Casey: “Being the hunted is a nice position to be in”

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31/05/2021 An interview with the Porsche Brand Ambassador Paul Casey ahead of the Porsche European Open.

Paul Casey is travelling to Hamburg for the Porsche European Open as the title holder. For the first time in just over a year, the Englishman, who in the meantime lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, will step back onto European soil. In an interview with the Porsche Newsroom, the three-time Ryder Cup champion speaks of the lessons he has learned from the challenging times, the reasons behind his very successful year on the Tour, his pleasure at being able to tee off again in front of spectators – and the mission to defend his title at the Porsche European Open, which will be played on the Porsche Nord Course near to Hamburg from 5 to 7 June.

Paul Casey, after winning the 2019 Porsche European Open, you always spoke of it as being a special victory. Why?

Paul Casey: History plays a huge role in our sport. And this tournament has an incredible history. It's one of the big events on the European Tour and the European Open's roll of honour includes golf's who's who. Every player on every tour dearly wants to win all the tournaments his heroes won. As a kid at the start of the 1990s, I carried a scoreboard around at the European Open in England when it was played in Walton Heath. They are memories that remain etched in your memory.

What is more difficult, winning a title or defending it?

Casey: Defending them is a whole lot of fun, but it has never really worked out up until now. I managed it as an amateur, but only once as a pro. Interestingly, I'm under less pressure as the title holder because I don't have to prove anything anymore. Being the hunted is a good position to be in. The only thing that's frustrating is when you narrowly miss out on winning. It's something that no longer comes into the equation at the Porsche European Open, which means I'm really looking forward to defending the title.

Your year has been pretty successful up until now. Victory in Dubai, top placings at the majors and in a number of other tournaments. Where does the consistency come from?

Casey: My bag has contained a new driver since the start of the year. I'm now teeing off better than I've done in the last ten years. It's not about length, it's far more about control. I know 100 per cent that golf

balls don't do any strange things I can't explain. It gives me a lot of confidence. And confidence leads to a secure swing, a snowball effect.

When placing fourth at PGA Championship, you watched Phil Mickelson's win from close up. What lessons have you learned from the year's second major?

Casey: For me at the age of 43, Phil Mickelson at over 50 really is an inspiration. As for Phil, I think two things have been important. He has remained injury-free. And he has retained his passion for the sport. He is playing at the same level as he was ten, 20 years ago, and appears to be as fit as ever. His continuing motivation is impressive.

How does one conserve the passion for the sport over decades?

Casey: For me it's important to have other passions. If golf is everything, then you get burned out quickly. At the same time, your other passions should not take up too much of your time. It's about finding a balance, and everybody is different. But I've got many other things that give me lots of fun, starting with sports cars. It helps when you suffer setbacks.

Setbacks are the focus of this year's campaign that you have initiated with Porsche.

Casey: We looked into the difficulties people sometimes have when they try to move forwards, especially in the past one-and-a-half years. It goes back to motivation, to problems and crises that we all know. In sport we often concentrate on being successful. One sees the cups, the celebrations. But I spend 99 per cent of my time not trying to hit the perfect shot, not to winning. There are so many doubts, injuries, disappointments, wrong decisions. The message is: you can grow with the challenge. Hit the next shot. It's about staying power.

Does the search for perfection ever come to an end?

Casey: No, there are always things that can be improved, especially when it comes to the golf swing. It's all about one per cent here and there. There are important minute details. We're all perfectionists in a sport one will never be able to master perfectly. But we try to perfect the thing we can't perfect.

To what extent has you approach been affected by the past challenging months?

Casey: We're all learning momentarily just how important friendships are, social contacts and experiencing things together. It's also why I'm looking forward to Hamburg. I haven't seen many of the boys on the European Tour for a long time now. At the same time, it is nice to see how many supporters like sponsors or organisers there are that believe in the game of golf and that have made it possible for us to also play golf tournaments in these times. Perhaps it is down to golf embodying much of what is important to people in general – honesty, discipline and fairness. Just how difficult the situation is at the moment is something we can see with the Porsche European Open, which was cancelled last year and has had to be postponed this time around. It's another reason why I'd like to fully support the

tournament and its stakeholders.

What have you missed on the Tour in the past months?

Casey: Eating with a knife and fork from a plate. All the food really was packed on the Tour, for good reason. But much more important, spectators. At the PGA Championship, I felt the energy that the fans exude for the first time. It was intoxicating. And now we also have fans back at the venue in Hamburg. I can hardly wait. Golf with spectators is a completely different kettle of fish. Something that's unfortunately not going to work out is that I can drive from London to Hamburg with a Porsche before the tournament due to the current regulations.

It was something you had planned on doing?

Casey: Yes, it would have been cool, don't you think? It means I now have to go the long way around when travelling from the golf club to the hotel and back to get to see the surrounding countryside a bit and drive some beautiful roads. Best of all in the Leader's Car. It was a great idea in 2019 and people were waving to me the whole time. Especially as "Leader" was written in big letters on the side. A quite special feeling. Or I win the hole-in-one vehicle, the Taycan Turbo S Cross Turismo. The car is perfect for golfers what with all its space. I love Porsche's GT models. But it's also a cool car. My everyday vehicle is a Cayenne Coupé. But I can well imagine that I'll swap it for the Cross Turismo. If you can only have one car, then it's perfect.

You've been a Porsche Brand Ambassador since September 2020. How well have you been received by the Porsche family?

Casey: It really is an honour. I gain a lot from the partnership because I'm so motorsport crazy myself. And if I am going to be authentic when advocating something, then it has to be something I also want to do. It's why I'm so happy with everything we've done together – campaigns, podcasts, events. I want to fulfil my ambassador role to the full and I'm free to do it – it's fantastic. And I'm getting to know many wonderful people with whom I can talk motorsport. It's incredibly inspiring.

Porsche in golf

Porsche has been the title sponsor of the Porsche European Open, a European Tour event, since 2015 and has been involved successfully in professional golf with automotive partnerships at three tournaments on the Asian and European Tour since 2019. Last year the sports car manufacturer additionally supported the UK Swing with the European Tour's "Golf for Good" initiative. Porsche has also been organising the Porsche Golf Cup for more than three decades. The tournament series is one of the company's most successful customer events. Held in Germany for the first time in 1988, the Porsche Golf Cup has developed into an international event at which recently over 17,000 Porsche customers competed in 261 qualifying tournaments worldwide. Also highly successful is the Porsche Golf Circle, an international and app-based community for keen golf-playing Porsche customers that

was launched in 2017.

Brand Ambassador as a part of the Porsche family

As the first ambassador from the world of golf, Casey complements the Porsche family. In tennis, it includes the exceptional Maria Sharapova as well as the top two current German players Angelique Kerber and Julia Görges. Also from the world of sport, the football World Cup winner Sami Khedira is active as the ambassador for the Porsche junior development programme. Others representing the sports car manufacturer's company and product communication are the German rally legend Walter Röhrl, the Australian Endurance World Champion Mark Webber, the two-time Norwegian Olympic Champion Aksel Lund Svindal as well as the actor Richy Müller. Two former Porsche works drivers have also joined the circle of Brand Ambassadors – GT specialist and development driver Jörg Bergmeister as well as the two-time Le Mans winner Timo Bernhard.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

Taycan Turbo S Cross Turismo (Modèle précédent)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/181328_en_3000000.mp4

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