



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: TOM LEHMAN & COREY PAVIN
April 21, 2011

MODERATOR: We welcome Corey Pavin and Tom Lehman into the interview room. A couple years ago, Tom, you were with Bernhard and he got you your first win, and you're going to try to get Corey his first win this week.

A couple thoughts about teaming with Corey after Bernhard's injury and talk about that. Then Corey, talk about playing with Tom.

TOM LEHMAN: I thought I would get a partner who knows how to do a chest bump, that's the biggest issue right there. We've been practicing, we've been working on it. I just didn't want to hurt Corey.

You know, it's a mixed bag for me personally because two of my favorite people are Bernhard and Corey. Having the history with Bernhard and not having him here is disappointing and it's sad, but then having the opportunity to play with Corey is really exciting and fun for me. So I guess at the end of the day we're hoping to make Bernhard feel really bad for not being able to be here and play.

MODERATOR: Corey, about playing with Tom?

COREY PAVIN: I guess I'm just the second choice, which is okay. No, obviously we hope Bernhard gets better and recovers quickly.

Actually, Tom asked me a few weeks ago if I was interested in playing and I think I gave -- didn't take too long to say yes. But I think it will be fun. Tom and I teamed up in Ryder Cup before, which is a long time ago, but I think this will be fun. I believe we just played -- we played alternate shot though, so a different format for us, but I think it will be fun. Tom's playing great, I'm going to just ride his coattails and hopefully he'll just make a ton the birdies and I'll be the guy that makes the pars and cheers him on.

MODERATOR: Have you two devised any strategy with this course, who's going to hit first, who's going to putt first, anything like that?

COREY PAVIN: Tom said I was hitting first. That's what you said.

TOM LEHMAN: I told you I'd prefer to hit second.

COREY PAVIN: Is that how that works? Okay. I said that was fine with me, it doesn't matter.

TOM LEHMAN: How long have you been married, he said. It's that obvious, is it? We're just very good friends.

MODERATOR: Okay. We'll just open it up for questions. Nathan?

Q. Nathan Dominitz from the Savannah Morning News. I think Mike Stephens was here about a month ago and he said that when Bernhard was injured, that was going to set off a lot of shuffling and stuff of partnerships. Was it like the prom where you find out somebody's already going with somebody else and there's a lot of phone calls? How did it work where, once they found out about, Tom, that you weren't going to have a partner, did you get a lot of calls?

TOM LEHMAN: Well, Bernhard, being the very classy person that he is, he gave me warning ahead of time, saying that I've been struggling with this thumb, I've gotten two or three opinions, surgery is a definite possibility, there's a really good chance I may not be able to play the Legends of Golf.

When he brought up his surgery, I wasn't even thinking about that, I was thinking more about him missing majors and missing tournaments, and then when he said you may want to look for a partner for the Legends just as a backup, I was like oh, yeah, thanks for the warning, I appreciate that.

So the first thing I did, I knew that Corey wasn't playing, I knew he was going to be off that week, and I called him and I said look, if there's a possibility if dot dot dot, would you consider readjusting your schedule to play if that happens? So it was all set up, I think, ahead of time so that the what if, if then, if Bernhard plays, then I'm playing with Corey, he knew that and I knew that and Bernhard knew that and it all worked out.

Q. You didn't get wooed like a college prospect with gifts your way or anything?

TOM LEHMAN: You mean paid to play? Well, the tournament paid me a lot to come here and play. Just kidding, just kidding, that was a joke.

No, no, there was -- I got a few phone calls from guys, but it was -- you know, which is why I chose ahead of time to try to set it up so I could take it out of play.

Q. And Tom, also you're playing very well right now. What's going right for you on the course and off the course maybe?

TOM LEHMAN: Well, a lot of things are going right. My wife is doing great, you know, and that's always a good thing. My kids are doing fine and my game is -- I think my attitude is just different over the last three or four years than it's ever been before. To me, that's what I see more than anything with my game. I'm not nearly as consumed with the results as I used to be. I'm really enjoying playing, I'm really enjoying practicing and really enjoying just competing and not all that stressed out about where I finish, I think kind of where I should have been my whole career, but I think I'm finally learning a few lessons.

Q. Why do you think that shift? Because you've made your fortune and your kids are getting older and you're off the main tour and your window is closed? I probably just gave you four reasons right there, but why the shift?

TOM LEHMAN: You know what, quite frankly, we talked a lot when I was the Ryder Cup captain about that conversation with John Wood and that kind of got it started for me was this whole idea of how we define success. His definition was all about the process and not anything at all about the results. That kind of got me going down that road of maybe I'm putting too much pressure on myself to get results, why don't I just go ahead and absorb myself in the process of trying to be better and the process of trying to play good golf and not worry about what happens.

So what I found is that I get very unhappy with myself if I don't play well, but I don't find myself on the golf course putting pressure on myself to have to hit a great shot or have to win when I'm in contention, I simply play. Then if I'm unhappy with the results and reevaluate maybe I didn't spend enough time chipping or whatever, so you go back and -- but the results are not as important during the course of competing as they used to be.

Q. For Corey now, I think when we were talking to John Cook yesterday he referred to you as a bulldog. Are you getting tired of that? Would you prefer to be another animal at this point?

COREY PAVIN: A Bruin, I'm certainly a Bruin, yeah. I don't know how to answer that one. Yeah, it's absolutely a compliment. I've always liked the nickname name for what it means, it just means I try really hard, I guess competitive. I've always enjoyed that type of a label, but with -- if you look at me on paper, I need to be a bit of a bulldog because I don't have as much talent and as much physical prowess as some of these other guys, so I've got to find other ways to do it. That's the way I try to do it is just make the best of what I have.

TOM LEHMAN: I'm going to disagree with that comment a little bit. Let me tell you a quick story. I was playing with Harrington, Padraig Harrington, at Firestone a number of years ago and Corey was right behind us. The first hole at Firestone, which is normally like a driver, a 3-wood and a 9-iron or a wedge, it was into the wind and the pin was front left and he had to hit a wood. We were watching him from the second tee and he hit this 3-wood or 4-wood in there about six feet from the hole and Harrington says, That Corey Pavin is a great golfer. We all agreed and the point was this, you know, my partner here knows how to play golf. He is a great golfer. He may not hit it as far as some guys, but he knows how to play the game. He is a great, great golfer, which is why I'm so happy to have him as a partner because he gets a lot out of his game because he knows how to play and he never gives up and never quits, and therefore that bulldog nickname is very appropriate. But he has way more talent than he gives himself credit for.

COREY PAVIN: Time for a hug.

Q. Also, how's your German by the way?

COREY PAVIN: That's a rhetorical question, right?

Q. Just following up on two things. First, him, pretend he's not sitting there.

COREY PAVIN: He usually does.

Q. Good. Is he arguably, and I can think of Paul Runyan, but is he arguably the best in the game's history from where he has to play his tee ball from?

TOM LEHMAN: That's a really great question. I never thought that. I'll put it to you this way: If I had to play, you know, from where he drove it --

COREY PAVIN: In the fairway, you mean?

TOM LEHMAN: -- I wouldn't be anywhere near as good as him. We just played, for example, a couple weeks ago in Newport. I think it's unfair to characterize his game as, you know, anything but really, really good, but he hit a couple of -- like he hit a 3-wood to a par 4 where he kind of hit a mediocre drive and kind of fanned to the right so he was back there a ways. So he hit a 3-wood inside of my 9-iron. He did it repeatedly with longer clubs throughout the day.

Loren Roberts is the same way, by the way. I remember him saying one time that he just realized that length is not his gig, he'll beat you with his 4-wood. I think -- I would assume that's the way my partner approaches it, too. He plays to his strengths.

Q. Follow up on the mental shift, how is that played out, the simply playing and not getting in the results, what have you noticed is the result in terms of play or your demeanor or not getting as upset, how has that played out?

TOM LEHMAN: I think it's played out in more confidence because I think I've hit more quality shots and more quality putts under pressure than I have in a long time over the last couple of years, because of being just more focused on the process. So suddenly, what comes first, the doing it or the confidence?

I think most guys you talk to will stay on the range and hit a 7-iron after 7-iron perfectly, and then we get some pressure on us and we shoot ourselves in the foot and hit a crappy one. To me, the whole thing has been, hey, it's just another 7-iron, just go through the process and hit it, hit a good one in a big situation and then you kind of learn, hey, I can do this better and better under pressure and so the confidence grows. So that's to me the sequence and it kind of feeds on itself.

Q. (Inaudible.)

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, my attitude's been way better, not nearly as upset for bad shots, just kind of hitting it and chasing it. Tom Watson's the best at that. He's the best that I've ever seen at that.

Q. Letting go?

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, hitting it and letting go. You get upset inside, you're not happy about it, but you let it go and you chase it and you hit the next one. I've always admired that about him and the way he plays. I wish I could be more like that. When I think about guys that do it really, really well, I think about him. You can kind of see it, he plays the game.

MODERATOR: Jody or Jim, do you have a question? Jody?

Q. Just talk about -- talked to a couple guys about what majors mean on the Champions Tour. Do they mean the same thing as the four obviously on the regular tour? What do majors mean to you guys?

COREY PAVIN: You know, I think when we get out here on the Champions Tour, the majors are the focus, they're the premier events. It's no different in that regard for us.

The majors on the regular tour are what we strive for when we're on the regular tour so that's what we strive for out here; the courses that are set up the most difficult, the best test for each of us during that week, and I think we all feel like who wins those tournaments are playing some pretty darn good golf under tough conditions. So I guess they're very similar in that regard. Obviously the majors

on the regular tour are the premier events in golf, period, but for us and what we're doing out here, those are the premier events for us on the Champions Tour.

TOM LEHMAN: I agree, ditto.

Q. I have a philosophical question for both of you. Speaking of majors on the regular tour, is there -- Kenny Perry last week said it's way more relaxed out here, fans and players, and I've noticed it, too. This is just my phraseology. When the game face comes off on a lead player like you two, when maybe you feel your window to win majors is closed and there's a mellowing process, can both of you address that, and was there a moment when you realized it and you noticed there was a shift in -- and if you want to bring anybody else up. I mean, I've seen guys who used to be -- I call Weiskopf now and he's kind and gentle. Back then, people wanted to stay away from him. So not to pick on Tom, but you see where I'm going with this.

COREY PAVIN: Are you talking about right after we won a major or years afterwards?

Q. No, I'm talking about there's a shift that I've seen over the last 20 years with players when it becomes more human and mellow, when maybe the window closes and then the game face comes off. I'll give you Nick Faldo, too. There seemed to be a change there once you stopped (inaudible) and take the blinkers off.

COREY PAVIN: Well, in my opinion I think that it just sounds like people are maturing, they're just getting older and maturing more than anything else. I'm sure Tom would sit here and I feel the same way personally, that if I play really well in a certain major on a certain course, that I could still have an opportunity. I mean, look at Tom Watson. He almost won and he was 59.

So I think under the right circumstances and the right golf course, I think everybody out here that's won a major championship on the Champions Tour could win a major. I really feel that way.

Are we mellower? Yeah, I think we're just mellower because we're older and kind of have a better perspective on life. I think when you're younger and kind of the competitive juices are [when it's all about competing and doing that and that kind of consumes your life in some ways, I think it's just different, I think we're just maturing as people more than anything else.

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, I think there's a lot to that. I think the game face is still there, it just looks different. I don't see guys competing any less aggressively or

with any less passion out here when they get in the hunt, but it just looks different.

I think -- I've always said guys have nothing to prove, they feel like they've got nothing to prove and so they kind of -- I actually see a little bit more of the just letting it go and competing feeling out here than on the other tour. The guys seem to play really well under the gun, in the heat of competition, and it's a different game face. I think it's -- the smile and the relaxed atmosphere kind of belies the still competitive nature of all the players.

Q. And there's probably a lot of ingredients behind that. A lot of you have raised families and made your fortunes, where back in the day you're trying to make cuts and raise a family and deal with -- there's probably a lot of reasons for what he talked about, the maturing.

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, and I think part of it is -- I talked to you about a story at the Senior PGA Media Day about at San Diego one year hitting an 8-iron in the water on 18 and had a chance to maybe tie the lead by making eagle, and I hit the bank, came back in the water and then I made a bogey. I went from finishing maybe second or third to tied for eighth. I just took it out on my clubs in the parking lot because instead of getting maybe 80 or 90 Ryder Cup points, I got like seven because I was tied for eighth with like eight people.

To me, the results of how you play were more significant. There was more riding on the end result. There was more riding on making the Ryder Cup team or being in the top 50 in the world, so therefore we got more wrapped up in the results and I think in some way, very much many, many ways to a lot of people, it paralyzes you a bit, whereas out here you don't have the results to worry about. The only that matters is that trophy. That's the only thing you're playing for is that trophy that day. There's nothing else down the road really. I mean, the Schwab Cup, yes, but it's easy to forget about that in the course of a competition. But I'm not depending on having had this high finish to be in the top 50 to get in Augusta anymore or to make the Ryder Cup team anymore, so you just play.

Q. I'm DaShawn Brown with WTOC here. I had a similar question in that because so many of you guys have matured and your game has matured, how does that make this field tougher because so many of you are in that mature place and you have that confidence now?

TOM LEHMAN: A nice way of saying we're a bunch of old farts, I appreciate that.

COREY PAVIN: I think what Tom's kind of saying is that you look at the fields out here on the Champions Tour and the guys have won so many tournaments, majors, Hall of Famers, everybody knows how to win out here and everybody does it maybe a little bit differently, but it makes it tough out here. These guys

know how to play under pressure and how to win. It's like playing a tournament of champions every week, so it's hard to win. It's a difficult task out here just because everybody's been there, done it and accomplished it and they have confidence that they can do it again. But that's what makes it so much fun to play out here, too.

We're all laughing and smiling and having fun on the driving range, but when we get on the golf course, we're coming down the stretch, it's pretty serious stuff. Everybody wants to win and play well. As Tom said, our exterior may look a little different than it did 20 years ago, but inside we're playing pretty hard out there and trying to win.

TOM LEHMAN: I also think there's something about that whole outlier thing about 10,000 hours to master something. I think as you get older, the more time you put in practicing, that's exactly what happens. I think a lot of guys, they come into their own in their games later in their careers now because they keep working, and the longer you work, all of a sudden something clicks where you feel, hey, my swing, it's kind of there. You don't need to work anymore. I remember talking to Byron Nelson and he told me that where there came a point in his life where he felt his swing was there, he didn't need to spend hours and hours practicing because he had it. It was boom, my swing is my swing and it's not going anywhere and I know it, and his career was amazing, retiring early. So I think there is an element of as you mature and you accumulate the hours of practice and practice and practice, that your swing at some point kicks in and it's like, okay, after all these years of toil and work, it's there, period.

Q. One quick question, maybe lighten the mood a little bit, yesterday Mark Calcavecchia was joking, I think he was joking, about wanting a redraw when he found out he was going to be paired with Hoch and Perry.

Are there certain pairings or foursomes that you'd almost pay to see, maybe have a -- be able to listen to some of the comments going back and forth when you see the way these groups are for tomorrow?

COREY PAVIN: You can have that question.

TOM LEHMAN: I would pay to follow John Jacobs anywhere, for example, so the answer is yes.

COREY PAVIN: That's a good one.

MODERATOR: Well, good luck on the weekend. Thank you very much.