

GREATS OF GOLF
May 4, 2019



LEE TREVINO
GARY PLAYER
JACK NICKLAUS

CHRIS RICHARDS: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm very honored to welcome Mr. Lee Trevino, Mr. Gary Player, Mr. Jack Nicklaus. Before we get started with the 3M Greats of Golf, we'll have an opportunity to ask them questions. I'll open with one each and then open it up to the media.

Lee, what does it mean to you to be part of a legendary group of 16 players we have today for the 3M Greats of Golf?

LEE TREVINO: Great, absolutely great.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Can you use a microphone?

LEE TREVINO: Oh, they can hear me. You know, if they can't hear me, goddamn, something's wrong. They're deaf if they can't hear me.

Anyway, **sorry that I missed last year. My wife turned 60 last year and we took a little trip. I wanted to know if she wanted to go on the 9th and she said no, so the 8th was her birthday, May 8th.**

It's always great to see everyone here, especially the ladies. Jack and I and Gary see each other maybe two or three times a year, but we only get to see the girls maybe a couple of times, and they still hit it very well.

We are very honored to be here and we thank you. We thank the sponsors and everybody that's involved with this for bringing us back.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you. Gary, can you put into words what Lee and Jack have meant to you both on the course and off the course?

GARY PLAYER: First of all, I think the important -- you can hear me as well. I think the important thing is they've been great friends. When you've got good friends in life, it's a tremendous asset. We've played against each other, we've beaten each other, we've laughed together and we've traveled together. So that's a very special experience in your life.

Obviously admire both of them. Jack's definitely the greatest player that ever lived, and he's not only been that, he's been a great family man.

Lee Trevino has been one of the greatest strikers of a golf ball that ever lived and has been a great entertainment to people. He's always laughing. He sets a good example to people to try to be happy because everybody's got problems, doesn't matter who you are, and if you can be happy, it helps solve them.

And actually, in conclusion, they have been contributors to society and that to me is important, not only just golf champions. I'm always intrigued by presidents giving athletes medals of recognition and yet the athletes that have done far more important than just athletic prowess have never seen medals, but that's just how life goes. So I'm a big admirer of both of them obviously.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you. Jack, a similar question to you. What's it meant to you to have people like Gary and Lee in your life for all these years?

JACK NICKLAUS: Not a damn thing. (Laughs.)

No, they've -- I go back and Gary Player, I remember the first time I saw him hit a golf ball was the 9th hole at Southern Hills, uphill shot. I saw Gary Player swing and I saw his left wrist like this back in the fairway, and I said, "Well, we'll never have to worry about him." You finished second there, didn't you?

GARY PLAYER: Yeah, I did.

JACK NICKLAUS: You end up finishing second there. Through the years Gary's family is very similar to mine. We both have 22 grandkids. He has one more child, six kids, we have five. Our families have been good friends and we spent a lot of time together not only on the golf course but off the golf course, so that's been great.

Lee Trevino, Lee Trevino. When Lee first came out, I remember the first time I saw him hit a golf ball was -- he finished 5th in the U.S. Open in 1967 at Baltusrol and then the next week we played in Cleveland. I saw this guy on the practice tee hitting golf balls and I saw this swing and I said, "Who in the world is that?" They said, "Oh, that's Lee Trevino, he's a young guy that just came on the tour, just finished Fifth in the U.S. Open last week." I said, "Really? With that swing? Um-hmm." I started watching the swing and that swing's pretty good. That swing repeated itself well, hit the golf ball well.

Lee has come to be -- I think he has been -- well, let's see, I don't know how you phrase this. I have as much admiration for Lee Trevino as anybody I know. From where he came from and what he's done and how his life turned around from -- with his previous marriages, and then Claudia came along and Olivia and Daniel came along. Watching how he changed and what happened with him and how his other kids will come back. I mean, I think he's just done such a great job with his life. I've got two guys here that I couldn't call -- couldn't have two better friends, two guys that would, you know, they would do anything for you, as I would for them.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you, Jack. I would like to open it up to questions now.

Q. Last year I asked Jack and Gary this question. I asked Tom Watson. What do you see is the state of golf today?

LEE TREVINO: Well, I thought that the state of golf was having a little rough time until Tiger won the last tournament and then he wins a Masters. He absolutely stimulated it again. It's already started all over again. The kids want to play and it really put it back on the map.

I will make a confession that, you know, you get past that particular question and I'm sure that Jack and Gary were asked that question, would Tiger win again. I didn't think that Tiger was just injured. I've gone through that, Jack's gone through that. Gary's gone very little through injuries because of the way he takes care of himself much better than we do. I've gone through the back problems and whatever.

And I've made that statement that I said if he gets corrected, he will come back with a vengeance just simply to prove to people that he wasn't finished.

He's extremely talented. I mean, he was like Jack. You don't lose that talent and you don't lose -- in other words, the thing that you want, the challenge that you have to get back.

I thought that he would win a golf tournament, but I have to make a confession: I did not think that he would win another major. I pulled for him so hard that Sunday. I remember when Jack won in '86, 46 years old, won the Masters. He was on 15, made the eagle. I was across my airplane gate in a bar with my wife, Claudia. We would not get on the plane. There were 40 people there. We were absolutely dead drunk by the time Jack won the damn tournament because we couldn't get out of there. I was really pulling for him, I was really pulling.

I think the state of the game right now is in pretty good shape. I think that the U.S. -- and he can tell you more about that than I can. The U.S. right now, I don't think there are very many golf courses being built in the U.S. There's probably more closing than being built, but I think that it's making a comeback. I really believe it's in pretty good shape, yeah.

Q. Lee, turning back the clock a little, you first win as a professional, as I understand, Texas State Open and it was right here in Houston.

LEE TREVINO: Yeah, 1965, um-hmm. That was when I was telling you I never seen traffic like that. I had a '55 Chevy with a bad radiator and I was bumper to bumper and I told them, I said the traffic was so bad that I had a flat tire and I changed it and I only lost one spot in traffic. I never seen anything like that before.

I did win. I won. I beat -- I can't remember who I beat in that tournament. He was going to Houston University at the time. Fleckman, I beat Marty Fleckman in a playoff. I birdied the

first extra hole. I won a thousand dollars. My caddie and I had ten dollars in our pocket. We bought two RCs, a half a pound of bologna, a loaf of bread and we were going for Dallas and that was it. That was it. And I repeated in '66 also. I won it in '66 also.

Q. Do you know where that trophy is?

LEE TREVINO: Beg pardon?

Q. Do you know where that trophy is?

LEE TREVINO: I didn't get a trophy. I got a check. It was cashed real quick, fast as I could. I don't remember a trophy. I don't believe in trophies anyway. I know I won it, I don't need to be explaining it to somebody who comes over. Oh, where did you win that? Oh, the hell with it. What did you shoot? That's okay.

Q. Jack, can you just talk a little bit about were you glued to the TV as well during the Masters, and can you just talk a little bit about Tiger's victory there?

JACK NICKLAUS: I was fishing in the Bahamas and I came in to see the last few holes. I got there when I saw (inaudible) Rae's Creek and then I saw Tiger's shot hit in the middle of the green. I said, "We don't need to watch anymore, this tournament's over."

Tiger played beautifully there. He swung beautifully, played beautifully coming in. He did make three birdies and he needed to make all three of them. Just played good solid golf. You could not deny his determination in that situation. He was determined to play smart, solid golf. He did. The other guys did not.

Molinari, if his shot at 12 was three feet left, I think Molinari might have won the golf tournament. But it wasn't three feet left, it was on the bank and came back down in the water.

I just thought -- I think it was good for the game. Nobody likes to see their records broken. Obviously nobody wants to see that, but that doesn't make any difference. If the man who breaks your records plays well enough to do so, well done. That's the way I feel about it. Tiger played awfully well.

I was a little bit like these guys, I wasn't sure what Tiger would win, but I've said for a long time, people ask me will he win again, I say sure, I think he'll win again. I said when he was winning, you know, the last major he won at Torrey Pines, he didn't drive the ball -- he drove it all over the world, but he always figured out a way to get it back and get it in the hole, which is what he's done most of his career.

He's actually driving the ball pretty well now. I just said if he learns how to just, you know, stay healthy, his short game will carry him through. He's got a great iron game. He's got the best distance control of anybody I've ever seen. And he's smart, he knows how to play, he

knows how to win. That's not going to leave you.

The only thing that's going to leave you is going to be his health if that's the case. Health, you know, his back or his knee. They seem to be in pretty good shape, so I see no reason why he won't continue to win more.

Q. Gary, you made the call to Retief Goosen telling him that he was in the Hall of Fame. Had to be a proud moment for you to have another South African go into the Hall of Fame.

GARY PLAYER: Absolutely. When you think what a small country South Africa is and how remarkably well they've done in all sports, being world champions in almost every sport that exists, which is quite remarkable. And to see Retief, he's such a nice man, win two U.S. Opens. What's the one in New York?

Q. Shinnecock.

GARY PLAYER: Yeah, probably was the most difficult conditions they've ever had in a U.S. Open.

JACK NICKLAUS: It was tough.

GARY PLAYER: And he's not only done that, but he's won tournaments. I think when you talk about the World Hall of Fame, you know, when I first came out here and I saw the World Series of Baseball, I didn't know much about baseball, and I said, "Well, how many world teams are playing?" They said, "None." I said, "Well, that's pretty strange how you call it the World Series of Baseball." I was quite fascinated by that.

But Retief is a world player. So many people are able to play in their own backyard, but how many -- this is what these guys could do, they could leave these shores and go out and win. That's a true champion. You know, in certain places the foods are different, the galleries, the entire culture's different, it's a massive challenge. And Retief is adept at that and he's done extremely well, so it was very nice for me.

I would like to just say something not on camera necessarily, but I was sitting there watching the Masters and it was fascinating for me because I never saw four guys make a bigger mistake ever in a golf tournament. Jordan Spieth did the same thing.

I played in that tournament the most number of times of anybody and I might have knocked it in the water, but I don't ever remember knocking it in the water. I always made my flag at the back of the green. You can always make a -- and when you've got a two-shot lead -- I mean, Molinari said he didn't hit the ball that well. It had nothing to do with him not hitting the ball well. You see the green runs that way, there's a trap here. If you don't hit it well, you go in this trap. But when that flag is on the right-hand side and you don't hit it well, you're in the water. And Tiger Woods exemplified that. He put it 45-foot from the hole over

the trap and that's what you've got to do because the winds swirl there. It doesn't matter how well you hit the ball or how badly, you've just got to play that for a par.

And these four guys all made the same mistake. If they put it on the back of the green, they win the tournament. Koepka and Molinari. If they make a bogey, they're probably going to win the tournament. I've never seen such -- particularly when they saw a man make a 7 there with a five-shot lead.

And it's known, it's just known you don't -- you stand on No. 11 tee -- 12 tee, pardon me, and you look at the 12th green and the flag is doing this and you look at 11 and it's doing that. Now, anybody that goes there for the first time, it's so confusing. How can this flag be blowing this way and this one's going here and they're a hundred yards apart, 80 yards apart. That's what happens because the wind swirls.

It has nothing to do with the shot you hit. It's the way you went about it. That's what Tiger did. He didn't play better than the other guys, he just played smarter. This is what golf is. It's a simple thing.

I tell young players, "Do you know how to play golf?" Yeah, you can be a long driver, which everybody's inundated with. Long driving is not the answer, putting is the answer. You only hit probably 11 drives a day, but you hit 30 putts a day, three times as much. Putting is the answer, not long driving. But man, I never saw such big mistakes ever. Unforgivable, quite honestly.

LEE TREVINO: I would have got those balls.

GARY PLAYER: Huh?

LEE TREVINO: I would have fished those balls out. I did that once. I played there one time and I saw five of them on the bank. You can look at the back history. There was a group on the tee and I took my wedge and fished the balls out and put them in my pocket. I got five balls. You can go back and look at it. Goddamn, they were brand new. You would pick up a five dollar bill, wouldn't you, if you saw it? Hell, yes.

GARY PLAYER: Unless it cost me ten dollars to have it picked up.

Q. Lee, when you look at Tiger's swing like right now (inaudible) coming back from all the injuries and surgeries that he's had, is there anything in his swing that can prevent --

LEE TREVINO: Tiger will be the first to tell you that when Tiger came out and we criticized the lot that was driving and Mickelson about keeping the ball in the fairway and everything, Tiger wasn't interested in that. Phil's not interested in that. They're so good with the wedge and the putting that they said, "No, we just want to hit it 325 and then we'll figure it out there. After we find it, we'll figure it out."

With this injury, he had to change his swing. Instead of swinging, locking up his left knee when he hit to get a little faster, that's where you get the speed from and the knee completely locks up quicker and the hip and the shoulder turn faster.

He's had, what, three operations on his knees, or four, and he's had a couple or three on his back. He's had to go back. He's still hitting that drive out there, though, with most of the guys, but it looks to me like he's working underneath a little bit better. In other words, holding the angle a little bit longer. I'm an angle holder. Jack hit a big high fade also. Gary is different. Gary goes this way and then he closes it, then he hits a draw. He can fade it when he wants to, but his primary shot is a draw. I was a blocker. Jack wasn't a blocker. Jack was kind of a releaser, but he still faded it and it was because of his grip.

Tiger's gone to that. Tiger's gone more inside. It looks to me like he's using more club for less distance, which makes his rhythm better and it makes him stay with the shot a little bit better, never off balance.

It's like Gary said. I tell my son all the time. Jack I'm sure has told Gary and all his kids. There are a lot of kids out there today that play golf, but they don't know how to play, and that's the secret is you have to be -- you have to have a bad day and bring in a 72. You can't have a bad day and bring in a 77, that's it, you're through. That's the people that know how to play, how to maneuver around. We go to a golf course, we have an A game, we have a B game, we have a C game. If A's not working on the driving range, there's no reason to take it to the golf course. You better go to B real quick, you better go to C, you better do something different. This is the whole deal with that.

It looks to me like Tiger's under control more than he was before and he's gotten that chipping back. You know, he had the chipping yips there for a while.

JACK NICKLAUS: That's because his back was hurting. He couldn't stand up.

LEE TREVINO: Yeah. I'll tell you, I take my hat off, he's done a phenomenal job.

GARY PLAYER: I think that's the issue. The issue is not winning the 15th major, it's what he's done to world golf, which has been eliminated. He's given people -- there's 7 billion people -- there are probably 6 billion people have problems that are down, and he was down. I mean, if anybody was down. You could see the exuberation when he won, that explained it.

But he's given people encouragement, people who are down and out and said, well, this guy was like it. He said to me at the Masters dinner two years ago, he said, "I'm done. He said, "I'm all locked up with my back, I'm done, I'm finished." Now to come back and win a major, I never thought he would win a tournament, never mind a major. So I take my hat off to him. It's been the most wonderful encouraging thing to the human being.

LEE TREVINO: I tried to get him to that doctor to begin with when he got hurt. I didn't talk to him personally, but I talked to Notah Begay, which is his best friend. I said bring him to the North Texas Back Institution and see Rashbaum and Blumenthal and those guys and they'll fix him, and that's where he ended up. He ended up at the North Texas Back Institution and it wasn't 3-4, 4-5, it was S-1, it was actually a bone in his tailbone and they did a fusion. I talked to the doctor. They did a small fusion and he said that he only lost 7 percent rotation.

See, when my back went out, and I have two steel rollers in there now to give me my space back. When I had the 5 nerve trapped, I couldn't move and we were going within a day to get double laminectomy, which I was going to lose all rotation and my golf was over.

Then we found out that there was a procedure done in Germany called an X-Stop, which is a small roller that goes in between the vertebrae in your back and it gives you your space back and the nerves have room to operate. I went to Cologne, Germany, and had it done in May of '04 and I've never had a spasm or a pain in my back since. That's a long time ago, that's 14, 15 years ago, yeah. He came to that doctor and they fixed him.

GARY PLAYER: In Germany?

LEE TREVINO: No, he came to Dallas.

Q. He went to Germany, though, first.

LEE TREVINO: Did he go to Germany?

Q. Yeah.

LEE TREVINO: Yeah, I'm sure he went everywhere trying to get it fixed.

Q. He got another opinion over there.

GARY PLAYER: But the big thing is --

LEE TREVINO: Television, there's a lot of opinions.

GARY PLAYER: I think the big thing in the future is how well -- I mean, with four back operations and three knee operations, how secure is that back? You've had --

LEE TREVINO: It can go any time.

GARY PLAYER: It can?

LEE TREVINO: Yeah. I asked the doctor one time, Dr. Rashbaum went with me when I had this done and I honestly asked him about bad backs. He wouldn't touch Greg Norman.

He saw Greg Norman's back. He said, "That's the worst back I've ever seen." He said, "I wouldn't touch it." I asked him, I says, "Let me ask you something, Doc. How much do you all know when you look at the back?" He said, "15 percent." I said, "That's about right."

GARY PLAYER: Need a mulligan, right?

LEE TREVINO: Yeah, that's why it says they have the right to practice, they have the right to practice medicine.

GARY PLAYER: That is scary.

LEE TREVINO: Well, I mean, it's your body and the good Lord gave you that body and somebody else is trying to repair it.

GARY PLAYER: But golf is not conducive -- it's a bad sport for backs.

LEE TREVINO: Golf is not a good sport for backs. I love it, though.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you very much, gentlemen, and have fun this afternoon.