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An Interview With:

J.B. HOLMES

TODD BUDNICK: We welcome J.B. Holmes who sits at 5-under par after two rounds of the Mercedes-Benz Championship. You started with a bogey today and ended up shooting 5-under, a nice round for you today.

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah, it was a good round. I started out in the rain, a little messy starting out. I hit a hard putt on 1 and didn't hit it hard enough in the wind and rain. The rain kind of slowed down and made some birdies, kind of held it together on the front. Missed a couple short putts coming in on the front but the back side played really well. Hit the ball close and putted good and put up a good score.

TODD BUDNICK: This is your first visit to the media centre this week, so we'll ask you as a first-timer, what's it been like so far?

J.B. HOLMES: It's such a great way to start off the year, first of all to come out here to Maui, it's so beautiful, and to win a tournament like this, it's a great golf course. It's a great way to start the year.

Q. How soon before you teed off today did you know you would be playing on your own?

J.B. HOLMES: About ten minutes, 15 minutes. Just on the range an official came up and told me that Aaron withdrew. Didn't bother me too bad.

Q. You can set your own pace.

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah, I can set my own pace. As hard as this wind is blowing out here, I can back off of it as much as I wanted to or wait for a gust or whatever. I was obviously, didn't have to wait on anybody else, it was just me, so it was better for me to play slower as a single so I wouldn't have to be waiting for the group behind me or in front of me.

Q. Do you converse much when you're playing with other people, or is it a little bit lonely?

J.B. HOLMES: No, you do have a caddie so you can talk to him. I usually don't talk a whole lot in the round, I'll talk a little bit, but I'm not one of those people that just chats it up a whole bunch.

Q. On 18, I think your drive, talking to one of the laser guys who said it was pretty close to 400, and then you hit an iron to 255. Can you describe the 18th hole?

J.B. HOLMES: I hit a good tee shot, drive down the middle there and then I had a 5-iron I think it was 255. I hit it right where I wanted to up there on the right, and it usually kicks down left, feeds to the pin and didn't do it. I hit two good shots where I wanted to, and then the wind is blowing so hard on that last putt, I was worried about keeping it on the green.

Q. You stepped away several times.

J.B. HOLMES: On the first putt, I was worried about keeping it on the green and left it short and the other one, just waited, the wind was gusting, so I was just trying to wait and get comfortable over the putt.

Q. Any evidence in the warm-up session on the range before the round that you were going to play this well?

J.B. HOLMES: No. I mean, every other day, you know, I usually play better when I hit the ball bad on the range. I hit it all right. Nothing special.

Q. Playing by yourself, you got through it in 3 1/2 hours on a tough, hilly golf course that's 7,400-plus. Did you have any idea you were playing that fast, and did you feel good?

J.B. HOLMES: I didn't feel I was playing that fast. I stepped off a lot of golf balls and I was trying to slow down, I was trying not to catch up to the group, they were on 18 green and I was on 18 tee so it was perfect. If I felt comfortable over the shot and I hit it, or the wind was gusting or

something, I backed off and took as much as time as I needed just because it benefits me.

I stopped at the 10th tee at the tent, sat in there and ate a candy bar and banana in the tent and drank a Poweraid in there and wasted some time there. I didn't feel I was playing fast, but must have been moving pretty quick.

Q. Power players have fared well here before, when you got here and saw the place even now even, do you think this is right up a power player's alley?

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah, I think it sets up great for me. It's wide fairways and a long golf course and add windy as it is, you can't have narrow fairways out here, they would never finish a round with golf balls. I think it sets up good, especially wet today, you've got carrying, the ball is not rolling as well as it normally does at this tournament so it sets up better for the longer hitters.

Q. The way you finished yesterday, which was probably fairly irritating to bogey 18, does that stay with you long?

J.B. HOLMES: No, I mean, that was frustrating, usually about 30 minutes, if I'm real frustrated about, 30 minutes after the round you don't want to talk to me. But I get over it. It's just a game. It's frustrating if I'm coming into that hole 1-under; most of the time, you walk away with birdie or no worse than par. But I made a few mistakes.

Q. What did you do?

J.B. HOLMES: Bad drive and I hit my lay-up shot to the right and the ball bounced over the green. Chipped and missed a 4- or 5-footer. Wasn't well executed.

Q. And then a nice easy start today when you had to back off your opening tee shot, 12, 13 times, was it, for people crossing the fairway?

J.B. HOLMES: I just stopped. They kept going back and forth, I was like, is another tournament starting? I know I'm a single, but come on. (Laughter).

Yeah, I mean, I hit a good tee shot, it's just in the rough and I hit my next shot a little fat and just made bogey. That's how it happens sometimes.

Q. Do you feel like you have anything to prove this year? Most people who win as a rookie maybe don't, but there's always that talk about, you know, backing it up or what have you. Especially since the rest of your year --

J.B. HOLMES: I'm 24; I think I have plenty of time to prove myself. No, I'm not too worried about that.

Just my standards, I want to come out and have a more consistent year, more Top-10s. I played great early last year and after that, just for certain reasons, not used to traveling or being out here alone all the time, just the average PGA TOUR life, getting used to that and never seen the golf courses before. This year, I've seen them before, so it will be nice to go back somewhere that I've seen before.

But I'm used to it now. I understand what's going on, and I've got a better feel and I think I'll play a lot better this year and more consistent.

Q. Did your expectations change after that win?

J.B. HOLMES: With the hype I got from the media and the way I won, yeah, my expectations jumped up. I already had pretty high expectations, so I just made it harder on myself to play well and put added pressure on myself I didn't need.

I've had a year to pretty much let that go so trying not to worry about that now and just take it one tournament at a tournament. If I play well, I play well. I have the ability to go out there and win, so I just have to go out there and play.

Q. This is the FootJoy pump shoe that you're wearing, how long have you been wearing this shoe?

J.B. HOLMES: This is the first round I've worn them.

Q. And, comfortable?

J.B. HOLMES: Comfortable.

Q. I think you're the first player on TOUR that's been wearing it.

J.B. HOLMES: I think there's several that's been wearing it. There's several people this week I've seen wearing it. I like it.

Q. Two-parter. One, you were talking about your medical problems in December on TV, if you could go through those a little bit, and you lost weight, wonder if affected your distance. And your reputation for hitting the ball long, do people urge you on from the galleries, because every time John Daly would pull driver out, people would go crazy, I just wondered.

J.B. HOLMES: Sometimes people do. You know, I'm a TOUR player. I can't let them make my decisions for me. If it's a place to hit an iron or a 3-wood, then you hit an iron or a 3-wood. It doesn't matter what the crowd is saying. I got myself on TOUR so I know what I'm doing, so I don't let the crowd urge me to hit something I don't need to be hitting.

I had my tonsils taken out and lost some weight. I didn't play a whole lot but I don't think it's affected my distance much. By the time I went back to playing, I had gained most of it back, but I had lost a little bit of weight.

Q. Was the tonsils something coming for a couple of months?

J.B. HOLMES: It was chronic tonsillitis. Apparently I had been sick for about four months. I was pretty tired at the end of the year and maybe that was part of it. So I had that, I felt a lot better after I've had that done, and had my eyes -- I had LASIK done, so I can see better, see further. So it's been good.

Q. Have you ever played by yourself in a tournament situation whatsoever, and just the second part of that, did it allow you to relax or get in the zone or anything like that at all today?

J.B. HOLMES: I don't think I've ever played by myself in a tournament. I think that was the first time. Yeah, I liked it, because like I said earlier, I could take as much time as I wanted over every shot. I was always ahead of schedule on time, so if I wanted to take 15 minutes to hit one shot, I could. I didn't, but with all of the wind, and there was a lot of players backing off several times today because of the wind, the burst of wind and stuff like that. So I could back off as many times as I want to and not worry about it, so that was beneficial.

Q. Your 430-yard drive, was that at 18 today or where was that?

J.B. HOLMES: I think that was yesterday. 18, I don't know how far it was, it was probably around 400 yards.

Q. What did you have in, with the 5-iron?

TODD BUDNICK: He had 429 on 12 yesterday.

Q. And your distance in on the 5-iron at 18 today?

J.B. HOLMES: I think it was 255 or something, 260, something like that.

Q. Last year when you splashed on to the scene and made a splash at Phoenix, what was the most meaningful thing another player said to you, meaningful or interesting that you took away from the year about your ability or your long ball or whatever that registered with you?

J.B. HOLMES: At the CVS, I played with Nick Price and played real well, and he gave me a lot of compliments on my game and skill level. He said, "You're going to do well in this game." Coming from somebody that has done as much as he has in the sport, that's just a good compliment.

Q. Where was that?

J.B. HOLMES: CVS.

Q. And you played with Daly at Shark Shootout and he was having some finger issues there?

J.B. HOLMES: No, that was Vegas. I think his finger was okay then.

Q. Where did you play with him?

J.B. HOLMES: At Vegas he withdrew, because he cannot hold on to the golf club.

Q. He said he showed I weird things he could do and almost made you throw up?

J.B. HOLMES: He could almost twist his pinkie like backwards, it was really grows.

Q. Did he show it to you?

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah, he thought it was funny.

Q. He said you were about to throw up.

J.B. HOLMES: I wouldn't go that far, but I didn't want to see it anymore. (Laughter.)

Q. At Target he said it was broken.

J.B. HOLMES: It was fractured or something. He had something done; the doctor dislocated a bone. It was hurt.

Q. Yum! is that KFC; how did you get connected with them?

J.B. HOLMES: I went up and played with the CEO of Yum! and got to know him through a mutual friend and after I turned pro, kind of approached and he wanted to help me out and just worked out that way.

Q. Do you have a lifetime supply of chicken and tacos?

J.B. HOLMES: Hopefully.

Q. When you look back at that rookie year, did you find yourself having a hard time with your schedule, playing the right amount of events, and what have you learned and what would you do differently?

J.B. HOLMES: I didn't know what the right amount of events was for me. I played a whole lot early and at the end of the year I was burned out and didn't play as much. The win got me into tournaments I was not expecting. This year I feel like I can lay out more of a schedule and I know how much I need to take off and how much I need to play and stuff like that. That was the most golf I ever played in a single year. I'm used to playing 12, 13 events a year and I played like 27 and was gone over six months.

So, that's a big change from being gone two months and every time you leave, you've got six of your buddies going with you. It was a big change, a lot of attention, everything at once. Didn't handle as well as would I have liked. I don't feel like I handled it bad but obviously my game didn't improve or play well so obviously it affected many he.

Q. What will you do differently this year?

J.B. HOLMES: I just know what to expect. Last year I didn't know what to expect.

Q. Just in terms of scheduling.

J.B. HOLMES: I know what tournaments I want to play, I know what tournaments I don't want to play. Three weeks in a row is about as much as I need to play. I don't need to play four or five weeks in a row. I found that out. If you have to, sometimes you have to, but if you're playing well, if I'm tired, don't keep playing, take a week off, even if it's two weeks in a row and you're tired, don't go play the next week.

So just feel like I'm more settled in my life. I've got a place in Orlando now. I'm not just -- not running around everywhere. Everything was settled in and I had to get stuff done even when I went home it was hectic and I had to go see this person because I never came home. I'm more adjusted, I know what to expect and what to do and just stay more rested and just be prepared.

Q. Where did you buy in Orlando?

J.B. HOLMES: Phillips Bay. I'm not on the course yet.

Q. And you went to Korea at least once last year?

J.B. HOLMES: I went once last year.

Q. Was that good?

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah, that was fun. I had a lot of fun over there. I was in it until one hole. Played bad on one hole.

Q. We don't need to go there.

J.B. HOLMES: But I had fun.

Q. How important for the first time winners like yourself, how important is the guaranteed money from this event? I know you're not going to finish last, but last place is \$50,000, how much does that play into your mind and how important is that for the first-time guys to get going this year?

J.B. HOLMES: It's always nice to have a guaranteed \$50,000 playing in a tournament, no cut. I don't see any downside to it.

It's nice, you can get a head start on the Money List, and starting the FedExCup, I'll get points before anybody will even get a chance. It's great to start this way out here. It's just awesome.

Q. I know you've talked about it before, but just briefly can you take us through how you became a member of the golf team in high

school as a third grader and kind of what that did for you?

J.B. HOLMES: My dad basically approached the head coach and said, what do you need to shoot to be on the team. And at the time we were a small school and I think they only had about four or five players on the team. They said, well, he has to shoot around 50 on nine holes. He said, well, I can do that. So I went out there and played with the coach a little bit. And he said, okay, so, you know, started that way, played on the team and got better.

I think it helped me because I was a third grader playing with high schoolers and everything like that, so I learned not to get intimidated or whatever. I played the State Championship through my senior year, so I was always playing with people older than me and I was beating them. It didn't matter who they are or whatever. You just do your best and play your game and see what happens at the end.

Q. How did your teammates, who were nine or ten years older than you, treat you?

J.B. HOLMES: The first year it was a little rough. A couple of guys picked on you, but high schoolers are just mean. (Laughter). After that, we played growing up together and played all the time and just, you know, we were playing in the summer me and him, parents would drop us off at the golf course and we would play 54, 72 holes a day just in the summer. It was a lot of fun.

Q. Did you wind up winning about 12 high school letters in golf or what was it?

J.B. HOLMES: Ten-year letterman. That's got to be some kind of record. (Laughter).

Q. Do you remember what you shot with the coach when you did your little tryout?

J.B. HOLMES: I don't remember. I think my average for that year was like 52.4 or something. I won the award for most improved.

Q. Did you have a letter jacket?

J.B. HOLMES: Yeah.

Q. What did that look like, stock car?

J.B. HOLMES: A T and then just straight down. I had a bunch of conference patches. It was a red jacket and it would have been grey if I had all my patches.

Q. Weren't you an Academic All-American? A lot of guys in sports don't have the time, or academics are not that important for them. Obviously your parents, did they say, do you want to play golf, or when you got to the books you really concentrated on that?

J.B. HOLMES: I focused on golf a lot, but when it was time to study or get your stuff done, you had to get it done because if you didn't make the grades, you didn't play. So that was, you know, big for me.

Golf was always, focusing, as much as I disliked school, I probably wouldn't have went to college if it wasn't for golf. You have to make the grades and I went to all my classes and studied when I needed to study and did well on my papers and everything I was supposed to do and I made good grades.

Q. Along the way, you know that golf saying, "you drive for show and putt for dough," did anybody ever tell you that when you hit these long balls?

J.B. HOLMES: I heard that forever. It's the truth. But, you know, you hit your driver good enough, sometimes you can 2-putt and you can make birdie. (Laughter) So there's two sides to it.

Q. Were you a long hitter? Were you the longest hitter on your team in high school from what grade?

J.B. HOLMES: A lot of people on my team hit it a long ways. Probably from eighth grade maybe on. I was hitting it 300-plus probably in eighth grade.

My college team, I think it was only four or five guys hid it ten yards past. Our whole team hit it a long way. I knew I hit it a long ways, but I got more hoopla when I came out on Tour about how far I hit it. In college, a whole team hit it a long ways and they were right there with me.

Q. Did you do any other sports in high school?

J.B. HOLMES: I lettered in basketball. I played varsity basketball my freshman year and quit after that, gave it up. I played like freshman, JV and Varsity and got burnt out. Next year I decided to not to play.

Q. How many kids were in school when you were playing on that team in third grade? A hundred kids, or more?

J.B. HOLMES: It was more than that. My graduating class had 110, so it was probably 400 or 500.

Q. What school?

J.B. HOLMES: Taylor County.

Q. Is that a 12-year?

J.B. HOLMES: Elementary to 12th, to the whole thing.

Q. Do you still battle with dyslexia at all or were you cured of that?

J.B. HOLMES: No. You can't be cured of it, unfortunately. That's something that he just help yourself by doing exercises and stuff like that.

It's just the big struggle is in college. I can read. I just get everything slower than everything else and you have to read so much in college. By the time I read two pages of the book, my buddies are reading six pages of the book.

And it was just, you know, if I start reading fast, you switch up the words and it just didn't go through your head right. So it was something that I had to struggle, but the college did a good job and I got tested for it and it was positive.

I got extended time on tests. The problem with my first semester, I had low grades, and the problem was I knew all the stuff and I could do it, but I didn't have time to get the test done. It was 50 minutes and I knew the questions and by the time the time was up, I'm barely halfway through the test and if you're guessing the rest of them, your grades are just not going to be that good.

After that I got time and a half and I was able to finish all the tests and I went from like a 2.3 to 3.6, so that was an improvement.

Q. Does the work ethic relay to any part of your game?

J.B. HOLMES: I think it helps me in golf. Dyslexia, you've seen pictures, visualize stuff real well and in golf, a lot of stuff is visualization. I picture shots really well what I wanted to do.

Athletically and almost every sport I've been in, dyslexia has actually helped me.

TODD BUDNICK: Let's just do your card, starting with the bogey on No. 1.

J.B. HOLMES: Hit driver, went through the fairway, I hit a heavy set fat 7-iron about three yards short of the green and putted it to about ten feet and missed it.

5, I hit a pretty good drive, left side of the fairway, hit a great 4-iron to about 25 feet. Hit a good putt about a foot and tapped it in for birdie.

8, I hit a pretty good shot. I hit a pretty good first putt, almost went in, went by about three feet, and missed it coming back, so bogey.

9, I hit a good drive, real good 3-wood and it actually got a bad break. It got caught in the thick bermuda in the lip of the bunker. I hit a great shot to about two feet and made it for birdie.

11, I hit a good tee shot to about 15, 20 feet, made a good putt.

12, drove it four or five yards short of the green, chipped it up to about a foot.

13, I hit a good drive down the middle, hit a good 6-iron into the wind to about three feet, made it.

14, hit a driver up 25 yards short of the green, chipped it up to about two feet and made it.

18, hit a good drive, 5-iron on the front, putted it down to about five feet and made it.

Q. What did you do on 15?

J.B. HOLMES: I hit a driver left side of the fairway. I hit it a little too far left, hit a good 3-wood on the green and I 3-putted.

TODD BUDNICK: Thanks J.B.