



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: FRED FUNK
Friday, June 8, 2012

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Fred, 71 today and 6-under. You are right in the thick of things through 36 holes. 67 yesterday, nice score. Just maybe a couple thoughts on today's round.

FRED FUNK: Well, it wasn't as much fun as yesterday. Yesterday was just -- couldn't wait to go to every hole, and then today I got off to a really poor start, bogeyed the first two holes and I also bogeyed the par 5, No. 6. And 1 and 6 were just careless because maybe those winds were overhanging from where I was coming in on 1 and I should have played away from them and I didn't.

Anyway, then on 6 I laid up in water, so pretty bad start. And then really saved the round coming in on 14, made a nice birdie, nice par save, my second putt on 15. Terrible tee shot and bad bunker shot on 16 and then made a really nice par save from about 15 feet. Beautiful birdie putt on 17. And then 18, drove it in the rough and I had to play for long and that's where I hit it, hit a great chip, got up and down. So I really saved the round the last five holes, I was real pleased with that. I would rather finish good than -- start bad and finish good than the other way around. I held it together and kept myself in the tournament just at those last five holes.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Coming in here, you won at Houston, missed the cut at the Senior PGA, and had a decent finish last week. Talk about your overall game.

FRED FUNK: My overall game has been really good. At Benton Harbor I got a little baffled at the greens and I wasn't -- I didn't hit my irons that good that week, and because of the way those greens are, that put me behind the 8 ball almost every hole. Seemed like hitting over hill and dale, didn't know how to read them, much less putt them.

Last week I played good again, finished fourth and felt really good coming in here and was real excited the way I was playing the practice round. Went to the U.S. Open qualifying, I played good even though I didn't make it. Yesterday it was just as fun as could be out there, I couldn't wait to play every hole and every shot. It was like I was learning something every hole and really enjoyed the process.

Then today I got a little lost with what I'm doing, so I have to figure out -- I've just got to simplify things a little bit. That's kind of the name of the game when every day's a little bit different.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We'll just go to questions. Please wait for the microphone.

Q. You mentioned about a few weeks ago at the most previous major you struggled, didn't make the cut, then you come out here at this major, first round you felt great. Is that just the nature of this sport, or are there specific things that you learned from that one that you have been able to do better this time around?

FRED FUNK: Well, I think it is the nature of the game, every day's different. I think you can look at Tom Kite yesterday, I think he shot 80 and he's 4-under through 8 today. That's a big difference, big swing if he keeps it going.

You have certain courses where you have a bad attitude toward a golf course or your body's not feeling really good or whatever. Benton Harbor, I didn't -- I think the more I played it, the more I appreciated the golf course, but my initial -- it had to grow on me because I really was -- I just didn't understand the concept of Nicklaus' design on that one. I think that you just, you know, if you write about the game a lot, you know how everybody's so up and down, you just never know.

But I'm really known for my consistency. I expect to be consistent, I expect to hit the ball pretty solid and in play, keep the ball in front of me. I have distance control a little bit, and when I lose that I'm really struggling with my game, and that's what happened at Benton Harbor. I couldn't hit it solid off those fairways for whatever reason, and today I kind of felt that a little bit. Yesterday was as solid as could be, I had great distance control and everything. I'll find it. I'm going to work on it this afternoon and hopefully we'll get it. Short game is still really good, so I like that. That's also a key. You've got to have the short game going.

Q. Speaking of that, working on your game, am I correct that you're working with somebody new the last few months?

FRED FUNK: Yeah, the last year and a half or so. My instructor works for -- or works with my son. He works at the Academy, Travis Fulton works at TPC Academy at home at Sawgrass. He did such a great job with Taylor, I went to watch him. My wife goes to the lessons with him and I said, well, gee, he did such a great job with Taylor -- because I'm pretty much self-taught. I've been to a lot of teachers to see what they say, but I don't like listening to them, I'm pretty stubborn and just figure it out myself, just what I call digging in the dirt to find out what works for me.

Travis has really helped me come back from quite a few of the injuries I've been dealing with, mainly my thumb last year. Coming back this year it was really sore and I was trying to come back as fast as I could and I couldn't take a divot, scared it would hurt at the bottom of my swing, and I got in a lot of bad habits compensating for that. Once it got good, I had to figure out how to get back to the basic fundamentals and rework my swing. I played at Honda and it was horrendous the way I played. I went back to Travis when I got home and missed the cut. I said, all right, I'm ready to listen, just tell me

what I need to do, and we've been working on it ever since. I know it's the right thing and I've just got to get better at it.

Q. Any comfort -- I know you haven't won this tournament at this course, but you are a two-time winner at the Tradition. Any comfort level with that (inaudible)?

FRED FUNK: I love the golf course, this is a really good golf course. I love Sun River. I don't think the majority of the people love Sun River in the field, I really like it a lot. Some guys thought it was a little quirky. I thought it was really spectacular and a fun course to play and rewarded good play.

This one here I think is a venue that we can really grow the event and turn this thing into something really special that it should be, because it is one of our majors, and I for one and I think the majority, 90-some percent of the guys out here love this golf course. It rewards good play. If you're playing well, it rewards you, you can make a lot of birdies out here. If you're not playing well, you're going to struggle and that's what you should do on any golf course. I think you want a golf course that's going to reward really good, solid play and the guys who keep the ball in front of them and try to keep it out of the fairway bunkers and the rough, at certain places on the greens. You have to have control of your golf ball, and there are some really, really good holes out here as well that you've got to get by. You get by those and you're playing well and you set up the holes that aren't very -- like the par 5s, a lot of the long hitters can get there in two and you can still make a lot of birdies with your wedges. I know last year I went for 11, three out of four days, I played 3 over. I don't want to do that again.

Q. What's it like having your son caddie for you this week?

FRED FUNK: It's great having Taylor on the bag, not only because -- it's just special to have him out there with me. My wife and I made the decision early in our marriage when we decided to have kids that we were going -- and after we had Taylor, that we were going to homeschool and stay on the road and she was going to be the homeschooler, the teacher, but it kept our family together and we've been together on the road since day one, and our daughter as well, Perry. And when it finally got to a situation where he was able to caddie, it's just was a no-brainer. It's so fun and I just can't believe how good a caddie he is. He's incredibly professional out there, he's very prepared. He knows all the yardages, all the strategy. He can get in my face. I want him to get in my face if I'm getting a bad attitude. He's really good at it and I respect him as a caddie. Well, obviously as a son I love him, but as a caddie I really respect him, he's fantastic. He's as good as any caddie I've ever had, and I've had some really good caddies, so that's saying a lot.

Is that it? Okay.