

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
November 13, 2024

CAMILO VILLEGAS



MODERATOR: Camilo, thank you for joining us. Defending champion here at the Butterfield Bermuda Championship. If I can take you back to last year, obviously a lot of good memories from being here last year, obviously everything you did with the 63 Round 2 tying the 72-hole tournament record. Just a few thoughts on what really clicked for you last year.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, everything obviously. The week before started in the World Wide Technology where I finished second to Erik van Rooyen. Came here and I felt really good. I kept the peace of mind and the good shots and I was rolling a lot of good putts that were going in. Obviously great memories.

Last year was very special to finish the year the way I finished, to win here. To look up in the sky, to dedicate my victory to my little one that's up there, little Angel, Mia, and here we are again. Time goes fast, one year later and happy to be here.

MODERATOR: It's kind of the tale of two stories here at this event. Prior to last year, not terrible but not a lot of real strong finishes. What was the difference last year do you think?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I think I worked so hard on my swing during the whole year and I had low expectations because I didn't feel I was -- I felt I needed a little bit more time.

But then when I played good in World Wide Technology in Cabo and I felt so comfortable being in contention, I got a big burst of belief. I haven't been in that position in several years and feeling so comfortable the week before, I kept it going here.

Then I went to RSM the following week. I was playing pretty good and I just ran out of energy for the week.

It was a very nice stretch, good swings, great putting and some good mojo, good belief inside of me, so that was good.

MODERATOR: I wanted to ask you about Nico. He's someone that's really looked up to you, mentor type capacity. Just a few comments on how well he's playing and how good that makes you feel to see him playing as good as he is.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Absolutely. Nico's a great kid, he's like my little brother. I saw him grow up back home in Colombia. I always said I don't want to be the only Colombian guy on the PGA TOUR. So we had Munoz for a little bit and now we have Nico.

Nico winning in Puerto Rico was really cool. Me being there for the win was very special,



then him being here for my win was very special. I wasn't there in Japan, but man, did he play good.

I had a chance to talk with him, I actually roomed with him, we stayed in an AirBnB the week before in Vegas. He had the bad wave with crazy winds and missed the cut, but for some reason I was talking to my brother and I said, Nico looks in a good spot, he's doing the right things, I feel like he has a good team around him and he looks confident. I didn't think it was going to be a win the following week, but there you go.

Then he put himself in contention again last week in Cabo, didn't go his way, Austin played an unbelievable round on Sunday and then Nico didn't perform as well as he wanted. He's been lucky, Nico's been lucky to win two events once he's put himself in contention.

My message to him afterwards was you know what, losing tournaments is normal, you've just been on the good side. It's those losses that make you better, that make you stronger. Again, he still played great, he finished T-6 and he keeps going, man. He's getting confidence and that's what you need out here.

MODERATOR: And my last question and I'll turn it over here, last year's win here is your fifth and first in a long time. I mentioned on the way in that I've had the opportunity to be with you for all your wins. How special, especially coming so long after the Wyndham victory, how special was last year's win as far as validating and giving you encouragement knowing you've still got it?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, it was a nice way to keep this journey going, to be honest. There was a lot of years in between Wyndham and last year here, a lot of things happened in my life from a golf perspective to a personal perspective. There's times where you doubt yourself and you just don't know if you kind of lost it.

But you keep plugging. You love the game, you love the process and that's the most important thing. But that doesn't mean -- we've got a pretty great job, we've got a pretty tough job. Emotions go up and down and playing against the best players in the world is a challenge.

So even if you just tweak it a couple little notches down, everybody starts beating you and you think you're pretty far. Then you just kind of start cranking and cranking and cranking and you get that belief and do it again.

Five wins on the PGA TOUR this kind of young kid coming from Columbia, I'm proud of myself. It can always be better, it can always be worse, but I've really enjoyed the journey and I just want to keep it going.

Q. Camilo, this year you've had the chance to represent Columbia internationally as not only Olympian but as a vice captain for the International Team in the Presidents Cup. In a year where maybe things haven't gone your way on the golf course, how has



representing your country kind of been a bright spot for you?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, started with my performance this year obviously has been pretty crappy, I haven't performed. I didn't get off to a good start, it took me a little while to get comfortable.

I don't know, I don't really know what it is. I think maybe I relaxed a little too much knowing that I have full status for next year. At 42 years old, maybe kind of that can happen. At 22 you keep pushing. But next year's a big year and I need to come ready to play, come focused. It's going to be a good challenge next year.

When it comes to representing my country both at the Olympics and Presidents Cup, it's been an honor. Both events were unbelievable. I declined going to the previous two Olympics due to different reasons, but then after winning here and knowing I was going to be in for Paris, I was very excited. Man, what a week. Totally different event, totally different energy, but spending a little time in the village was unbelievable being around all the other athletes, seeing how everybody that's in the village has kind of given their life to their sport. It was really cool, man. Spent some time in the gym seeing the different bodies of the different athletes, how they train, how they move, how they kind of eat. It was awesome.

Then the crowds, the crowds were unbelievable. It was not so much a golf knowledgeable crowd, which was actually pretty cool, pretty good for our game just having so many different options being able to go to so many other sports and for them to elect golf, go out there, take a bunch of kids and enjoy the day was pretty special.

Presidents Cup, highlight of my year. Every year I've been involved as a player and as an assistant captain, it's just so much fun. So much fun to be around the guys, so much fun to challenge ourselves to put those kids in a good position to perform, to compete against a really strong American team. It's become a big family. The shield, it's big time being part of the team, it is an honor. Challenging ourselves to kind of keep getting better is also -- it's also very interesting.

But the energy of the guys, the family atmosphere, the different cultures, the different languages, the time we spend together, having all the wives around, it's a special week.

Q. Obviously it means a lot to you. Would you say that potentially being a captain of that team someday has become a career goal for you?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: I don't know, I haven't looked that far ahead, to be honest. I want to continue to be involved if I can in many different ways.

But it's not up to me, man. It's up to the others if they see that I could do a good job, if I can connect with the guys, if I can just kind of add my two cents. That's what I try to do every year as an assistant captain. I'll just focus on the present and who knows what comes, but if for some reason there's an opportunity to do it, I would absolutely love it.



Q. Going back to your play this year obviously it looked like you turned a corner last year with a runner-up finish in Mexico and then winning this event. Things didn't really shape up to that this year. In that vein, describe to the people at home just how tough it is to kind of capture lightning in a bottle and maintain that.

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, we're playing against the best players in the world. I'm not one of the young ones out here and I've got a little more busy life. Golf maybe is not the No. 1 priority, but I really enjoy the process. I want to continue out here. Maybe I have to kind of look into it and see exactly what I need to do to come ready for 2025, perform and keep adding years to this cool journey.

Q. Being on the PAC has obviously been an adjustment. How much time did that maybe take away from your game a little bit?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, it's made me think a little bit, which is good. I consider myself a thinker, I want to add my two cents.

It was interesting, when I was running for chairman and then I got elected as chairman of the PAC, somebody came up to me and said, "Do you really want to do that? You're going to be on the board of the PGA TOUR, there's a lot of things going on."

I looked at him and said, "Absolutely."

I've been very fortunate to play this game for a long time. I've been very fortunate to be out here on this tour for almost 20 years and I feel it's kind of my way as giving back just kind of being as objective as I can, just kind of removing myself and the individuals from the equation, thinking what's best for the game and just go out there, think, analyze, try to be objective and see where we can take this tour.

Q. How challenging is it to be objective when you and other members of the PAC are voting on changes to the PGA TOUR, particularly with eligibility that could have ramifications on your own playing opportunities?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Yeah, absolutely. The changes proposed to the policy board, I could be the first guy affected. I haven't been playing great and we're going to be playing for less cards next year if it's approved.

But again, it's not about me, it's not about -- it's not about -- it is about the players, it's not about individual players. It's about the game of golf and what can we do to create the best product. A lot has changed in the last few years and you've got to adjust, you've got to go with what's going on, you've got to stay in the present and think about the future.

Looking back doesn't really bring us too much good. Hey, it will be interesting.



Q. You've talked about your involvement in the Presidents Cup, we all know that you played and vice captain. With the growth of PGA TOUR Americas and the success of South American players, do you ever see the Presidents Cup heading to South America in the future at some point?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: Well --

Q. What would that mean if it did?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: -- I've thought about it different ways, thinking of which countries could host it. Obviously when I do my analysis there's not too many countries that can kind of host it from a financial point of view, from a fans point of view, from a golf knowledge point of view. Is it going to happen? I don't know. I don't even know how many venues have been allocated moving forward.

Hey, let's take it one step at a time, let's start thinking of what the options are. You've got to really analyze the markets. We're here to kind of have a good event, we're there to make money, we're there to fricking, how do I say it, impact, cause a big impact in golf. We'll see if South America's one of those places where it will go.

Q. How closely do you follow the careers of the players that are coming out of South America on PGA TOUR Americas?

CAMILO VILLEGAS: PGA TOUR Americas I don't follow as closely as I do the Korn Ferry Tour, but once the guys get on the Korn Ferry Tour I do follow it, I do keep an eye on them, I do ask questions about how they're playing, how they're performing, what their kind of history is and their background and all that stuff.

I had a chance to spend a little time on the Korn Ferry Tour last year, played a lot of practice rounds with some of the Latin guys. It's always nice. I'm in a position where I'm -- I look forward to seeing more players from kind of our area just perform, play good and get on the PGA TOUR.

