

October 22, 2012



WEBB SIMPSON
BUBBA WATSON
KEEGAN BRADLEY
PADRAIG HARRINGTON

Q. Thoughts on being here in the 2012 PGA Grand Slam of Golf?

WEBB SIMPSON: And with Pádraig being here being a three-time Major Champion, I'm just glad to be part of the mix.

Q. There was some strong indications from the USGA last week that they were thinking about banning the belly putter. I've been told that you've been practicing with a regular-sized one. Just wondering if you could talk about that?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, well, I switched in 2004 to a belly putter. Growing up putting wasn't the strong part of my game so I wanted to always have the same mechanics with the belly putter if I chose to stay with the belly putter.

What I found was I just became a more consistent putter. I don't get hot quite as much. I don't get cold quite as much. With the short putter, I was a real streaky putter, so in my head I figured if I want to play this game for a long time, I don't want my putting to be such highs and lows. The best players in the game who have had long careers have been steady players, so that's kind of why I switched. I just want to be ready.

If they are going to make it a rule for next year -- I think they can't really implement it until '16, so I'm going to be ready. I was practicing with one at home. It's not that I'm worried about -- I'm definitely engaged in it and I want to know and I think it's going to be -- if the USGA bans it, I think it's going to be a whole another ballgame to see if the PGA TOUR bans it.

It's going to be, you know, I think it's going to be tough if they do ban it. It's going to be tough

for a lot of people -- not players. I think it's going to be tough for committees to really have a stance on it and explain why.

I explained earlier, you look at the facts, and the facts last year, there was no one in the Top-20 in strokes gained category that anchored a putter. So the argument of, it's an advantage, you have to throw that out there. There's a bunch of arguments going around but I haven't heard a good one yet so wait and see. But the final say is, I'm friends with a lot of the R&A guys and the USGA guys. It's nothing personal and I know they are trying to do it for the betterment of the game. But, I don't think it's a good decision.

Q. Can you put a finger on why, if it's not to cut an advantage, how does it affect the game?

WEBB SIMPSON: I don't know to be honest. I've heard a couple things. I've heard that the belly putter count was up in the U.S. Junior Amateur and U.S. Amateur, and you know, we all know that the R&A and USGA love to keep golf as original as possible, but I think with the changes in the groove, the golf balls, the drivers, you've got a little persimmon head 20 years ago the size of a fist and now a titanium head 460 CCs; in 1980 the long drive guy was hitting it 285, and now if you hit it 285, you're one of the shortest guys on the TOUR.

To me it's a bigger change to go from that size head to what we play now than the putter. Now, I think that it's getting more -- I think it's getting more attention because Keegan won a major, I won a major, Ernie won a major. There's a lot more talk about it now. Twitter, certain guys that are Tweeting about it that half a million followers, so it's getting out. But I'm not worried about it. I'm ready and if they do it for next year, I'll be ready.

Q. Wanted to know what you thought of Bubba's artwork?

WEBB SIMPSON: I thought it was -- I didn't think it was very creative. He did the same for everybody (laughter).

But when I won the U.S. Open, I realized I would be here with Bubba, I immediately became

pretty happy because he's such an easy going jokester and I knew this week would be special with him just to be -- he's already in his element drawing all our pictures.

Q. What would you do for an encore next year?

WEBB SIMPSON: I've got to stay true to what I've been telling you guys for the last couple years that all I care about is improving. You know, statistically this year, I made half as much money as I did last year and I won half as many tournaments but I feel like I've gotten better. I feel good about that.

And I think whether I win five times next year or win zero, I've just got to continue to strive to get better. There's so many great players right now, so many young guys coming up, and if you don't stay hungry and stay after it, you'll get passed, so just keep my drive and keep trying to improve.

Q. What will get you into this year, your schedule the rest of this year and next year; do you know?

WEBB SIMPSON: I'm playing in Tiger's event end of November/December, and that's it for the year. And I'll be playing as of right now, definitely both in Hawai'i and from there I'm not sure. We are probably going to play a good amount on the West Coast but we just have to figure out which ones.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks very much.

Keegan Bradley, defending champion of the PGA Grand Slam of Golf. Keegan, welcome back, how you doing.

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I'm going great. Great to be back in Bermuda. Weather is perfect and course is even better than I remember it. Looking forward to playing with him (Bubba, in back of room) the next couple days.

Q. Have you ever had a better WD getting into an event as an alternate than this one?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Yeah, this is great. Any time you get to come here and play this tournament is a bonus, and the PGA puts on a great tournament. And the people of Bermuda really make you feel very nice when you come here. So any time I get a chance to come, I'm going to jump on it.

Q. I was just wondering if you were thinking about getting a nose ring now that you've had a look at Bubba's artwork outside?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Yeah, I think that looks pretty good, and I have a black tooth. I really like what Bubba said that I like belly putters so much; I'm glad he's being vocal about that for me.

Q. What do you have the rest of the year and what do you to start next season?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I'm going to play HSBC in China next week. Then I go to Chevron and then Shark Shootout. I'm going to really try to work the hardest I've ever worked this off-season. I've already been working a lot on my physical fitness side of things that I have never worked as hard as I am now, so it's going to be a busy off-season. But I'll be trying to get better just like I always did.

Q. Will you still go down to see Jim and practice at Doral?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Yeah, there's another thing I'm going to try to see is see Jim a lot more, just to practice -- whenever I'm around Jim, we seem have to really productive practice sessions, so that's going to be a big part of this off-season, as well.

JULIUS MASON: Bubba Watson, ladies and gentlemen, congratulations on earning a berth to the PGA Grand Slam of Golf. How did it look out there today.

BUBBA WATSON: It was good. It's a great course. You know what I liked is that we're on a small island. It's amazing, the atmosphere around here, there's a lot of people, a lot of local support and a lot of the vocals and volunteers and stuff are excited for us to be here so it was nice to get that warm welcome in this beautiful area, and the weather was perfect today.

JULIUS MASON: Sounds like you might have a future as a golf instructor, sounds like you were giving some pretty valuable tips to Robin Meade?

BUBBA WATSON: Yes, my first lesson under the gun with a camera and fans watching. She almost made a hole-in-one. She knocked it to two feet, three feet. I think I did pretty good. If they were all like, that I would make tons of money.

Q. Can you talk about the golf course

and any holes specifically that you like a lot or you see where your length is going to give you a really good advantage?

BUBBA WATSON: I thought the golf course -- it's a short golf course but they have it in a way where it plays longer. You can lay up off the tees or you can try to go for some things with the right wind. The par 5s, 17, is a really short hole downwind. I don't know if it's downwind all the time but it was today. Hit a little gap wedge, 52-degree in there but it's still tight. If you try to be a hero and hit the long drive, there's water and then gets tight on the right over there.

First hole, I didn't know what to do, I hit driver over the trees into the water, so have to lay back off of that. It's a short course but they make it play longer than it really does.

Q. Back to Robin Meade, she's taken six lessons with Suzy Whaley. I watched her swing a couple times and looks like her fundamentals are good and she's been bitten hard by the bug. Could you tell that?

BUBBA WATSON: It was funny, she started Tweeting, her and Suzy started Tweeting the last week, week and a half about me and I was like, what is she talking about. She said we were playing the Pro-Am together. I didn't know -- she sings -- I didn't know anything about her, so started following her on Twitter because she was following me, and so we just communicated on Twitter. That's how I knew I was playing with her in the Pro-Am. It's nice to see someone of her stature come over here and love to play the game of golf and learn it late in life. She was walking down the fairways telling me how much she loves it and how much she enjoys learning something new. It's nice to see.

But obviously her swing, she played a lot better than her third time out on the course, and especially when I instructed her really good. (Laughter).

Q. At the University of Georgia, I assume you took some art classes, judging by your handiwork?

BUBBA WATSON: At university of Georgia, we learned to draw inside the lines. I think it is St. John's where Keegan went, they need to work on their art program, because he has to scrub and paint that wall again since his is not coming off.

Q. Is it true that Justin Bieber is your favorite music artist?

BUBBA WATSON: No, it's Robin Meade, obviously. I'm her favorite instructor, so -- no, I'm really good friends with -- well, I guess I'm really good friends with Justin Bieber. I've hung out with him a bunch at his house. He was the only person I took a phone call after I won Augusta; him and his girlfriend called me on the phone and I talked to them a little bit. I have a lot of respect for him.

JULIUS MASON: And your favorite country artist is Robin Meade?

BUBBA WATSON: Robin, for sure, is my favorite.

Q. Georgia question: What do you think about next Saturday, Florida looks awfully good?

BUBBA WATSON: They do and the Dogs didn't look that good. A win's a win I guess but they haven't really looked complete yet.

So I'm looking forward to it obviously. I'm hoping they pull it off and I'm home for one day, I get back on Friday, home for Saturday to hang out -- just home in Arizona, so I'm home for one day before I go to China, just enough time to see my son and watch the game hopefully. It's going to be a big one though.

Q. What do you have planned rest of the year and early next year?

BUBBA WATSON: I've got China next week. Go home for a day, go to China, going to play HSBC World Golf Championships, and then I come home for about three weeks and in that three weeks we're shooting the golf video that nobody knows about, so don't tell anybody. Then I'm going to Tiger's event in California. Not sure what it's called now, World Challenge or something like that, and then we are going to Thailand.

Q. When do you get back?

BUBBA WATSON: Second week of December, I guess Tiger's event ends December 4. And we leave straight for Thailand, then I'll be done. Have three weeks off before Maui.

Q. Everybody talks about when you win your first major what a life-changing event it is and it's such a whirlwind, especially the first couple months after, immediately after. Could you talk about, you've had some time

now to reflect on it and what that was really like, right after you won that Masters? And also, to be here is kind of a crown on your year and what it means to be part of this event.

BUBBA WATSON: Start with the last part first. Being here is special. That means you've done something great to get here. It's an honor to be here. Something we have always thought about playing in one day, but only way you can do that is you've got to win a big one.

So on the way over here is where it hit me what I've done, the last -- it's like a baseball player, this is my contract year, I had a lot of contracts up this year so winning a big one helped me out a lot.

So coming over here, it really hit me. The same time I won my Masters, we adopted a son, so being a dad has been the best part. I would give up the green jacket any day of the week for my son. The last six months, playing golf and also learning how to be a great dad and a husband, that was the difficult part and now with all of these contract talks, doing a lot of things behind the scenes is where it's really hitting me that I actually did good this year.

So coming over here is where it really hit home that I won a major. I get to play in this, and there's only four guys; it's pretty special to be here and be a part of this and hopefully can do it again one day so I can come back.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON

JULIUS MASON: Pádraig Harrington, if at first or second time you don't succeed in winning the PGA Grand Slam of Golf in a playoff, both times, try, try again?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, it's funny, I can't remember the playoff which I obviously lost to Jim Furyk, but I really remember the one I lost to Cabrera. He got the last to get into the playoff. I thought I had it won. I remember that one all right, and hopefully this is third time a charm.

Q. This is obviously a late invite, would you talk us through the process of where you found out, whether your clubs had been put away --

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: No, I was due to travel to China Sunday night. So on Friday, I was practicing and my manager rang me and said there's a possibility that Ernie may pull out and

would I be interested, and I said yeah, I'd be interested.

On Friday evening, we provisionally started looking at flights, and the word came flew Saturday afternoon, late Saturday afternoon, that Ernie had pulled out. As unfortunate as it is for Ernie and let's hope he gets better, it was good news for me.

You know, I think it was easy to get here. You know, Bermuda is simple to get to. If it was Hawai'i or something like that, it wouldn't have been so much fun trying to get there. I think it was easy for me to get here and I didn't feel like I was, you know, for a short trip, I didn't feel like I was coming here and going to have a lot of jet-lag or have a problem with jet-lag or anything like that.

Obviously playing the Grand Slam was a great choice but it was made that much easier by the convenience of coming to Bermuda. I left Dublin 10:45 on Sunday whereas I had intended to leave on 7:30 that evening, so it was only a slight change of plans.

Q. Unfinished business in the back of your head?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Absolutely. I've come close twice in Grand Slams and hopefully it will be that close coming down the stretch this week and it would fall in my favor. That would be nice. You never can tell, but that would be the plan; to keep it the tournament as long as possible and hopefully down the stretch, do a few nice things, things turn in my favor and come out winning.

Q. Can you talk about such late notice coming here, obviously this isn't a major, but having shorter time to prepare mentally for playing in an event like this --

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: As I said, I was going to play an event this week, so I'd been at home practicing. I had planned three full warm-up days to get myself for switching over from hitting technical shots on the range to playing and I obviously had just the one of those days today.

You know, I could see it, the first couple of holes today, I was definitely a little bit -- I was struggling with my mental focus. As I got into the round though, I got a little bit sharper and sharper. Unfortunately this is a quick event, two days. You've got to be ready to go from the first tee. I can't afford to be playing well with nine holes to go

and that's it. I've got to play well from the start.

So it is an interesting one. You do need to be as sharp as you can be from the word go. There's not enough time in this event if you don't start fast.

Q. So you would have been playing?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Lake Malaren, China, BMW Masters.

Q. So does this change your schedule -- what else do you have?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm going to play Singapore, Hong Kong and The Race to Dubai are my last three events. Then I have a good sizable chunk of time off during the winter.

Q. Do you know when you start up? 2013?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: No, I'm not sure at all. I will 100 percent play AT&T in the States, so I will play one tournament, at least, before AT&T. AT&T, definitely I'll be there for that. I'm obviously defending with my Pro-Am partner (JP McManus), the Pro-Am version of it. So I'm 100 percent pencilled in for that one, and everything else is not quite there yet.

Q. What are your impressions of the course and Bermuda?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Obviously I've been here before. It's a beautiful island. You get a great welcome. Everything seems to be half an hour away, 30 minutes. Surprised how quick we got to the golf course today.

Yeah, it's a beautiful place. The golf course, it's a good test, some substantial holes out there. You have to think that 16th hole has got to be one of the toughest golf holes we'll ever play.

I would say if you have that -- I'd say if you had that in a regular event, there would be a slight amount of moaning. It is incredibly tough holes. It's a good golf course for this format. There's certainly some opportunities to make some birdies out there and there are certainly some big, tough holes that you have to play well on top of that.

So you have kind of a mixture out there. It's in no way -- it's in no way a tricky course. I think at times, this is a full championship golf course, there's no doubt about it, with some small targets in the crosswinds. If it got windy out there, it could get very difficult. If the greens got very firm, it could get very difficult but thankfully neither

of those are forecast so I would predict that the players are going to have a good two days here. I don't think necessarily the golf course is going to win out this week. If the greens stay as they are, we'll really enjoy this course.

Q. You mentioned the welcome you got here --

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I was really impressed -- the water out there is really green for me.

Q. The fact that the PGA worked so hard and got the signage changed, the flags up, everything here; could you talk about what that meant?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I would expect nothing else from the PGA, and that's to be honest. They are a professional-run organization and they are on of these type of things. They have encountered issues like this in the past. They know what they are doing. So, yes.

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