

ROUND 4 PRESS CONFERENCE
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JAKE KNAPP (-19)



MODERATOR: Good evening, everyone. We would like to welcome Mexico Open at Vidanta winner Jake Knapp to the media center.

Jake, first of all, congratulations on your first PGA TOUR victory. We'll start off with some comments on what it's like to get that first one.

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, it's pretty amazing. Like we were just talking about, I don't think it's fully sunk in yet simply because I haven't looked at the schedule and all the events that I'm into now. Obviously I know the Masters and everything like that. Yeah, it feels pretty amazing.

MODERATOR: And sleeping on a four-shot lead, what was it like last night and entering on No. 1 tee today?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, I was super calm last night eating dinner and hanging out and, you know, going to bed wasn't an issue. Then I kind of woke up early out of nowhere at like 5:30 and was tough going back to sleep.

I was more so just excited to get this day going. Not that I wanted it to be over with, but it was one of those where I was excited to get it going, I wanted to get into the moment. Did a good job of kind of laying there for an hour or so and getting a few more hours of sleep.

MODERATOR: Probably not the start you wanted for the round today, but what was kind of game plan with your caddie and kind of turning that over?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, I mean, it was one of those where we kind of tried to not leaderboard watch and just focus on my game. We knew the course was set up a little bit tougher today, there weren't going to be any super crazy low scores, especially on the back nine. Just kind of felt it was one of those if I could have a lead going into the back nine that if I just kind of make a bunch of pars and force guys to make birdies, it's going to be tough. And if they do, good on 'em.

Yeah, after that start wasn't super ideal and we just said it's kind of the three worst holes I could have played and we still have a two-shot lead, we've got a free tee shot right here, get this swing out of the way, make some pars, give ourselves some birdie chances and we'll be just fine.

MODERATOR: Are you someone who typically leaderboard watches during rounds?



JAKE KNAPP: One hundred percent, the entire time. You think about Kobe Bryant, Steph Curry, Michael Jordan, it's not like they don't look at the score with a minute to go. It kind of gives you a good idea how the course is playing.

If I would have seen a bunch of the guys at 12 get to 17 under through nine holes, I'd be like yeah, the course is very gettable, but I felt a lot of them were at 12, 13, 14 and not really moving. It was windy and it was playing tough, pins were in tough spots.

Once we got to like 14 I looked at the leaderboard and I was like OK, it's a two-man race and I've just got to focus on kind of what he does and kind of play it basically as match play from there.

MODERATOR: What were the feelings on 18 tee with the lead and one hole to go?

JAKE KNAPP: Walking off 17 I told Mike, let's have a conversation because I know that there's some guys that play it left of that fairway into the opposite hole. I was like, let's have a conversation even though I've never done it, never seen it in the practice round or anything like that. Only place you can't go is out-of-bounds right. But I hadn't driven it that well all day and felt like if anything, I was either missing it left or kind of overcutting, so I had a bit of a two-way miss going.

I was like let's just aim just left of the bunker, hit our fade. If it goes in the bunker, fine; if I overcut it, it's in the fairway. He said he loved it. So yeah, just trusted that, trusted our game plan and went about business.

MODERATOR: It was a young final pairing, just your ninth PGA TOUR start and Sami's 11th. What was it kind of like especially as you guys were going back and forth down the stretch?

JAKE KNAPP: He was awesome. Super, super nice kid. We had a good conversation on like No. 5 just kind of talking hockey and kind of talked off and on. Twosomes it's kind of tough, feel like you're just trying to move all day.

But super nice kid, very fun to play with, very good player. And like we talked about it after, it was just very fun. It was a fun last group. He's a nice kid and we had a good conversation. It's just going to be a matter of time before he wins out here because he's a very good ball-striker, and once he gets that putter going he'll be just fine.

MODERATOR: The contrast of yesterday, you were playing with the home country favorite. What was it like today playing with the lead with the crowds?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, it was definitely different. There was a lot more cheers for me, which was kind of fun.

No, I just saw Ortiz a second ago, he's awesome, super, super nice kid. I wish him all the



best on the Korn Ferry this year. He's a very good player in his own right.

Today was great, the galleries were very fun. Obviously I didn't give them a ton to cheer for, but when I did, they did a good job of giving it to me.

MODERATOR: On the West Coast Swing but not as successful for family and friends to come out, but girlfriend McKenna was able to fly out. When did you kind of find out she was going to be able to make it here to the final round?

JAKE KNAPP: I jokingly told her at the beginning of the week that if I have a three-shot lead -- I think I said it on Tuesday, if I have a three-shot lead going into Sunday, you're flying down for Sunday to watch. She's like no, no, no, I'll get my own flight.

Sure enough, last night she had a big smile on her face when we were FaceTiming and I was like, What are you so giddy? She showed me her phone and showed that she had a flight getting in at like 12:30 or 1:00.

That was pretty cool to be able to have her down here. I know my family was all over at my parents' house watching and doing a little watch party there.

Yeah, being able to have her here and even just having Mike, because Mike my caddie's been a friend of mine for the last five or six years, having him here was very special as well.

MODERATOR: And yesterday you shared the significance with your tattoo and the meaning behind it. Was that something you kind of allowed yourself to reflect on last night or even today during the final putt, of your grandpa?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, I had a little kind of conversation with him this morning and just talked about the day and wish he could be here to watch it and experience all of it. I know he's one of those guys that if I ever kind of got down on myself or if I ever got nervous or started doing something bad, he would just kind of whack me on the back of the head and be like c'mon, get to work.

So yeah, there was definitely a little bit of that today, just kind of, even though I didn't have my best stuff, kind of doing it for him and everybody else who has been a part of my team and my family and everything for so long.

Twenty-nine years old and first win, there's a lot of people who helped me along my way. Keeping them in the back of my mind and just no quit, no surrender and just grind it out.

MODERATOR: What do you think his comments would be on capturing your first PGA TOUR win?

JAKE KNAPP: "Winner, winner, chicken dinner," that's his go-to. I know he would shoot me a text with that, and he'd probably say, "gars on me, cigars on me" when I get home.



MODERATOR: One more from me. Haven't given you much chance to think, but now you have way more flexibility with your schedule into all those Signature Events and Masters. So what's the importance of that now for the rest of the season?

JAKE KNAPP: Pretty surreal, to be honest. We talked about it at the beginning of the year with the Farmers, with what happened at Farmers and basically barely getting into Waste Management and not being into AT&T and then not being into Riviera. It was just like, man, this is going to be really tough to play into these Signature Events unless you win.

Everybody wants to win out here. There's a lot of guys who have played out here for a long time who have never won. It's just one of those things where now all of a sudden there's a lot of doors open.

The Masters part hasn't even begun to sink in yet, that's going to be surreal stepping on the grounds there. Mike and I just keep talking about it, it's like just keep putting in good work, keep putting yourself in positions in these tournaments, put our head down, go to work and good things are going to happen and sure enough this week it worked out.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about the vibe this whole week being here at Vidanta, the resort? Does it feel any different than other tournaments?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah, I mean, considering my last event was Waste Management, it's definitely a very different feel. My caddie and I were talking, it was like, man, if we can control our emotions in an event like that where everything's just crazy the entire time, we'll be OK.

It was awesome. This entire week I feel like everybody was just in love with this event and everything at this resort and everything going on. You could just feel that with the galleries and everything else. Even the guys I played with in the pro-am, just very passionate about it. Yeah, it was a very, very unique event for me and I'm excited to come back.

Q. Jake, talk about the important parts of the round for you which you think was the key shots or holes that ultimately won for you?

And also, the last couple years, this is your rookie year on the PGA TOUR, a lot has been made about you working as a guard in a nightclub. Talk about all the rollercoaster that lands you now as a PGA TOUR winner.

JAKE KNAPP: Yes. Some key shots today, I would say just honestly all the chipping today. Like I had to chip a lot coming down the stretch. We talked about that last night, we knew that the -- maybe if the ball-striking was off, our short game's going to have to be a little bit more dialed in.

So I feel like a lot of those chips coming down the stretch, I felt like I hit a good shot on



No. 12, just didn't hit a great putt, and a good chip on 13, 14, 16, 17. So yeah, I think all those played a big role.

And then in terms of the rollercoaster of my career, yeah, I jokingly talk about it with Mike and my family when all these people ask me for autographs and pictures and questions and podcasts and all that stuff, it's hilarious to think two years ago I was working security at a bar and it was a much different scenario in my life.

I'm very appreciative of being out here, being able to play golf professionally and just this entire atmosphere. It's what I practice and work for every single day.

Q. If it didn't have a name before this weekend, thanks to you we could have named it moving day on Saturday, 11 holes, nine birdies. Can you describe to us how that Saturday came about and what did you feel at the end?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah. It was one of those days where I was just -- it felt very similar -- I mean, Friday I felt like I hit the ball very, very well and I just didn't make a lot of putts. Most of my birdies I either -- on 15 and 16 I hit it to three inches and four inches on those holes and that was on Friday.

Then Saturday, came out and ball-striking was very much the same. Hit a great wedge shot on the first hole and second hole and a good one on the third hole as well. It was one of those days where you kind of get out of your own way. You know you're swinging it well, go through your process, don't think in the future too much about what the round can be. Made a few bogeys, but did a good job of bouncing back when I did with a couple birdies.

Yeah, obviously gave me that position going into Sunday. You don't want to get comfortable with any lead out here because anything can happen. Yeah, Saturday was a big day.

Q. Many times the feat seem like the moment to work on correcting mistakes. In this case, what did you learn with the win?

JAKE KNAPP: What will I learn from a win. I mean, today, yeah, all experiences obviously good and bad you can kind of learn from.

I think today learned a lot about my tendency when I get under pressure like that. I feel like a lot of my misses were kind of the same, and I probably should have given myself a little bit more time to warm up this morning. I feel like I probably was rushing through it a little bit.

I think next time around just get to the course a little bit earlier, get to the range a little bit earlier, give myself time, don't feel like I'm rushing because the entire day you need to be working on lowering your heart rate, not raising it.

Q. Jake, in which place of your top-10 or top-5 do you put this whole experience in Mexico and why?



JAKE KNAPP: This is No. 1 experience for me, I'll never forget this. I mean, for the rest of my life this will be my first win on the PGA TOUR. Whether it's my first win and only one that I ever have or it's the first of many, this will always be one that I remember. It's just a very special place. It's a beautiful golf course, one of the best driving ranges in terms of how it's manicured that I've ever seen.

Yeah, and then the resort, everything, just how well the hospitality is everywhere is pretty amazing here, so I'll remember all of it.

Q. Off topic here, we're wondering on your player bio you talked about getting a ball from Steve Williams from Tiger's 9 & 8 match back in the day. Can you talk about that day, what you remember and what that was like for you?

JAKE KNAPP: Yeah. When I was a kid there weren't many -- there really aren't many PGA TOUR events around Orange County where I'm from, Costa Mesa, but one of the ones was the WGC Match Play at La Costa. It's about an hour from my house. So my dad took my brother and I there when we were a kid.

I was just hounding Stevie all day to give me a ball, give me a ball, give me a ball, and he kept on telling me after the round.

Then Tiger finally closed out Stephen Ames 9 & 8 on the 10th hole. I was standing back by the 10th tee. They walked right by and I asked him for a ball and neither of them really did anything. They walked into the locker room and I was like, dang, like there they go.

Then 10 seconds later Stevie walked out and he was like, hey, kid, tossed me his ball.

It was pretty awesome. It's really only the piece of sports memorabilia that I have that I really cherish. Still got it in the same little plastic case sitting on my shelf at home.

MODERATOR: Final few from me. Are you someone who is a goal setter, what goals did you kind of have coming into this season and will you kind of have to reassess after capturing your first win in your ninth start?

JAKE KNAPP: Not really. I've kind of shifted everything internal for me. I just want to feel like I get the most out of every day, every tournament.

We kind of -- Mike and I talked about it or I talked about it with my coach and everything. I just want to keep my card this year, I just want to keep it. I don't want to put too much pressure on myself to finish top-50, top-30 or anything, just give myself an opportunity to do those things.

Even now it's like I would love to win a lot more times for sure but going to keep on working hard and trust the fact that the good things will take care of themselves.



MODERATOR: With that, we will wrap things up. Jake, again, congratulations on getting your first PGA TOUR victory.

JAKE KNAPP: Thank you. Thanks to all you guys, appreciate it. Thank you.

