

**February 10, 2009**



An Interview With:

## **J.P. HAYES**

MARK STEVENS: We'd like to welcome J.P. Hayes to the media room. I think most everybody knows the story about second stage of Q-school last year, but if you would go over that briefly again and then just more importantly talk about the response that you've received since then leading to the sponsor exemption this year at Pebble Beach.

J.P. HAYES: Well, to explain what happened, I guess the first round of the second stage of Q-school on I guess it was my 12th hole, I played what I thought was a wrong model ball. We're required to finish a round with the same brand, and not just brand but model that we started with, and I teed off with the Titleist Pro V1x.

I got on a par-3, asked my caddie for a different ball, or a new ball, and I hit the tee shot, just over the green, chipped on to the green, threw the ball to him, he threw it back to me, I leaned over to putt, lined up the model name like a lot of us do to putt, and I noticed that it didn't have one. So I knew right then that I had played a different kind of ball.

I called an official and got a ruling. It was a two-shot penalty. I was to finish the hole with the ball, which I did, and then put the original model that I had teed off with that day back in play on the next hole, which I did. I finished the round.

Next day I came out, played decent and kind of got back into where I could have a good finish, and that night of the second round I was sitting in my hotel room, and I had another one of those balls in the room, which I found. I was looking at it, and it just occurred to me at the time that because it didn't have a stamp on it that it was still a prototype and it hadn't been approved for

USGA play in our rules for tournament play. I made a couple phone calls. I tried to call somebody from Titleist. I got a hold of Skip Hougan from Titleist.

I called an official that was at second stage of Q-school, Robby Ware, and asked him. And I knew what the penalty was going to be. The question was had it been approved yet. Even if it had, that particular ball, since it hadn't been stamped, would have been impossible to identify as an approved ball. So I pretty much knew what the story was going to be. Next morning I went out, and sure enough, I was DQ'd, and I went home.

I thought that was the end of the story. It was kind of a fitting end to a tough year for me. I went home, close friends and family knew the story, and that was about it.

Then I got a call from Gary D'Amato from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and he said, listen, I'm getting a lot of phone calls, I'm getting a lot of emails, people know you got DQ'd but they don't know why. Can I just do a short story and get these people to stop calling, maybe answer some questions.

I said, sure, that's fine, it doesn't bother me. This was about a week after the incident. So we did a short interview, and he did a short story in the paper.

Next thing, I guess it was the morning that it appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, I started getting these phone calls from Mike & Mike and Dan Patrick and Charlie Gibson. It was just a bizarre response to a story that I certainly had never intended to get out, but it did.

I did a lot of interviews, and I always thought that the next phone call was going to be the last, but it never stopped ringing for three days. Probably about 300 phone calls later, it started to die down a little bit. I would say the response was overwhelming, a little bit embarrassing to be honest with you. Not what I did, playing a wrong ball, but that it got so much attention, because in

my mind it kind of felt like one of those things that we all do and we all expect each other to do.

It was a crazy time, but it had some positives in the fact that I'm here right now and I'll be at some other tournaments that I might not have gotten in otherwise. So that's pretty much the story. It was crazy.

**Q. In reading all those stories, what do you suppose it was about what you did that resonated with so many people?**

J.P. HAYES: Well, I think the fact that it was -- well, there's a couple answers, I think. First of all, it was Q-school, which in our world of professional golf, is like a job interview. So the fact that it was Q-school and the fact that it was a disqualification I think was the ultimate penalty, I guess. And the result was no job, no chance of getting a full-time job anyway, for the next year.

If it happens in a tournament and it's a two-shot penalty, the player calls it on himself, it happens a lot, as you guys probably know. We do it -- it probably happens every week. You know, but unless the guy is in contention, I guess, people don't really pick up on it. I can't explain it, really. It was Q-school, it was DQ, next year, limited status out here.

And the other thing I think people were interested in was the fact that at that particular time there were a lot of negative stories in the world of sports. I can't think of what they are right now, but there was a lot of stuff going on with some arrests in other sports. So you know, I guess it was a good story for people to hear that sometimes good things take place, as well.

**Q. Did it ever occur to you -- I know what the answer is to this but I'm just asking so you can say it, but did the thought ever occur to you not to fess up?**

J.P. HAYES: No, it didn't at all. I guess I had hoped that the penalty wasn't going to be what it was, that for some reason there was something in the rules, a special circumstance kind of thing, and I was just hoping and praying that that was going to be the case. But it never occurred to me not to bring this to light and get the right ruling. I don't know why. I don't think anyone would have known, but I would have known. Had I made it all the way through Q-school and gotten my card back, I think that it would have been anticlimactic for me.

**Q. How many phone calls did you get after winning?**

J.P. HAYES: Not as many as I got for getting DQ'd, I'll tell you that. I got a lot but not that many.

**Q. What tournaments have you gotten into?**

J.P. HAYES: Well, for sure, of course, this one -- all these tournaments called me days after this happened. I did not solicit an exemption for any of these tournaments. I didn't have time at that point because it happened so fast.

Anyway, this tournament, of course the John Deere -- I say of course, but it's a special tournament for me for a lot of reasons; Milwaukee, which is also special, kind of a home tournament for me; and then the Byron Nelson and Colonial called, which was pretty cool because those are two tournaments that I definitely would not have gotten into. So that's five tournaments, and with my past champion status, I'll probably get in, I'm guessing, ten more, so it's not the end of the world.

**Q. A lot of the things that you said to people who interviewed you sort of were around the, listen, I'm not a hero, don't make me into a hero over this thing; I was just doing what was right. Another question, what makes golf -- why do people react this way about golf do you think?**

J.P. HAYES: Well, I think that it's a unique sport in that we don't have referees following us. I think it's the culture in which we learn the game. We were encouraged to read the rules, to learn the rules, and to enforce the rules on ourselves, even when we were playing by ourselves. We take pride in the fact that we can do that and we can do it in the circumstances like out here where you're playing for so much money. People bite the bullet and say, look, I did something wrong, I've got a two-shot penalty.

And I would say that almost -- I would hope anyway that 100 percent of us play by those standards. In other sports you have referees, things happen fast. I'm sure a lot of penalties occur that the players may not even know of because things are happening at such a high rate of speed. That's why they have referees. I'm sure a lot of penalties are on purpose and a lot of them are on accident. But it's just the culture of the different sports, the nature of the different sports.

Golf is unique that way, and I think it makes it special.

**Q. When you first started in your youth, way at the beginning of getting into the culture and the game, can you identify how that appealed to you, because I'm sure you played baseball where you learned to beat the umpire. Can you identify anything about that when you were young?**

J.P. HAYES: No, not really. I, like probably most of the players out here or certainly most avid junior golfers and amateurs, find the rules interesting and read it like a book, like a textbook, especially in Wisconsin. When we had six months of winter there wasn't a whole lot to do, and that rule book, it's a lot to learn, so it passed some time.

You know, the rules of golf are many, and sometimes they're hard to understand, and that's why we have the officials that we do out here, not to penalize us but for help when we need the help, to call the penalties on ourselves. You know, I just think as time goes on and you get into competition and through college that you take pride in knowing those rules and enforcing them and not letting one slip by.

**Q. What did you do to warm up for this week?**

J.P. HAYES: Well, I've had a lot of time at home, and it's been great. I've played some golf, practiced, probably not as much as I should have. I've played a lot of tournaments for a lot of years every year, and I'm looking forward to being ready, hopefully being ready every week this year and enjoying a little bit lighter workload, some more time with the family, get to do some things that I haven't been able to do. But I've just played a lot of golf at home, I guess, to get ready.

**Q. Where are you living now?**

J.P. HAYES: El Paso. We've had great weather.

**Q. Just based on that, shouldn't you be exempt from drug testing this year?**

J.P. HAYES: (Laughing) No, probably not, but I welcome the test. I'm drug-free.

MARK STEVENS: Thanks a lot, J.P. Appreciate the time.

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