



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: JOHN COOK
April 20, 2011

MODERATOR: We welcome John Cook into the interview room. John, fresh off his second victory of the year last week at the Outback Steakhouse pro-am, you come back playing an event that you and Joey Sindelar have come close a couple times to winning. Obviously two wins this year, you've got to have a lot of confidence coming into this week.

JOHN COOK: Nice start to the year, yeah. It's nice to win early, and when you double it up, it's extra special.

You know, that's what this out here is all about, is about preparation and giving yourself chances to win. I've given myself enough, you know, in the three years that I've been out here, three-years plus, that if you don't capitalize on them every once in a while, it's pretty disappointing.

So I was fortunate enough to win last week and on a good tough golf course that played tough on Sunday. Obviously the scores were -- kind of reflected that, so I'm pretty proud of that one. It didn't end quite the way maybe I had envisioned walking down the 54th hole, but I did get a chance to redeem myself and hit two quality shots in the playoff.

Yeah, this week is pretty special. Joey and I do make a nice team. My driver, as I was driving in this afternoon, says, You guys are hitting for the cycle. We finished fourth, third and second in that order and now we've got to hit the big one.

It would really mean a lot to get Joey his first win here. We've been trying and he's a great partner. We've been friends for a long time, teammates at Ohio State. He's pretty easy to play with. You know that he's going to go out there and he's going to make some birdies and he's going to give himself chances and I'm just kind of there as a little backup for him, so we'll see if we can get him in.

MODERATOR: We'll just go to questions. Nathan?

Q. Nathan Dornitz from the Savannah Morning News. Welcome back. We're used to seeing you here in the media center, maybe never happier than you are right now.

What's going right in your game and maybe in your life right now that you're off to such a great start?

JOHN COOK: Well, you just said it, my life is real good. I have a great support system, I have a great family support system. We're just out playing golf, we're competing like we have since we were kids and really not a lot of drama in my life other than just, you know, I've got two daughters that are married and a son that's trying to find his way, you know, through the rigors of life. Other than that, it's -- I'm still working hard, my health is good. I had just a little bit of an issue there at Newport. Unfortunately I had to withdraw from a tournament that's a mile from my house. Other than that, yeah, my life is good. I've got no complaints. Like I say, I've got a great support system.

Golf-wise, I'm just letting things happen. I feel trust in what I'm doing with my golf swing, I feel real trust in my routine. I work out, I practice and I'm just not trying to get in my own way, which I have a tendency to do. Seems like when I just kind of let things go, the other things will happen.

So I'm trusting a lot of things that -- keeping things very, very simple and trying to keep that window open as long as I can. Every time I see Gil Morgan or Hale Irwin, they're 64 years old, Tom Wargo, he's 68 years old. I'm 53, and so I feel like my window is open. As long as I can stay healthy and stay committed to getting better, I think I can be competitive for a while. That's pretty much been my game plan since I turned 50.

Q. Does that make you one of the young turks, the McIlroy and Fowler of the Champions Tour?

JOHN COOK: My kids are all older than them. It's amazing what those kids do. I did have an opportunity not to play with them, but I did play in Cancun for a regular Tour event and see some of those kids play. It just shows you golf is golf.

What we do here on this Tour and what they do on the PGA Tour, talent is talent, it doesn't matter if you're 53 or 23 or 22 or 20. Those kids are pretty young. The kid from Italy, how old's he, 17? 18, I mean, that's just nuts. When I was 18 I was -- jeez, I was a senior in high school, kind of going through my letters of where I think I might go to college and trying to figure out where the next party was. That's just about what we were doing. But it's quite a game. Like I said, golf is golf. That little white ball doesn't really know how old you are, you try to get it in the hole as quick as possible. That's kind of my game plan.

Q. You mentioned that your life is pretty drama free. People forget, I guess, everybody's human, but do some golfers keep out distractions better than others, and how have you been in those terms?

JOHN COOK: Yeah, I think everybody's situation is different obviously. Mine certainly is. You have three kids, you're going to have your share of issues and we have not been immune to a lot of that and anything that takes up your time -- obviously your family is so much more important than what you do, but when you have things stabilized and everybody on the same page, it does allow dad to be a little more stress-free on the golf course. That's the way it's worked for over 30 years in my life.

Like I say, when you have a great support system, your wife understands, and we've been married 30-plus years, you know, you have that support, it just makes things a little bit easier.

It's not that way for everybody. Everybody does have their issues and we're no different. We have the same issues and family things that go on that everybody else does. Somehow we have to get through those and then also perform without any help from any teammates, so it's a little different. We can't take a, you know, a family day and then come out the next day and play. You take a family day and you just keep going, you keep going home.

Q. Can you tell us on the record your wife's name and how many years you've been married?

JOHN COOK: Yeah, Jan is my wife and we've been married 31 years. We were child brides, I guess. We were 20 or 22 when we got married. Our kids are Kristin, she's married, K-R-I-S-T-I-N. She's been married three years. And Courtney, C-O-U-R-T-N-E-Y, she just got married last Thanksgiving. She lives in Sidney, Australia, yeah. And son Jason, he's 25. Kristin will be 30 shortly, Courtney just turned 27 and Jason's 25.

Q. Just wondering with you going for the cycle and all of that, what has made you and -- what's made you and Joey such good partners? You make it sound like he makes all the birdies. I'm sure that's not the case.

JOHN COOK: It's been a good partnership. We really have -- I mean, if you look at the holes and whatever, we're probably -- we split. We both can make a lot of birdies. I think that he has trust in me that I don't make too many mistakes so he can kind of not just freewheel everything, but he can certainly take some chances on some par 5s. He drives the ball fairly long still, he's one of the longest that we have out here on this Tour, so that's a good combination. He knows that I'm not going to hit too many balls out of play, that there's always -- looks like par is always going to be pretty obtainable no matter where we are. When I've hit a good shot, he can take a run at it, too.

So we just have had a lot of double opportunities on, I guess it will be, 108 holes together that we would play each week, we've had a lot of opportunities to make some birdies. This is kind of a momentum type of game where you can get on a roll and string off a bunch of under-par holes in a row.

You can also get, you know, a little stale as times as well. It doesn't seem like we've had those real down times where we've gone 8 or 9 holes without making a birdie, which that can happen. We always feel like we've got a couple opportunities each time, or each hole, so we're comfortable. We've known each other a long time. He loves to chat and ask for my help and he trusts that I understand his game and what the situations are and how he's been -- if he's not comfortable with something, you try to say the right thing. If you can get both partners to relax and go have some fun and go freewheel a little bit, we all know it's always close to 30 under par, so somehow you've got 10 under a day, that would do it. We've been just a little bit short a couple of times, but we're -- it's a nice team, it's a nice pairing.

Q. Also just wanted to get your thoughts on just the Schwab Cup, the season race, whatever you phrase it, with Bernhard being out for however longest he's out, and Freddie's, his back's acting up. Seems like maybe it's as wide open as it's been in a few years?

JOHN COOK: Definitely. Like I said, the Champions Tour, if you have your health, you can be competitive for a long time. Unfortunately, that bug has hit Bernhard. We miss him. I mean, you want to compete against the best all the time.

And Fred, when he plays, obviously is -- you want to play against Fred because he's got that star power and he brings a lot to this Tour. Unfortunately, he's had a cranky back for a long time and it just kind of goes that way.

We want to have those guys out playing, there's no doubt. I'm not going to say that there's an opportunity here because you want to beat the best, but the facts are the facts and while Bernhard is down for a little while longer, he's been the guy the last few years. It just opens up a spot and you've got to grab those opportunities when you get them. I'm sure he'll come back and be strong as ever. We all know his resume is very competitive, he'll be ready when he comes back. We hope Fred comes back out real soon as well. It just makes our events that much more attractive to the viewers.

Q. Without Bernhard here, Tom Lehman is with Corey Pavin.

JOHN COOK: There you go.

Q. Can you kind of assess the field with the teams you've kind of seen? There's certain teams that jump to the top of your list?

JOHN COOK: Certainly that one is kind of a last-minute put-together, but it's a very formable team right there, major championship winners and Tom is very, very competitive. Corey is just a little bulldog guy that he can roll off some -- he can make putts there anywhere. It doesn't really matter how he hits it, putts, chips, bunker shots, whatever, you can't ever count him out. That's going to be a great pairing.

Nick and Mark, obviously defending champions and a great pairing, they're great friends as well. And I think that's what you see out here, you see great pairings of great friends and everybody's comfortable with each other. I think there's so many good ones and they're there for a reason.

I know that, who did I see, Kenny Perry's playing with Scott Hoch, yeah. Scott's just kind of making a comeback and I know he was -- I saw him yesterday at the club and he was excited to play.

Kenny hasn't quite found his niche out here yet, but he certainly will. He brings a lot of experience, a lot of wins to the Champions Tour as well, but it's not that easy to win out here, as he can probably attest to. We've got Calc. Just about any team can get hot for three days. Like last year with Andy Beah getting hooked up with Mr. Lu, and next thing you know they've got a chance coming down the stretch, so there's plenty of those.

MODERATOR: Anything else for John? John, congratulations and good luck this week.

JOHN COOK: Thanks.