getting into the Genesis this week?

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Yeah, obviously was a huge accomplishment. Obviously I would have like to have been in all the Signature Events and the Masters and the Majors and all that other stuff, but obviously I knew I would be close. I wasn't sure. Then I was doing my post playoff interview and I think Doug said something like, you made it. It sort of took me back, like awesome. I was fairly disappointed last year when I didn't play because it was the first time I hadn't played in my career.

It's a place I love playing, one of the all-time golf courses in the world. I came up here as a kid in '95, watched the PGA TOUR Championship. It's something that's near and dear to my heart and obviously love playing in front of the California fans. I'm a San Diego guy, I'm not a big L.A. guy, but I am a California resident and a fan, so I like displaying our talents in front of everybody. So obviously very, very happy to be here.

**MODERATOR:** Understand you were supposed to be skiing this week instead of here, but could you talk a little bit about how these two exemption categories through the Aon Swing 5 and Next 10 can kind of change the trajectory very quickly of a Tour member's season and career?

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Yeah, fortunately and unfortunately I've been on the board that's been part of this limiting fields, building purses. Obviously the majority of the membership didn't love limiting the fields, but we thought it was necessary with not isolating the events and getting the best players in the world together.

I know I was adamant about making sure the top players -- not the top players, the hot players -- were able to work their way into the events. My example last year was Taylor Montgomery, that guy deserved to be in all the events. He started off hot in the fall and played well and he should have been in all the events. Obviously that was my example this year. You got Christiaan Bezuidenhout this year and you've got a bunch of good players playing good and they deserve to be in these events. I think it's accomplishing what it's supposed to do. You've got guys that just come off the Korn Ferry Tour that have the ability



to get in these events if they play well for the remainder of the year and not just the Swing.

So I think it's working so far, but we'll see. The future, we'll see what happens.

**Q. So you were on the PAC starting in 2019-2020, which I'm sure kind of became more of an undertaking than maybe you might have thought at the beginning. Do you feel like there's a little bit of a weight off your shoulders not being involved in those kind of discussions anymore?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Yeah. Technically, '19-'20, I've been on the board of the PAC for so many years in a row it sort of runs together.

**Q. That's what I was saying, how has that job evolved to become more than it used to be?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Prior, in my first board stint, we thought how do we fix slow play, how do we get guys to play faster, just some stuff that's crucial to our product and how we display it to the public, but not quite as important as trying to get guys back on the course after COVID and making sure the players stay on Tour.

But it took a ton of time. There's a combination, I wasn't healthy for a couple years and I expended a ton of time into trying to make sure the Tour ended up in great spot because we know this is the best tour in the world and we want the best players to play against each other more often, and it did take a lot of time. It was something I embraced and I liked doing it, but as I've told a lot of people, I was embracing being a professional golfer again and I really like that a lot more.

**Q. You're roughly the same age as Tiger and he's obviously had injury problems that are extremely significant.**

**How are you able to stay kind of motivated at your age to come back from that, and obviously it's working out?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** I don't know any better. I've said this a few times in local radio shows, I think I'm just dumb enough to think when I first got on Tour that I was good enough to play on the PGA TOUR, but I wasn't a worldbeater. I was a pretty good player and I was able to do it. Now I think I'm just dumb enough to think I can compete against the young guys still. I love competing.

And I said this in my interview after I lost, I'm extremely happy with the way I played but there's something inside me that wants to get that W. I don't like losing. I think that fire's still burning. If I would have got the W obviously it would have been a lot of weight off the shoulders, but that fire's still there and my goal is not to compete this week, it's to win. It's to play against the best players in the world and do what I used to do on a regular basis and show up on the biggest stages and compete to win Signature Events and major golf



championships.

**Q. Two questions. One, how did the family -- I'm sure they're happy for you, but how did they take the ski trip cancelation?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** It's not canceled, they're up there right now, they're probably on the slopes. I was getting pictures of them all morning of them getting ready to go, they've got ski schools this morning. The snow in Mammoth looked great, the weather's perfect. Don't get me wrong, I love being here, but I would have loved a lot to be up there skiing with them on the slopes for the next couple days.

**Q. And then to the casual viewer last week, kind of seems out of left field, but did you notice something about your game in the weeks leading up to --**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** No. I've been saying for a little bit of time now, my body feels good and if my body feels good I feel I can compete against the best in the world. Obviously I've been in contention in a lot of golf tournaments and I've lost golf tournaments before, and there's no question about that. I'm just proud of how I competed coming down the stretch. Sort of what I said to myself when I had the lead around the turn was I've got to keep it down, there's a lot of birdie holes up there and I shot 4 under par on the back nine and I lost, Nick won.

So to be in that position, and I hadn't been there in a while, I really felt really good. I didn't feel uncomfortable, I actually felt better in that position than some weeks when I'm trying to make a cut. Like when you're in the lead, you're sort of free flowing, you're feeling good, you're not really searching for anything. So I felt great, the mental side was good because you never know how you're going to react when you haven't been there in a while. I would not say I was surprised, but I was happy the way my body and mind dealt with all the adversity in the whole tournament. I'm obviously excited for this week at the Genesis.

**Q. Charley, for a guy who's wearing that pad on his back heading out to the Playoffs, skiing's not an issue, skiing's not a worry?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** We won't know that. It could have been. No, it's been a couple years since I've gone because of the bad back to be completely honest with you, but I was feeling healthy and the kids are only young for so long. They were sort of the people, the kids that wanted to go. Obviously they really wanted to go because they still went with mom. It could have been an issue. As I said, I used to be a bumps and mogul guy and jumps. Now I'm a steep groomer, I like to go fast and make big turns, so I think I've been able to handle it.

**Q. Have you tried snowboarding?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** When I was younger. I've been skiing between my mom's legs since I was 4 years old going down slopes, so it's something I feel very comfortable with. I



don't feel like I put myself in harm. Obviously on the slopes you can't control everybody else. Strategically that's why we picked the middle of this week, wouldn't be too busy, there's some strategy behind that. I feel good on the slopes. Obviously you hear the stories of people blowing out knees and something like that could have been an issue, but it's not an issue.

**Q. Got a serious one for you, there's some chatter on podcasts and social media last week about, you know, an older guy like you who hadn't really contended much, you're about to win, you have a chance to win and you have all these riches in front of you, all these opportunities in front of you. And the view is how does -- how do all those come to a guy who just has one good weekend?**

**What's your answer to that as far as the difficulty of this game to getting to any point that you were in last week?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** To get -- well, really finishing second on the PGA TOUR's pretty dang good no matter what week it is. So to be able to have the ability to get into these events, it's not -- I'm only in this one as of now. I've still got to keep playing well to earn my way up, people change, who gets in, who got into Pebble is different than who gets here. It's an ongoing change where obviously through the years it's going to slow down those top-10s and 5s.

But you don't want to lose -- I say this, you don't want to lose the dream of being able to play against the best in the world and this tour is getting slightly smaller at this time and the top players are playing against each other more often. But you always want to give that kid the dream, the kid that just played his butt off on the Korn Ferry Tour that got up here, give him the dream to be able to play against the best in the world and prove to himself he can play. I think that's what this does. Just keeps the dream alive, keeps the storyline alive.

In some of those board rooms I go we can't lose the dream that people watch. People love to watch Tiger Woods win all the time but people also love to watch people compete against them and see if they can bring down Goliath. That's why consistency is good out here, but to get a few people that you don't know playing these events I think is great for the product and hopefully competing coming down the stretch is just more storylines. I'm a storyline guy. Not that it gets tiring reporting on Scottie Scheffler making another birdie, but I think people like seeing guys take down the best in the world and I think that's what people tune in to watch.

**Q. Do you fear a world tour that has just like the top-50 guys and then everybody else playing in regular events? Is that a concern for you?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** I don't fear that. I think if you took a big step back and you started the PGA TOUR over, you would probably have a world tour. You want to embrace all different countries, you want to grow the game all over the world, and it would be a little bit different. Obviously our core season, we know when it is probably now through August or after the NFL season, the Super Bowl, it's our core season. Obviously you want to be



domestic during that period of time. But I think there's plenty of time to play international golf. I don't know the breakdown of field size and how that's going to all work out, that's for future board members and all that. I think it's good to have a world tour personally from a guy that's played domestically probably his whole career. The big picture is to grow the game of golf worldwide and give access to people everywhere. We're just a small little blip on the map in the United States, and I would love to grow the game all over the world and hopefully future generations, younger kids have the ability to play in some countries that weren't fortunate like me to be able to play, so I think it's a good thing.

**Q. Two things, what kind of feedback do you get when you kind of talk about the dreamer aspect of the Tour and the kind of Goliath being taken down by the lesser known? I don't expect you to name names, but in the board room what's sort of the vibe you get on that?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** I think we all agree, but we also -- I think we all love the storylines, but I think the media wants to know what product you're putting out there on a regular basis. They're paying a lot of money to sponsor these events and we can't guarantee a field and we've never been able to.

But this seems to be working so far that we're sort of guaranteeing the top players are going to show up to these Signature Events. And also you're getting guys like myself playing their way in so you can have some storylines.

Personally, I think maybe 120 players may be a little better formula, but you don't want to isolate events that don't mean anything and guys aren't showing up to play. That's a strategic look at the schedule, which I know the management team always do and look at what's best for the PGA TOUR and its product. If there's a week off in the schedule that might be better sometimes.

Right now we have a ton of title sponsors that embrace the PGA TOUR, love our product and love what we do and it's hard to tell them we're not going to have an event that week. That's the great problem we have is we have great support domestically and internationally, and our players are very good at every level from the Korn Ferry Tour, the Canadian Tour, the Mackenzie Tour, we have great players coming up. Heck, our PGA TOUR U's proved itself pretty it was that it is a great product.

I remember sitting in a PAC meeting here X amount of years ago and there's a lot of veteran members didn't like that. I wouldn't say I pushed hard for it, but that pipeline of young kids is crucial to make sure those guys are coming out to play the PGA TOUR because obviously they're ready. Ludvig's ready, Dunlap's ready.

It's awesome to watch as a kid that, as Todd knows, unfortunately, we're dating both ourselves, he was reporting on me this first time, but I played my first Tour event at 16 years old and if I didn't do that and I didn't have that opportunity I don't know that I would be sitting here at 47. So we have to keep that pipeline clean for these young kids, these amateurs to



play the PGA TOUR, back to the dreams, so they can play against the best in the world. That's almost more crucial than keeping the top players happy because the other future generation of golf, they have watched us play golf for a long time and they want to play out here. So that younger generation needs to be able to have access to be able to play out here.

**Q. Quickly, 17 was such a big part of the tournament last week and it just seems like it gets better every year the way it plays. Do you mind comparing that with the tenth hole here in terms of how they play the short par 4s. I don't think you're a fan of 10, right?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Ten's a very hard hole. They made some minor tweaks to the green. I went around yesterday for a bit, looked at it. I think they did a good job. I don't think -- you wouldn't notice it if you weren't a golf geek that they really did anything, but I think they just made that green a little more playable, which I think will be great.

Back to 17, on three of the days it's a birdie hole and one of the days is, you're trying to get out of there with par without trying to make a double, which that back left pin has been traditionally on Sundays now, it's a doozie. You don't want to putt to it, you don't want to chip to it, you don't want to get close to it. You don't want to hit it in the water off the tee being too aggressive.

I wouldn't compare them besides they're both a great drivable par 4, I think the greatest thing in golf, because a 10 here or 17, you can make a bogey pretty quick, but you can also make a birdie or an eagle. I love the holes that you can have big swings on. But strategically they're just completely different holes.

**Q. Charley, you mentioned some of the young guys like Dunlap and so forth, seems like those guys are winning or getting into contention pretty often these days and they're closer to their teens than they are to the Champions Tour. When you do something like you did on Sunday, do you feel some solidarity, like do the veterans come up to you like, hey, way to show we've still got it, whether it's Tiger, Adam Scott, Lucas Glover or whomever, do you feel there's some solidarity amongst the 40-somethings?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Yeah, ironically drove up for San Diego yesterday and the first person I saw in the locker room was Tiger and he goes, Good job, old man. He's older than me, but it's nice to get that. Walking around the golf course also, good job Mr. Hoffman. My dad's behind me, I still don't feel like Mr. Hoffman.

It's a little bit different, I still feel young at heart. To be honest, it drives me, I want to beat these young kids, I want to show them that I can still play golf. That's sort of what keeps me going. Xander was a kid that I grew up -- I didn't grow up, I saw him coming up through San Diego. I love playing practice rounds with him because he's obviously a world class player and I feed off of him, I feed off trying to beat those guys that are in their prime and playing a



little better than me. That's sort of what keeps me going. And I want to be out here as long as I can, as long as I'm healthy.

**Q. Do you have a wish for what PGA TOUR Enterprises might look like, and does it include anything competitive, a competitive aspect to it that might be separate from what we see here every week?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** I'm not sure I quite -- PGA TOUR Enterprises is not what runs golf tournaments, so I'm sort of confused.

**Q. That's sort of what I was asking. I'm wondering if there might be something that's separate from what we're seeing now. You alluded to the international stuff earlier and if that could be under that umbrella?**

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Well, I think if you look at the way it's set up, you've got the DP World Tour, you've got all our tours sort of combined under this umbrella. They're all right now feeding this tour. Over a third of our membership's international, you can't ignore that. I'm sure they would love to play in front of their home countries and hometowns also.

There's big markets and big countries to dabble into it and get rights at, there's a lot of ways to make money. I think that's why SSG stepped in and goes I think we can streamline this and make it a little more productive for the world of golf. I'm glad I'm not on the board making those decisions any longer but I have a lot of faith in the players and the staff that are doing it and they're thinking forward. I don't think I'm going out on a limb on this, the PGA TOUR is going to look different in a handful of years than it does now and I think it's going to be more international, but there's going to be a ton of great domestic events and I think it's going to be a better product. We didn't evolve for a long time because we didn't have to, and someone came along and we had to evolve. I think we'll still be the lead tour, but we're going to look a little bit different and it's going to look a little bit better, I think.

**MODERATOR:** Charley, before I let you go I know there's some tournaments coming up you might not know if you'll get into or not, but making your 496th career start on the PGA TOUR this week. Is there a tournament in mind coming up where you want to make No. 500?

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** 496, so I'm going to play next week -- I haven't thought about this obviously, but I can walk you through it. 496 will be Vidanta in Mexico, I am not playing Cognizant, withdrew this morning. No. 498 would hopefully be Bay Hill, 499 would be PLAYERS, and I'm scheduled to play Valspar. Sounds like 500 around Valspar.

Obviously I've got to do work to get into Bay Hill. Bay Hill as far as I know with the Tour staff I've talked to is going to be harder to get into than THE PLAYERS Championship. PLAYERS Championship I think I pretty much locked up my position in that event. So then if I don't get in Orlando it wouldn't be Valspar and the week after Valspar is --



**MODERATOR:** Put me on the spot here. Houston.

**CHARLEY HOFFMAN:** Houston, depending. Maybe I make it at Valero where I've had my most career money ever made there. Maybe we'll try to make it Valero or something like that. It's coming up. Jeez, I haven't even thought about that. When people start saying it's my whatever, 17th or 18th WM Phoenix Open and this is my 17th -- I don't feel like I've been around that long, but I guess I have. It felt like it took forever to get out here for me after 2000 and I didn't get out to until '06, but it's flown by since then. It's the greatest place in the world to play and I appreciate you guys reporting on us and making us look good.

**MODERATOR:** Charley, thank you very much for your time and best of luck this week.

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