

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: Esteban Toledo**  
**Wednesday, April 30, 2014**



**Q. Are you excited to be back here?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Of course I am. Been waiting for, what, 11, almost 12 months. I think it's an honor to be here. It seems like it's, when I got here, a lot of people pulling for me either because I live here or because I won last year. Colin Montgomerie called me "champ" and Bernhard called me "champ," too. It's kind of cool because I've never been in this position before. I don't know, I'm just being myself. Just because I won last year doesn't mean they've got to treat me nice. Now I'm just the same guy. They treat me with respect and they honor me as a champion. I can see how every week, every champ up here they treat him good, they know who won last year and I think they're kind of excited for me this week.

**Q. Do you think back to last year, is it still kind of like a whirlwind, everything that went on when you were here and won?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Yeah, you know, it's last year that a lot of people were just talking about me, which is I'm not used to that. When I came here -- I've been here since last week since I live here and they're talking about me and it's kind of nice. It's still going through my head a little bit what I did last year. I was practicing last week and I got to the 17th hole and there was nobody around and I kind of went on my knees and I did just like I won, you know, when I won last year. It was just kind of cool.

The most important thing is the people treat me really nice and the players are very pleased that they're here. I think you guys are going to see a champion this week, either is me or anybody, I think you guys are going to enjoy the champion by Sunday and hopefully it's me. But it's going to be tough, I know that. How many repeat twice? It's only -- well, at least last year and this year I think it was, who was the guy who repeated? Pebble Beach, what was the name, Phil, last year? What was the pro's name who won the AT&T up in Pebble Beach?

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** On the PGA TOUR?

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Here, this Tour. Who did it?

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Well, we've had Kirk Triplett two years in a row.

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** That's it. It can happen. Why not? I've been really working on my game the last week and a half and I'm ready for it.

**Q. Do you have a lot of friends and family here that are going to be supporting**

you?

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, I don't have my family. My wife is coming tomorrow, but I have a lot of fans and a lot of friends because I play with so many guys during the pro-ams and I met a lot of guys and I play with a lot of guys this week. I'm excited about it. I'll have more friends later on but right now I'm just having a great time and just happy that I'm here defending my title. I'm going to try to defend it the best I can.

**Q. You say you've been working on your game a lot?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** A lot.

**Q. What are some specific things you've been doing?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, I went to California and I've been working with my swing with my coach and kind of thinking positive. I don't want to get too ahead of myself. I've just got to play one shot at a time and I think I've been doing it all year last year and I'm going to do it this year. My putter hasn't been hot the last four weeks, but I'm still hanging in there. So if my putter gets hot this week, I'll be a tough one to catch. At least that's what I think and this is the way I have to think for my game. And I'm going to play for the fans because the fans are the ones, they're going to be excited as soon as the win on Sunday.

**Q. I know it's a big deal for you to be the first Mexican to win this tournament and this was your first win on the Champions Tour. Do you think it's getting that first win was the hardest or is it going to be harder to repeat here? I know you've won another tournament since then.**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Oh, I don't know, that's a good question. I think as soon as you win the first time you can do it again winning twice is as difficult as the first one. Kirk Triplett did it last year, so it's tough. It can happen. I'm just going to enjoy myself. I'm not going to think about what's the toughest, the first one or the last one. All I know is I'm ready to go and a lot of people support me and that's what I feel going to the golf course and what I'm going to carry on to the golf course.

**Q. What are your thoughts on the competition and the field here this week?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Tough. Obviously the Insperity Invitational is a little different than last year. It's going to be a tough match this week. Bernhard is playing great, Couples is playing great, so many guys are playing so consistent. Obviously they won before the Insperity before, so it's going to be exciting for me. It's a new challenge for me how to handle myself as a winner from last year to now, but the only thing I can do is just be myself. I've got to smile a little more this year than last year because the fans recognize me as a winner and I want to be a winner again. I believe I can win again. I don't have no doubt in my mind, that's why I prepare myself

well and I'm going to have a lot of fun this week. This is my week and it will be my week until Sunday.

**Q. I like that, that's a good sentence. I know you do a lot of charity work. Can you talk to me about some of the things that you've been working on maybe specifically in the past year?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, the Esteban Toledo Family Foundation, we already have like 40 kids. Actually last week we signed the papers for my foundation legally in the U.S. and we're ready to go probably in a couple of months. It's difficult from the foundation from the U.S. to switch it to Mexico is tough, we have to do a lot of legal papers that we have to go through for a little while and right now they're stopping us, but everything is ready to go. I believe by January, I would think maybe December but as the papers went through, now we're ready to go to build. Last week, three weeks ago we had a great tournament up in the (indiscernible) in California. We raised \$50,000 for my foundation and there were 12 guys at \$5,000 a piece. I'm very impressed and surprised how the people respond to me and my foundation. We're ready to go by hopefully this year but it doesn't seem like it's going to happen. Probably by January, February next year, I'm going to put those kids back in the facility that I'm building for them. 10 rooms for the girls and 10 rooms for the boys, office and a couple employees in there, and I'm so excited, thrilled that we're going to build that for the kids.

**Q. And why is it important for you to give back like that?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, you have to understand, you know, I came to this country because John Minnis brought me to this country, so I grew up like them, probably a little worse than them. When John Minnis died 11 years ago and he told me that someday if I make money, I want you to do something for somebody. So this is how my mind started thinking, you know, I want to give back. Now that last year I had a wonderful year and this is how I'm going to help children to get them out of the street, to teach them what is right and what is wrong and teach them the right path to get successful someday. Not because John Minnis told me that's what you've got to do; I'm doing it because I love it, I'm doing it because it's in me. And I've got a lot of big support, you know, with me. My foundation, my friends, my family. I'm not going to wait until the day that I build a facility for those children. It means everything to me and it's what I promised John Minnis.

**Q. What are you most looking forward to about this week being back as the champ?**

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** Well, it's a good question. I'm going to win, honestly I'm going to win. After Sunday I'm going to left a wonderful experience that I never experienced before and being a champion and defend hard like a champion. And what I'm going to left I hear next week is the fans and the people who treat me really good here in

The Woodlands and all the sponsors, without them we wouldn't be here. But I think it's that image that I'm going to probably build this week through the years that is going to get me with a big smile Sunday.

**Q. Great, thank you.**

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** I've got one for you. When you look back on your win last year and the fact that, I mean, Cinco de Mayo in Houston with the Hispanic population, was it almost like, you know, the perfect storm in sort of a good way?

**ESTEBAN TOLEDO:** You know, Phil, it was a great story in Mexico when I won the Cinco de Mayo. To be honest with you, I didn't realize it was Cinco de Mayo. I was just playing golf and be myself and smile to the crowd, and then I find out that it was Cinco de Mayo and that was huge for Mexico. It was Batalla de Puebla, which is Pueblo battle back in those days. It was a big deal in Mexico. I didn't realize what I did. And when I got to Mexico the following week, I was at Mazatlan and the governor from Sinaloa just send me the plane to go to Los Cabos and how well they respect me and I didn't realize what I had done for my people. It was amazing how they treat me up there. It's like a hero and I am not a hero, but it's for a lot of people I did something that no Mexican ever done it. It was like, really? Like wow, I can't believe that. But it's the most experience probably tournament I ever won because I never won nothing on the TOUR but something that I really work in my game to win and I think every player on the Champions Tour practice and play to win. To win that week of Cinco de Mayo, it was incredible. My family was here, my wife was here, my daughter was here. They were wearing the big sombreros. I can't believe. It was an experience I can never forget.