

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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BILLY HORSCHTEL

DOUG MILNE: We will go ahead and get started, like to welcome Billy Horschel to the interview room here at the Valero Texas Open.

Billy, you're on the heels of your 10th start here at the Valero Texas Open, haven't played since 2019, a couple of two, three top-10 finishes in your previous nine. Just some thoughts on being back here this week?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, it's nice to always come back to a place you've had success. When they moved this event to the week before Augusta, I was excited for the tournament. I think the first year it was 2019 they played the week before Augusta. I just think after that I felt I wanted to be at home to be prepared for Augusta and that's why I hadn't been back in the last few years. Obviously with my play as of last year, I'm not in Augusta so I need to be here to play.

Last year was a great reassessment in the year to understand things, and I think going forward for the rest of my career I'm going to play the week before a major. I feel I just, I feel better going into the major with some rounds under my belt, understanding where my game is.

Like I said, Valero is an unbelievable sponsor of the PGA TOUR, this tournament does an unbelievable job, Larson and his entire staff are unbelievable, they take great care of the players. Yeah, it's nice to be back and hopefully the success I've had in the past can continue to happen this week.

DOUG MILNE: I know with the Aon Swing 5 avenue, you're at No. 5 coming into the week, you want to stay at No. 5 or better so that you can make that 12th consecutive start at Hilton Head for a Signature Event. How much has that been on your mind, has it been on your mind at all and how nice would that be and how nice of an avenue is that Aon Swing 5?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, last year was tough not to play well for a multitude of reasons and this year -- and one of those reasons is there's events that I'm not in that I'm accustomed to being into. Not being at Bay Hill this year was tough, I played that every year since 2013. I not in Hilton Head right now, I'm not in Memorial. I haven't played Genesis a lot but I started playing that again. There's a lot of events that I'm not in this year due to the play of last year.

So I know I've had to play well this year. I haven't played bad, I just haven't played well enough, and to play well the last couple weeks to finally get myself in a position to be able to qualify for one of the Signature Events is huge. We know what those events are. We can talk



about the money, we can talk about the points, but for me it's more or less the World Ranking Points, getting to play against the best players in the world and compare myself against the best players in the world is where I want to be. Get myself back up in the World Rankings, get myself back into the majors.

So hopefully I can have another good week here, secure my spot into RBC Hilton Head. I love that event, such a great event, I've had success there as well and so we'll see what happens.

DOUG MILNE: Coming off a 64 in the final round, obviously coming into the week probably feeling pretty good, a couple of top-10s in your last four starts. How are you feeling coming into the week with your game?

BILLY HORSCHHEL: The game's been in a really good spot all year. You look at the stats in every department, it's in a really good spot. It's sort of been more or less getting out of my own way. I say getting out of my own way. When you hit shots that you're not accustomed to hitting the way I did last year, you start to have some mental little demons in there a little bit, so I've had to clear those out and replace them with better golf shots. PLAYERS was a tough one because I played well at Cognizant and I played well at Phoenix, WM, except for the final round, I had a really bad final round. So the game was trending in the right direction, I was really excited about PLAYERS, but like I said, there was some of those mental things that arose again that week and I just had to address them with my team and talk to them about them and have a better mental mind frame going into Valspar and then last week.

Yeah, game's in a really good spot, I'm excited about where it is, where it's heading. I'm excited about all the work Todd Anderson and everyone else on my team that we've been doing. We're just trying to build the momentum.

Over my career historically, we can go back around look, I tend to play well as I build momentum. My wins come from playing well multiple weeks in a row and that's how it's always been in my career. So hopefully I can continue to build that momentum until that victory pops up again.

Q. Going back to Sunday, it looked like you were enjoying yourself, but as you make the trip over here on Monday morning, which is it, are you more disappointed with the finish or happy with the finish?

BILLY HORSCHHEL: I could be disappointed because I missed three putts inside 10 feet on holes 6, 7 and 9. I had a couple birdie opportunities coming in. But I can't dwell on those shots because I also had three three-putts throughout the week, and historically I'm a really good putter and I can say I take those three shots away, I win the tournament. I can also say that I had three really bad bogeys. I mean, just really bad bogeys earlier in the week.

So am I -- I was not disappointed at all, I was really encouraged by my game. I don't think I've come anywhere close to playing to my level that I expect of myself. I feel like I'm playing



really good golf, but I don't think I'm playing anywhere what I'm capable of. It's nice to see that even with me not even close to what I think potentially of my game and where it can go that I'm still having chances to win and I'm having good finishes. I'm encouraged by the finish, I'm encouraged by the way I've played these last two Sundays at Valspar and -- or the last three Sundays, three out of the last four Sundays going back to Cognizant, I think I shot 4 or 5 under at Cognizant, I shot 4 under at Valspar I think, and I shot 6 under this past Sunday.

So I'm doing a lot of really good things well, I just need to clean up some things earlier in the week so I'm closer to the lead on Sunday than I have been.

Q. And going to the Aon Swing and talking about getting into the Signature Events, you started the season on the outside looking in. Is it delivering what your expectations were of the Signature Events and providing not just that but providing a pathway for you and others to play their way in?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I think the Aon Swing 5 and is it Aon 10, is that it? Those two avenues have been tremendously beneficial.

I was skeptical in the fall and had some conversations with Kirty because the number that they thought was going get into the events, I think they were expecting 70 unique players, 70 different players get into the Signature Events throughout the year. I just, I wasn't sure that number was right, I thought it was a little high. I've had some conversations with her and they showed me the numbers and they're pretty much right on track to what they projected.

I think it's done very well. I can sit up here and say I think the Signature Events have been somewhat of a success. I don't know if they've been the ultimate success. We talk about TV ratings haven't been as well for the Signature Events as I think in my opinion what I would expect them to be. I was in favor of what the Signature Events became in a smaller field, but I also think at the same time I think the viewers like to see more unique stories, more storylines, more of guys that may be a journeyman PGA TOUR player or having the opportunity to make a splash that they haven't done as a rookie on the PGA TOUR, so the Aon 5 and the Aon 10 is giving that.

I think maybe if I had a crystal ball and I could change some things, maybe next year we make a couple of fields -- not every field, but make a few of the fields a little larger just to have a little more of those unique storylines going forward. But I think so far the Signature Events in sense of getting players in, more unique players in and giving them opportunity, I think it's been a success in that atmosphere or that avenue.

Q. Do you think there's any difference in the mindset this week for guys who are tuning up for the Masters versus guys who don't have that opportunity lined up at this moment?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I'm not in Augusta and my main focus this week is to win. I think



if you're in Augusta, you're sort of -- ultimately you always want to win, but I think you're sort of assessing where your game is, what you need to work on, some of the shots you may need to have to be able to play well at Augusta.

So yeah, there's two different mindsets between the players that are in Augusta and the players that aren't in Augusta.

Q. You've been a regular at Augusta and the other majors in recent years. Is there pressure or do you feel an extra drive to try to get back to that level now?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, listen, I'm not very happy that I'm not in Augusta. I've been fortunate enough to play there quite a few times, and I play the game of golf because I want to create a legacy, that's all I've ever cared about. The money aspect is great, but I've always understood that if you play well and you win golf tournaments, the financial side takes care of itself. I want to be remembered for what I did on the golf course and winning golf tournaments and winning golf tournaments that you can put your name next to legends in the game of golf and players that are the best in that generation that you're playing against.

Yeah, I'm not happy that I'm not in Augusta or any of the majors as we sit here right now, but listen, it's my own fault. I can't do anything about that, I didn't play well last year, but the great thing is this game of golf gives you opportunities to correct that wrong and I'm trying the best I can right now to make up for a bad year last year and get myself back to where I feel like I deserve to be in the game of golf or I want to be in the game of golf.

Q. How do you balance not putting too much pressure on yourself or having that become overwhelming when your goals and expectations are that high?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I've put so much pressure on myself my entire career, I'm still trying to figure it out. My 15th year on the PGA TOUR, I'm 37, I still don't know how to figure out not putting pressure on myself. It's what I've done my entire life.

It's why -- it's been a hindrance, but it's also been a reason why I've been so driven, been so successful in the game of golf. There's that equilibrium. I've just got to figure out that balance level. Sometimes I have it right and sometimes I don't. Right now I'm in a really good spot and if I can just stay here, then I think everything else will sort of fall into place where it needs to be.

DOUG MILNE: Final question, putting you on the spot, happened to notice, what's your "fearless," what have you got there?

BILLY HORSCHEL: So listen, Taylor swift is massive in my household. My girls went to a Taylor swift concert last year in Atlanta with my wife and they are massive Swifties. So my oldest one, Skylar, made me a bracelet that I've been wearing for almost a year now. It just says Sky, Colbs and Ax.



And after THE PLAYERS Championship, talking with my team and my wife about I just need to go out there and play with less fear, got to be fearless, so my wife made me a fearless bracelet.

There's a little more back story behind it. I sort of had a dream I think Sunday night of PLAYERS, woke up Monday morning and we were talking about Valspar is a week before I left that Monday morning, I said yeah, I think I'm just going to put a Sharpie on my left wrist that says "fearless" because I had a dream seeing fearless on my left wrist. She said, well, I'll just make you a bracelet, so she made me a bracelet.

I didn't realize this either, I don't think my wife realized it at the time, I guess Taylor Swift's second or third album is Fearless and she has a song Fearless. I'm not the biggest Swiftie. I get asked about it a lot from the fans now when I sign autographs, they ask if I'm a Swiftie or are they friendship bracelets or anything. It's a cool little thing, but also just puts me in the right mind frame of when I'm playing golf of what I want to be thinking about.

DOUG MILNE: I like it. You could raise the bar and say it'd go over a tattoo instead.

BILLY HORSCHER: I thought about a tattoo, but I'm not a tattoo guy.

DOUG MILNE: Billy, we always appreciate your time, thanks for coming by.

