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Transcript: Tiger's public statement

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ASAP Sports

TIGER WOODS: Good morning, and thank you for joining me. Many of you in this room are my friends. Many of you in this room know me. Many of you have cheered for me or you've worked with me or you've supported me.

Now every one of you has good reason to be critical of me. I want to say to each of you, simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in.

I know people want to find out how I could be so selfish and so foolish. People want to know how I could have done these things to my wife, Elin, and to my children. And while I have always tried to be a private person, there are some things I want to say.

Elin and I have started the process of discussing the damage caused by my behavior. As Elin pointed out to me, my real apology to her will not come in the form of words; it will come from my behavior over time. We have a lot to discuss; however, what we say to each other will remain between the two of us.

I am also aware of the pain my behavior has caused to those of you in this room. I have let you down, and I have let down my fans. For many of you, especially my friends, my behavior has been a personal disappointment. To those of you who work for me, I have let you down personally and professionally. My behavior has caused considerable worry to my business partners.

To everyone involved in my foundation, including my staff, board of directors, sponsors and most importantly, the young students we reach, our work is more important than ever. Thirteen years ago, my dad and I envisioned helping young people achieve their dreams through education. This work remains unchanged and will continue to grow. From the Learning Center students in Southern California to the Earl Woods scholars in Washington, D.C., millions of kids have changed their lives, and I am dedicated to making sure that continues.

But still, I know I have bitterly disappointed all of you. I have made you question who I am and how I could have done the things I did. I am embarrassed that I have put you in this position.

For all that I have done, I am so sorry.

I have a lot to atone for, but there is one issue I really want to discuss. Some people have speculated that Elin somehow hurt or attacked me on Thanksgiving night. It angers me that people would fabricate a story like that. Elin never hit me that night or any other night. There has never been an episode of domestic violence in our marriage, ever. Elin has shown enormous grace and poise throughout this ordeal. Elin deserves praise, not blame.

The issue involved here was my repeated irresponsible behavior. I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did is not acceptable, and I am the only person to blame.

I stopped living by the core values that I was taught to believe in. I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules didn't apply. I never thought about who I was hurting. Instead, I thought only about myself. I ran straight through the boundaries that a married couple should live by. I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled. Thanks to money and fame, I didn't have to go far to find them.

I was wrong. I was foolish. I don't get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me. I brought this shame on myself. I hurt my wife, my kids, my mother, my wife's family, my friends, my foundation and kids all around the world who admired me.

I've had a lot of time to think about what I've done. My failures have made me look at myself in a way I never wanted to before. It's now up to me to make amends and that starts by never repeating the mistakes I've made. It's up to me to start living a life of integrity.

I once heard, and I believe it's true, it's not what you achieve in life that matters; it's what you overcome. Achievements on the golf course are only part of setting an example. Character and decency are what really count.

Parents used to point to me as a role model for their kids. I owe all those families

a special apology. I want to say to them that I am truly sorry.

It's hard to admit that I need help, but I do. For 45 days from the end of December to early February, I was in inpatient therapy receiving guidance for the issues I'm facing. I have a long way to go. But I've taken my first steps in the right direction.

As I proceed, I understand people have questions. I understand the press wants to ask me for the details and the times I was unfaithful. I understand people want to know whether Elin and I will remain together. Please know that as far as I'm concerned, every one of these questions and answers is a matter between Elin and me. These are issues between a husband and a wife.

Some people have made up things that never happened. They said I used performance-enhancing drugs. This is completely and utterly false. Some have written things about my family. Despite the damage I have done, I still believe it is right to shield my family from the public spotlight. They did not do these things; I did.

I have always tried to maintain a private space for my wife and children. They have been kept separate from my sponsors, my commercial endorsements. When my children were born, we only released photographs so that the paparazzi could not chase them. However, my behavior doesn't make it right for the media to follow my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter to school and report the school's location. They staked out my wife and they pursued my mom. Whatever my wrongdoings, for the sake of my family, please leave my wife and kids alone.

I recognize I have brought this on myself, and I know above all I am the one who needs to change. I owe it to my family to become a better person. I owe it to those closest to me to become a better man. That's where my focus will be.

I have a lot of work to do, and I intend to dedicate myself to doing it. Part of following this path for me is Buddhism, which my mother taught me at a young age. People probably don't realize it, but I was raised a Buddhist, and I actively practiced my faith from childhood until I drifted away from it in recent years. Buddhism teaches that a craving for things outside ourselves causes an unhappy and pointless search for security. It teaches me to stop following every impulse and to learn restraint. Obviously, I lost track of what I was taught.

As I move forward, I will continue to receive help because I've learned that's how

people really do change. Starting tomorrow, I will leave for more treatment and more therapy. I would like to thank my friends at Accenture and the players in the field this week for understanding why I'm making these remarks today.

In therapy, I've learned the importance of looking at my spiritual life and keeping in balance with my professional life. I need to regain my balance and be centered so I can save the things that are most important to me -- my marriage and my children.

That also means relying on others for help. I've learned to seek support from my peers in therapy, and I hope someday to return that support to others who are seeking help. I do plan to return to golf one day, I just don't know when that day will be.

I don't rule out that it will be this year. When I do return, I need to make my behavior more respectful of the game. In recent weeks, I have received many thousands of e-mails, letters and phone calls from people expressing good wishes. To everyone who has reached out to me and my family, thank you. Your encouragement means the world to Elin and me.

I want to thank the PGA Tour, Commissioner Finchem and the players for their patience and understanding while I work on my private life. I look forward to seeing my fellow players on the course.

Finally, there are many people in this room, and there are many people at home who believed in me. Today, I want to ask for your help. I ask you to find room in your heart to one day believe in me again.

Thank you.