

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**May 2, 2019**



**TOM WATSON**

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**THE MODERATOR:** I would like to welcome Mr. Tom Watson to the media center for the Insperity Invitational.

Tom, it's been 10 years since you played here at the Insperity Invitational. What's it mean to be back to Houston and to be in front of the great golf fans that this city has?

**TOM WATSON:** Well, what it means to me is that it's a wonderful golf tournament. People who run this golf tournament, the sponsors of this tournament really -- they go all out. It's one of the best-run golf tournaments, the most actively involved golf tournaments we have on the PGA Tour Champions. And I particularly like the golf course. Woodlands has always been very enjoyable to me. Has a lot of variety to it, a lot of different changes in directions. It makes you think. And it's quality -- the premier quality of any golf course is it makes you think from the first shot to the last putt. And this golf course does that.

**THE MODERATOR:** You have played the last two weeks. This will be your third week in a row.

**TOM WATSON:** I'm really tired.

**THE MODERATOR:** What keeps you driving? Why do you come out and still compete on the PGA Champions?

**TOM WATSON:** Well, I enjoy competition. The competition is what motivates me. I am a golfer. That's the bottom line, that's what I am. I have been a golfer since -- well, probably since about nine years old, when I got cut from the Midget B tryouts in baseball. I couldn't play baseball that summer, and I had to play golf.

**THE MODERATOR:** And the rest is history.

**TOM WATSON:** The rest is history.

**THE MODERATOR:** All right. I will open it up to questions. We'll start with Richard.

**Q. Tom, you mentioned you love competition. I see where you've got a new interest now in, I guess, cutting horses.**

**TOM WATSON:** That's right, yeah.

**Q. So, you go out of your comfort zone, which is always a good thing. Just tell me -- tell me about how did you get interested in all of that?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, my wife has been cutting for about 10 years in competition. And we started small, with one horse, and now it's grown dramatically, as you might say.

I followed her around and went to a few of the events and watched her. I like photography, so I was taking photos. And I got tired of sitting, watching. Finally I said, I got to do it. And fortunately, I live on a farm in Kansas. We live in a farm there. And the fellow who runs the farm is an expert horseman. That's what he did for a living before he came working for me. And now he's -- he's helped me learn to be a horseman, how to ride, how to take care of a horse. It's something my wife always knew how to do, but I was out here playing golf while she was taking care of the horses.

And so I started to work on my riding skills, and practiced on a cutting horse. And Tom Arne, who was my mentor there at the farm, he had a friend of his who found a good practice horse, a good starting horse that I could learn on and also compete on. And 10 days into riding that horse, he goes lame. Welcome to the horse business.

So, we had a -- we had a friend and trainer out in California who heard about it. He said, I'm sending you my wife's horse. And the name of that horse is Cosmopolitan Cab, call him Cos. And he -- I have been training on him and competing on him for the last two and a half years.

And I actually -- I won some money on him. And I called up Gab, the trainer who gave me the horse. I said, I can't just -- you just can't give him to me. I said, what do you want for the horse? He said, a dollar. So, I paid him a dollar for the horse.

And so I won \$418 in the 2000 limited rider in Carthage, Missouri. Too much information, I know. But I called him up and said, Gab, I just won, I scored a 72 and I won. He said, Tom, you're the only guy in the cutting horse world whose horse is worth 418 times what you paid for it.

But I have enjoyed it. My wife has been going through cancer. Last year she finished fourth in the Amateur Rider of the Year. It's unbelievable. In between chemo, operations, radiation, more chemo, and she competed all through it last year. And she finished fourth. She won \$84,000 last year in the amateur division. And she beat me by \$20,000. I won \$65,000 on the Senior Tour last year, so she's -- she's the bread winner in the family, let's put it that way.

**Q. Is she getting her treatments in Houston?**

**TOM WATSON:** Yeah, we're living here in Houston. We have been living here since June of last year, and going through treatments.

**Q. M.D. Anderson?**

**TOM WATSON:** Actually, not. It's through another doctor who's actually -- used to work at M.D. Anderson, an oncologist.

So, that's where we are. We're living here, and really do -- enjoying Houston. Got a dog, a couple of dogs, and our apartment.

And she's been feeling pretty well until the last month. She had surgery here about a month ago. And it kind of knocked her for a loop. But she's getting better now.

**Q. I asked this question to Jack and Gary last year. They were sitting here for the Legends. Where do you see the state of golf right now?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, the state of golf in this country is kind of -- the balance has shifted. The younger people are not playing golf. The older people are playing more golf. So, actually seeing the -- the National Golf Foundation said the Junior Golf last year, I think it was, had actually started to increase again the number of players. But we're not seeing the youth getting involved in the game. And that's because of this right here. Bottom line.

It's a different culture now. They don't have time to spend two hours on the golf course, and that's what worries me. The old people do. They have time. And that's good.

The positive thing around the world, though, is that golf has increased, in Asia in particular. Golfers are increasing. And I have to give a lot of credit to the Masters. The Masters started the Asian/Pacific Amateur, the South American Amateur, and here in this country using the Masters platform to create Drive, Chip and Putt, and Women's Amateur. They're trying to, as you use the word, grow the game, or make the game -- help the game of golf grow, from a youth standpoint.

Personally, I have been very intimately involved in trying to get youth to play golf in my area in Kansas City through the First Tee, and now by extension an organization called Youth On Course, which subsidizes junior greens fees at public courses so that kids don't pay any more than 5 bucks. So we subsidize the difference between the \$15 or \$20 junior greens play to play at public golf courses to 5 bucks. And we're seeing really significant increases in the number of players -- of juniors playing on public golf courses.

And by extension from there, more of the kids are now enrolling in the competition in the Kansas City Junior Golf Association and playing their events. Had about a 50 percent increase in kids there.

So, that's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to get the kids out on the golf course. That's what I'm trying to do. Once they get out there, they can get hooked.

And I think that the state of the game is -- we're always going to have golf. Golf is a game that -- it hooks you, it hooks you. But we're -- as I said, we're competing with a different culture. That thing right there, that's what we're competing against.

And does it worry me? Yeah, it does. It worries me to the degree that we'll see the game shrink rather than expand. You're going to find it shrinking in some areas but expanding in other areas. And as I said, I think you're going to see it expand pretty significantly in the Asian theater.

**Q. What do you think about places like Top Golf, which is kind of combining --**

**TOM WATSON:** I think it's wonderful. I believe 14 percent of the people who go to Top Golf want to pursue green grass golf. They have PGA pros giving lessons to Top Golf now. And it's a place where there's -- you go -- the problem with learning how to play the game, especially from a women's standpoint, going through the problems of women -- they have been surveyed. Said, tell me your experience. Well, when you begin, you go to a golf course, you don't know what to do. You don't know the first tee, practice range, what do you do with clubs, rental clubs. You just don't know what to do. And that's -- that can be an issue where you stay away from that. The Top Golf, you just go there, the clubs are right there, the ball is put on the tee for you, you hit it. If you just top it, it may go right in that little hole out there and you get points on the board. And it's fun. You can sit back and eat you some good food and laugh and have a good time. There's no pressure, no pressure on performance basically.

But, on the other hand, some people go there and say, I want to try this, yeah. I want to get on a real golf course. And I think that's -- I think it's really healthy. The more Top Golfs, the marrier.

**Q. Tom, I know no one wants to play every week. I'm talking about even when you're on the PGA record Tour. You got families, you got a wife. And there are certain tournaments that you like to play, certain tournaments that you just can't fit on your schedule. But you never really played Houston that much on the PGA Tour, though, did you?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, it was always before the Masters, and I always took the week off before the Masters.

**Q. That was the main reason?**

**TOM WATSON:** That was the reason, yeah. I rarely played a tournament before any major championship.

**Q. So, it was just misfortune for Houston?**

**TOM WATSON:** Just on the schedule, yeah.

**Q. You have been on a number of national teams, Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups, et cetera. What do you think of Tiger being a playing captain this year, if he gets to do that?**

**TOM WATSON:** Well, he is going to be playing. It's happened before. Hogan was a playing captain.

**Q. Jack Nicklaus.**

**TOM WATSON:** Snead was a -- I think Snead was a playing captain. Arnold was a playing captain. Yeah. There's a significant amount of support that you have when you go as a Ryder Cup captain. You got all kinds of support.

And really, your chore as a captain is to put the teams together the best -- the players that are playing the best, putting them together, and that's your chore.

Although, I kind of like Ben Hogan's comment to his team one time. I don't know if this is accurate or not. But Ben said before the matches started -- this has been reported he said: All right, boys. I'm going to pair the crooked drivers with the crooked drivers, the straight drivers with the straight drivers, and I don't like to lose. And that's all he said. Simplicity sometimes is beautiful. Don't get too technical about it.

And that's -- but today's data-driven game, where you use the TrackMan and you use all the spin rates, and all this sort of stuff, launch angles, side angles, things like that, I think you can get a little bit too enamored with that.

When I use TrackMan, I basically want to know the distance the ball carries. That's what I want to know. And it's fun to get on them and have the guys running the -- down at Callaway getting back there, and I start -- when I hit a shot, before they told me the stats of that shot, I said that went 168. They -- 167. And the next shot, I hit that one 169. 169. And then I mis-hit one. That went 158. And it was 157. So, I know by the way I hit the ball how far it goes.

And actually, I was talking to Dustin Johnson at the Masters. I said, how do you use TrackMan? He said, I just use it for distance. I was talking to him about his wedge game, how he improved it. He said, I use TrackMan. And I knew exactly what he's doing. He'd hit a shot like this, and he'd say how far he thought he hit it, and the TrackMan confirmed it, and he's got that feel immediately. He's learned that feel. Hit that 68 yards, I hit that 97 yards, I hit that 49 yards. And look how his wedge game has done. He's running the tables. When he gets a wedge in his hand, he is really good.

**Q. Happens a lot of with him, too.**

**TOM WATSON:** Yeah, sure. So long as he hits it as far as he hits it, he's going to be hitting a lot of short clubs. That's your -- when you have a wedge in your hand, if you don't hit it 10 feet from the hole, you haven't hit a very good shot. And that's -- that's the bottom line.

**Q. Tom, from what you have seen of this course, does this course favor any type of player?**

**TOM WATSON:** I can't remember enough about them. I do know that there are certain holes on the golf course you have to be careful. There's risk-reward in this golf course. There's certain places that you can't short-sight yourself with the flag, and left to right side of the green, you can't do that. I'm just going to try to go out there today and remember them. I don't know if I can remember. And I'll get to play nine holes. Tomorrow will be -- the back nine will be a rediscovery I hope I do okay on.

**Q. Anything else for Mr. Watson? All right. Thank you very much for your time. And have fun this week.**

**TOM WATSON:** Okay. Thank you.