

DRIVEN

An Interview with Jay Monahan, Commissioner, PGA TOUR

EDITORS' NOTE Jay Monahan took office as the fourth commissioner of the PGA TOUR in January 2017, having been appointed by the PGA TOUR Policy Board in November 2016. Monahan, who joined the PGA TOUR in 2008 as Executive Director of THE PLAYERS Championship, most recently held the position of Deputy Commissioner with Chief Operating Officer added to his title in 2016. Prior to his move to the Office of the Commissioner, Monahan served as PGA TOUR



Jay Monahan

Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, overseeing business development, corporate marketing and partnerships, title sponsor relations, retail licensing and media sales. Prior to being named CMO in March 2013, Monahan was the Senior Vice President for Business Development where he was responsible for securing new sponsors and managing existing PGA TOUR title sponsorship relationships. As Commissioner of the PGA TOUR, Monahan serves on the Board of Directors of the International Golf Federation, the World Golf Foundation and the European Tour. He is also the co-founder and board member of Golf Fights Cancer, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for cancer-related charities and research organizations. Before coming to the PGA TOUR, Monahan was Executive Vice President of Fenway Sports Group, leading the sales and business development team for the property ownership and representation divisions since 2005. Additionally, he directed FSG's sponsorship sales operations for the Boston Red Sox, Major League Baseball Advanced Media, NASCAR's Roush Fenway Racing and Boston College Athletics. Prior to joining FSG, Monahan spent three years as executive director at IMG Worldwide, where he played an integral role in the development of the Dell Technologies Championship in Norton, Massachusetts, and served as the first tournament director. Monahan began his sports sponsorship career as director of global sponsorships and branding programs at EMC Corporation. Previously, he worked at Arnold Advertising and Bob Woolf Associates. Monahan graduated from Trinity College where he was a four-year member of the golf team and a Division III Academic All-American his senior year. He earned a master's degree in sport management from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1995.

TOUR BRIEF *The PGA TOUR (pgatour.com) is the world's premier membership organization for touring professional golfers, co-sanctioning tournaments on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA TOUR Latinoamérica and PGA TOUR Canada. The modern-day PGA TOUR was formed in 1968 when a subset of touring professionals broke away from the PGA of America.*

Will you discuss the history and heritage of the PGA TOUR and how the PGA TOUR has evolved?

The PGA TOUR has been showcasing the biggest moments in golf since its inception in 1968. Golf's greatest sportsmen, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, established the modern PGA TOUR based on a foundation of meritocracy, legacy, and purpose and set the bar for the generations to follow. Tiger Woods carries the torch for today's PGA TOUR and virtually every one of today's PGA TOUR stars credit Tiger's greatness and passion for "digging it out of the dirt" for inspiring them to compete at

the highest level. A membership organization with more than 84 international members from 28 countries and territories, the TOUR provides a global platform for members to compete against the best, earn their stardom and become household names. PGA TOUR tournaments are set up as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, and thanks to engaged communities, partners and more than 100,000 volunteers who give their time each year, we're extremely proud of the impact our tournaments make on a weekly basis. Last year, the PGA TOUR surpassed \$3.6 billion in all-time charitable giving and the values that were established by Arnold and Jack continue to be the TOUR's North Star. Over the last 20 years, we've established the FedExCup, a season-long competition that crowns the most consistent performer over the course of the season. Winners have included the greats of the modern game – Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, Jordan Spieth, Justin Thomas, Justin Rose, Jim Furyk and Vijay Singh. In 2023, we launched a series of events that brings together the top players to compete against each other more often, and we will debut a reimagined schedule in 2024 that will



Jay Monahan with 2014 FedExCup champion Billy Horschel at the first tee during the final round of the 2021 TOUR Championship at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta

“At the PGA TOUR, our core values have manifested into an acronym we use called DRIVEN – Diverse, Respectful, Innovative, Vigilant, Energetic, and Never-Compromising.”

be a massive win for our fans. We have a lot more to accomplish, but I'm excited about the direction we are headed, thanks to the unprecedented support of the membership.

Will you provide an overview of the PGA TOUR today and what have been the keys to the PGA TOUR's consistent leadership for so many years?

Though our game may be steeped in tradition, the PGA TOUR has always sought to be a constant innovator and improve our product for the betterment of our fans, thanks to the leadership of my predecessors, Tim Finchem and Deane Beman. Tim entered the World Golf Hall of Fame last year alongside Tiger Woods and his vision for the modern PGA TOUR is why the PGA TOUR is one of the world's preeminent sports leagues. He grew prize money exponentially thanks to the inception of the FedExCup, launched our youth development organization First Tee, and was instrumental in the birth of the Presidents Cup and the inclusion of golf into the Olympic Games. Always unflappable, Tim also led the PGA TOUR out of the worst recession since the Great Depression stronger than ever. A trailblazer, Deane Beman created the TOUR's modern business model that included a title sponsor for tournaments and a player retirement program that is considered the best in professional sports, and established the TOUR's 501(c)(6) membership status, a concept that remains a central fabric of who we are as an organization today. The imprint these two leaders left on the TOUR can still be seen and felt, and it's my mission – with the help of an amazing team we have in place – to continue building upon the strong foundation that they laid for both our own company and the broader ecosystem of men's professional golf.

How do you define the PGA TOUR's culture and values?

At any organization, a shared understanding of goals and values among employees creates a sense of purpose and direction. At the PGA TOUR, our core values have manifested into an acronym we use called DRIVEN – Diverse, Respectful, Innovative, Vigilant, Energetic, and Never-Compromising. I am a firm believer in the power of relationships, and as we enter our third year in our new Global Home headquarters, we have an engaged, well-connected team that live these values every day, which has

positively contributed to a solid foundation for an inclusive culture. And thanks to the leadership among the diverse groups we have in place within, we continue to listen, learn and adapt. That's certainly necessary in today's work environment to foster a successful and healthy workplace.

What interested you in the role of commissioner of PGA TOUR and how do you approach the role?

It is a true honor to represent our PGA TOUR family, and a responsibility I take very seriously. When you fully trust the team you have in place, it allows your organization to accomplish both the day-to-day and the unthinkable. In March 2020, the world was shut down due to the pandemic. We closed our doors on a Friday, canceling our flagship event THE PLAYERS Championship. The following Monday, we began to build a business unit consisting of existing employees with the goal of a return to golf, with an unknown timetable. As gut-wrenching as that day and the weeks to follow were – as we ultimately canceled or postponed nearly 30 percent of our season – the adaptability, innovation and collaboration shown

from our team in truly unprecedented times is something I will always both marvel at and cherish. With health and safety at the forefront of every decision, we successfully returned to PGA TOUR competition less than three months later, one of the first professional sports leagues in the United States to do so, and finished our season successfully and without any additional stoppages.

How critical is it for the PGA Tour to continue to adapt and evolve to meet today's needs and challenges?

I say this often – I wake up every day assuming someone is trying to take my lunch. That's the way I operate. That's the way we operate as a team. You have to evolve, you have to adapt, you have to make that mindset part of your organization's DNA. Above and beyond the competitive changes we are in the process of instituting, adapting to the needs of our fans and making the game of golf welcoming to all is at the top of our priority list. We have made tremendous progress in this area over the last several years through our new ESPN+ streaming partnership, which attracts a younger audience than traditional



Jay Monahan congratulates Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland at the 2022 TOUR Championship after Rory became the first PGA TOUR Player to win three FedEx Cups



Jon Rahm poses with the trophy and Jay Monahan after his remarkable come-from-behind victory at the 2023 Sentry Tournament of Champions in Maui, Hawaii

network television, gaming, golf analytics, the newly released Netflix docuseries “Full Swing,” the release of the new PGA TOUR app and a more concerted effort in storytelling to raise the profile of every one of our members.

Will you discuss the PGA TOUR’s focus on building a diverse and inclusive workforce?

The TOUR has taken a lead role in the industry-wide initiative Make Golf Your Thing, which has resulted in our internal team collaborating with our industry partners to ensure we are offering welcoming avenues for those seeking a career in golf and educating talented individuals who currently don’t have the golf industry on their radars. Our HBCU subcommittee has partnered with our human resources team to align our relationships more closely with these schools. The result has been a deeper connection with these universities as well as an introduction to a broader pipeline of potential candidates. Once on campus, we have an Inclusion Leadership Council, chaired by Executive Vice President Neera Shetty, along with several resource groups, established to identify and execute the key inclusion initiatives for the PGA TOUR.

Will you highlight the impact that the PGA TOUR events make on the communities they serve?

The PGA TOUR drives positive impact at unprecedented levels to support and improve local communities. Each PGA TOUR tournament is an opportunity to give back to your community in one of three ways – attending an event, volunteering, or donating money. The vast majority of our tournaments are run by 501(c)(3) charities as their host organizations; all of their net proceeds stay in the community to support local organizations. And these tournaments wouldn’t be possible without the 100,000 volunteers annually who commit their time to ensure each event is a success.

We’re unique in sports by hosting events across our five Tours structured as 501(c)(3)s. With our business model, we are able to directly impact more than 3,000 charities and initiatives annually. Giving back isn’t just what the PGA TOUR does; it’s part of who we are, and is something we’ve been doing in communities where we play for more than 80 years.

The PGA TOUR players are engaged in giving back and support many causes. How proud are you to lead an organization whose players are committed to making a difference?

Incredibly proud. Giving back because it’s the right thing to do has been a tradition of PGA TOUR players since the earliest days

of professional golf. Star players understand that their platform really can make a difference in raising awareness and funds. Giants in the game like Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus – who both have hospitals named after them – set the example which modern players proudly follow. Tiger Woods continued the tradition with his TGR Foundation, and their legacies inspire players to continue giving back today.

What are your priorities for the PGA TOUR as you look to the future?

The TOUR will continue to evolve our product for our fans and players and truly capitalize on this moment where the game has taken off in popularity. Tiger’s rise in the 1990s and 2000s inspired many of today’s stars, and certainly the next generation will be inspired not only by Tiger, but by Rory McIlroy, Jordan Spieth, Jon Rahm, Justin Thomas, and so many others. Off the course, we’ll remain focused on the pillars of positively impacting lives through charitable impact, diversity, equity and inclusion and diversity in the competitive landscape, including First Tee, junior and HBCU collegiate golf, and the Advocates Professional Golf Association (APGA).

There’s much more work to be done across the board, but we are proud of the foundation we have in place as we work toward our future goals. ●