

# RBC Canadian Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

## Jhonattan Vegas



MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome Jhonattan Vegas to the interview room at the RBC Canadian Open.

You're our defending champion after winning a tense battle last year. If you can just re-live some of that for us and talk a little bit about the year since and then coming back here as defending champion, what's that feel like for you?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, obviously the win here was a fun one, to put it that way. Obviously shooting 64 on Sunday and then watching kind of not everyone do what they needed to do to tie me on 18, that was stressing me a little bit but it was fun at the same time.

That was a great tournament for me. A turning point in my career, for sure. Ever since there, it's been pretty good. Feel like I've been playing pretty good golf for most of the time. Getting some really good results.

So obviously this win gave my career a huge boost, and so just really loving it. It's always fun coming back to places where you've had great results, especially wins. So just really loving every moment, remembering all of the shots from Sunday and this happened here, that happened there. So it's always good having that in your memory.

MARK WILLIAMS: You're currently No. 87 in the FedExCup standings, looking to get to the Playoffs for the fourth time in your career. Last year's victory was a big catalyst toward making that top 30 and you ended up 29th in the FedExCup. Just talk about finishing in the top 30 and what it means in your career and how it changes your scheduling, etc.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, I mean, like I said, winning is always obviously super important. It opens a tremendous amount of windows, opportunities on Tour. It allows to you play some of the bigger events, some of the majors. So I mean, the more you put yourself into those events, obviously the better your career will be.

Yeah, for me, obviously I started last year from a conditional PGA TOUR status, and made it all the way through to THE TOUR Championship, which it was massive. Even the previous year, 2011 when I won, I only made it to the third event. I didn't make it to THE TOUR Championship.

So last year, starting from where I started, to going to THE TOUR Championship, this week was super important. Especially where this week sits, it's just super important. The regular events are almost over, so this is where you want to be playing your best golf to really jump a lot of spots into the Playoffs where you really want to do your best.

So I mean, obviously this week is super important for me as it was last year.

**Q. You've come in on a bit of a cut streak. Does coming here maybe re-set things for you? Do you feel a lot of positivity coming back to this course?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, I've had a horrible summer to put it the best way. But yeah, just coming here and refreshing the memory about the win last year, about a place that I feel really comfortable. I really like this golf course.

I'm that particular with some of the courses on TOUR that I really like and I tend to play well, and this is one of them. So definitely it's a good refresher from the past couple of months that have been a bit of a struggle. But it's golf and you have to keep a positive mentality and always think that you're going to play your best.

**Q. Graham DeLaet was in here and he mentioned the course is playing quite a bit different this week than it did in previous years. Would you agree with that, and if so, what kind of game do you think would suit the way it's playing this week?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, I haven't been on the course yet. But from what I've seen and from being on the range, being on the practice greens, it's a lot softer than it was last year for sure.

So obviously you're going to really have to adapt this week. You're going to have to fly things right next to the hole. Especially some of these holes around here, where some of that pin positions are so protected from bunkers and water, that you're going to have to hit your irons really well to score. But obviously it opens up a lot of opportunities, as well. So I think you're going to see low scores again.

**Q. Last year when you were here, the par 3, 7th,**

**was just a gorgeous par 3 lined by water, but this year they have built a hockey rink around it. Your thoughts on the way that the hole is now?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, I haven't seen the hole yet either. Like I said, I haven't been on the course this year.

But we're in Canada. Hockey is a big sport here. Adding a little bit of that into golf is never a bad thing, especially if you're going to bring the fans. The more we can make golf appealing to more people, the better we'll be. So you know, I think it's good.

**Q. You talked about getting ready for the Playoff time, and in the past, this date, the way it's been situated after The Open Championship, it's been difficult to attract some of the top players, but now that guys are getting themselves into Playoff mode, do you think this stature is more important because this tournament can help get them into the Playoffs?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I think where it's located in the schedule, it's extremely important. This is a big week. You want to be playing -- for the guys like me that are not playing great at the moment, you know, you have a World Championship event next week and then a major the following week.

Obviously coming here and playing well could give you some important positivity for the next few weeks, and the guys that are playing well that might not get into some of the weeks the next couple of weeks, they see this as a big opportunity to get themselves into the Playoffs.

I think guys look at this week and this time of the year to really be playing their best golf. I think obviously the tournament is in a great position, and you know, that's why you see bigger names coming.

**Q. Speaking of what's coming up, The Presidents Cup, you're just outside the cusp for the Top-10 spots for the International Team. What would it mean to you to be a part of that team this year?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, it's been a dream for sure ever since I got on the PGA TOUR. Obviously this year, I feel like I'm closer to making The Presidents Cup and it's been on my mind pretty much -- pretty much the whole time. So it would just mean a lot just to be part of that team event. As an international player, I mean, you don't dream about playing in any other kind of team event except that one.

It would mean a lot. Especially Nick Price being the captain; I love Nick to death, and so it would really mean a lot to be part of his team, and try to give the U.S. guys a little bit of a run for their money.

**Q. Just curious, because there's a lot of eyeballs on that event and it's the top players in the world playing against each other on that kind of stage, what would it mean to your personal brand? You have the Patrick Reed finger wag that now goes in the record books, but what kind of things do you think could benefit your personal brand?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Just the simple fact that you're involved with the top players in the world, you're in a higher stage. So every time you're there, expectations are higher and everything is higher on yourself.

It's always good to put yourself into that kind of situation, so you can start feeling yourself as one of the top players, and maybe that can lead into playing better golf. So that's kind of why everyone that can be part of some of those teams really work themselves hard enough to be in it.

**Q. You've just came over here from England playing The Open Championship. What do you do mentally and physically to prepare for that, to come back here and play? Obviously there's a five-hour difference. Is it more a physical strain or a mental strain when you come back to this time period again?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Well, there's not much that you can do to be honest. I think one of the biggest things is obviously being in a better physical shape helps from getting rid of some of that jet-lag. But there's just not a ton that you can do.

Obviously I mean, the best shot that you have is try to stay active, try to stay as sharp as you can during the day, and then try to rest when you need to. But it's always a hard one. You have a long flight. You have a five-hour difference. You've just got to listen to your body and I know what's best for you, and try to be ready to go on Thursday.

**Q. This course is scheduled to close over the next ten years for housing development. Given your success here, is there any sentimental loss for you knowing that history may be rolled over?**

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Definitely. Especially like I say, when I walked in yesterday, and I saw my picture in the locker room, I guess my name will always be attached to this golf course by winning the Canadian Open here.

It's always been a sad news since I heard of it last year, but I mean, there's just not a ton that I can do but just that to wish that they could keep it open.

And it's such a unique golf course. I think we all remember the shot that Tiger hit on 18 here, and some of the greatness that has happened on this golf course.

Just to lose it like that, it would be hard but you know, there's not a ton that we can do as players.

MARK WILLIAMS: When you look at a couple of the players that you beat last year, Jon Rahm and Dustin Johnson who are both in second position, when you see what they have gone on and done since then, does that give you inspiration, and you sit back and think: Well, hey, I've beaten them and I've won a tournament against those guys.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah, you always have that in the back of your head for sure. Obviously I know that my game is good enough to compete against all of the guys here. Obviously they are doing it a bit more often than I am right now.

But it's always good to have that in the back of your mind and know that your game is always good enough to compete against the best players in the world. Obviously you have to work a little bit harder and do things a little bit different to get back to that form.

But you've just got to keep your confidence up and keep your head on a good target and work hard towards that. Obviously it's frustrating not playing good golf, but you just have to remember the type of player you are and where you can go.

MARK WILLIAMS: You've represented your title very well. Good luck in your defense of the RBC Canadian Open. Thank you for joining us.