

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
April 18, 2018

ADAM SCOTT



DOUG MILNE: Like to welcome the 2010 Valero Texas Open champion, Adam Scott. Adam, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Came back in 2011, top-25 finish in defense of your title and here you are back in 2018. So just a few comments on making the decision to be back here this year and a few comments on your year so far.

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, sure. Well, it's great coming back to a place where I've had some success in the past. It's amazing because six or seven years just slipped by and for whatever reason didn't fit the schedule, but did this year. I felt it was important coming off my play at the Masters to keep whatever momentum I was feeling there on the weekend going and not take a break like I usually do at this time of year.

So wanted to come back here and play. It seemed like the obvious choice having had a bit of success here before. Hopefully kind of pick up where I left off on the weekend, which was really solid and get a bit of momentum going because that's what I haven't had this year. Trying to put four good rounds together and get the most out of my game for a change.

DOUG MILNE: You've had a chance to see the course. Just some thoughts on how it compares now to where it was back in 2010 and '11?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I don't know if my comparisons will be accurate because my memory's probably not that good. I thought it was playing a little longer and slower today than I remembered and maybe that was just because it wasn't really windy this morning. But some of the par 5s that I felt like we were getting to in two weren't really in play this morning, and just generally it was a little bit soft, which is nice because that's friendly. And especially if the wind blows, got to be careful around here, you don't want them too firm and fast, otherwise maybe we're not out there playing golf when we could be.

I'm sure the wind will blow at some point this week, but the demands of the golf course is the same as what I remember. The green complexes are quite severe, and if you can drive it in play and put the ball on the green, you're at a big advantage because I think sure, you can scramble a little bit, but I don't know if you can rely on that all week. So if you strike it well this week I think you're going to be in front of most of the field.

Q. As you alluded to, you generally take almost from the Masters to THE PLAYERS I think most of the time. Is there a concern at all that you are having to kind of increase your schedule through this stretch or were there times in the past where you kind of got antsy and like oh, I wanted to play something in between?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, you've just kind of got to assess it as it goes. I remember one year

leaving the Masters I flew back to Australia. I don't know where I finished at the Masters, it was probably 20-something, 30-something. Flew back home and was playing at home with my buddies playing really well, and I'm like, Why am I wasting my good golf on you guys? So I flew back the next week to Dallas and won the Byron Nelson.

Kind of one of those things where you can't be so stubborn. We get so routine with everything now just because that's what I always do. I'm trying to be really in tune with where my game's at and identify why I'm just not having better results. To kind of change that, I've got to change something, otherwise I'm just going to do the same thing.

I feel like I'm still pretty fresh off where I was at the Masters and I saw good things happening on the weekend and I wanted to keep that going. So just took a week off and hopefully a quick turnaround here and things start going in the right direction because I think I can have a really great back end of the season. My ball striking is where I want it, I like where my short game's at. I just need to get a bit of momentum going on the greens. It's easy to do that on the putting green at home, but that doesn't always translate to out here. I think I've got to just make it happen out here.

Q. You're the only player that's obviously won each of the tournaments in Texas. Is that mere coincidence or do you think there's something about that in terms of like your ability to handle the wind here and that type of thing?

ADAM SCOTT: Maybe. Look, I think I'm a good wind player. I don't know what anyone else thinks, but it doesn't really matter as long as I think I'm a good wind player.

So sure, the wind definitely blows in Texas, but I've talked about it in the past. I think there are a lot of similarities landscape-wise out here, feel of the golf course, and even down to the crowds and people having a noisy and fun time, very similar to Australian sports fans. There are a lot of similarities and I've definitely felt very good playing golf here, and I feel even today the people who are out there and the volunteers were so nice and friendly towards me and welcoming me coming back to play here this week, so it's good vibes all around.

Q. Adam, you talked about it just a minute ago, but you know we're creatures of habit, most pros are. A lot of guys love playing the week before a major, the week before the Masters. Do you think that next year this is the week before the Masters on the schedule, yeah, do you think that -- do you think players will play here next year just because it is the week before the Masters maybe if they've never had any interest in playing here before?

ADAM SCOTT: Yes, possibly, for sure, yeah. I think guys who like to play the week before will play anywhere the week before. I really do. I think they're not going to struggle to fill a good field the week before the Masters here next year. I would be surprised if that would be the case.

The guys who like to do it, you know, if it was not a preferred venue of theirs or take a week off, they might not know what to do with themselves in that week off to prepare for the majors, so I would suggest they probably come and play. Once you're in that routine, like you talked about, creature of habit, it's hard to break that. I would say if you like playing the week before, you would feel more comfortable playing anywhere than sitting at home thinking and waiting around for the major to come by.

Q. It's kind of a never-ending debate I think, but where do you fall on that continuum? Do you like playing the week before or not playing?

ADAM SCOTT: Generally I do not play the week before. However, last year I did but I had a slightly different schedule situation going on, but generally I don't. I made a decision, I don't know when it was maybe around 2010 to really start preparing differently for the majors.

At that point I had underperformed in majors and I had to change something on a different scale and a different level to even how I'm approaching this week. I feel I've underperformed this year and I have to change something. I just can't set the schedule in January and stick with it when it's not quite there. I've got to change something up.

So that's what I did back in 2010 and I took a lot more time off and prepared differently for the majors and that had a really good effect for me, so I've done that mostly since then. But it wasn't anything revolutionary, it was similar to what Tiger did his entire career, or Greg Norman or Jack Nicklaus. They didn't necessarily play the week before, but they were very prepared with practice and preparation. Talking about peak performance a certain week, it's very difficult to do in golf, but I think you can definitely focus in at a certain point and get that if you're talking about four weeks a year.

Q. Just curious, what did you find in your last start specifically that you felt good about, anything that you can put your finger on?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I just felt like I'm -- everything's right there, I just need more rounds to get it going. I played fairly defensive on Thursday, Friday at Augusta because I got off to a bit of a bad start on Thursday. It's very hard to turn that around without taking big risks and potentially missing a cut or having another big number out there. So playing on the back foot on Friday is very difficult.

Every time you're cautious, if you're too cautious you pay a big penalty. So I never got any momentum going, but as I freed up on the weekend there was lots of good stuff tee to green and on the greens. Although I didn't make everything I wanted, I started to feel better on the greens and I want to keep that feeling going. I don't want to wait a month until THE PLAYERS to kind of rediscover a new feeling or wonder how it's going to feel once I walk out in competition. Just looking to keep the good striking going and then take advantage of some of my good golf because that's what I haven't been doing because I've missed too many putts, I feel.

Q. Speaking of greens, what's your opinion on the 16th here?

ADAM SCOTT: Here? Well, it's much like Riviera's 6. It's interesting for sure, but it's got us talking about it, which I think is a good thing, you know. Today it was playing quite long. It was a front pin and I had to hit a 6-iron I believe. It's a pretty challenging hole as well. You know, quite a unique design feature because I think they're the only two courses that I know of that have a bunker in the middle of the green.

Q. Do you ever find yourself on the other side of the bunker?

ADAM SCOTT: I have not yet, knock on wood. I wouldn't like to. I have at Riviera once, but not here.

Q. With Patrick's win at the Masters a couple weeks ago, now there's four all Americans all under the age of 30 on the four major championships. Is that coincidence or do you think the tide is swinging to the top young American players kind of asserting themselves at the top?

ADAM SCOTT: Well, I think they definitely have asserted themselves at the top, but Patrick's shown the potential to perform like that and did. So look at who have we got, Justin Thomas and Jordan.

Q. And Brooks Koepka?

ADAM SCOTT: Brooks. You know, certainly the way Jordan's played over the last few years and Justin Thomas has played the last 18 months or two years, they've asserted themselves well up at the top of the game. It's all cyclical, for sure, and there are periods where it's just waiting for that next generation to come through. It definitely looks like it has in the United States, for sure. After we'll take Tiger out of the conversation, but the Davis Loves and Fred Couples and guys of that age group and now the next lot has come through.

Q. Adam, it seems like a tough test this week. What's the key to being successful on this golf course?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I think you're going to have to drive it good, I really do. I mean, I think it's playing softer and a little longer than I thought, and keeping it in play is very helpful here. Even if you miss the green, being up that far because there can be a lot of chip-out stuff happening from under the trees and rocks and different obstacles that you have if you're not really straight. So I think I can see a premium on driving out there.

Q. And just a quick follow, you say that you're striking the ball well and you're trying to get confidence on the greens. Is it just a mental thing or is there anything you're working on in terms of speed, line, et cetera?

ADAM SCOTT: No, yeah, I'm always working on I guess two things. I've worked on my stroke a little bit and I've been watching Jason Day a lot and I've talked to him a little bit about it and just the path of my stroke. So I've been working on that a little bit.

And the rest is confidence, which is mental. So one, I have to forget about the stroke when I go out there and just do and just try and keep that mind really clear and free and not have all the too many thoughts going out there. You know, to go out there at Augusta and just be free and freewheel it sounds like fun but it can also be disastrous, too.

So hopefully here just a little less pressure on myself and I can go and be a bit more free, kind of just keep progressing to where I want to be. I feel like it's half a putt a round is what I want to gain and I'll be in contention in tournaments. If you look at rankings, I look really far down in the rankings, but if you look at the numbers there, it's like half a putt a round worse than average. Doesn't sound good, either, but it's not a lot to find and that's kind of how I'm approaching it.

DOUG MILNE: Adam, thank you for your time. Best of luck this week.

ADAM SCOTT: Thanks a lot.