



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: MARK CALCAVECCHIA

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

MODERATOR: Mark, coming in you had a chance, maybe a couple things. First off, coming off a win last week in Montreal, which tied the course record on Sunday, then you had a chance to play the course today. Maybe just talk about your win last week, and then you did have a chance to play this morning? Maybe just talk about this golf course.

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: Okay. Yeah, last week, obviously anytime you win, a lot of things went right. When I drove in there Tuesday to do some practicing -- actually, Wednesday, sorry, first thing I thought of is, well, I'm in Canada, so that's a good start. I'm usually pretty good in Canada.

Second thing that crossed my mind was when I walked in the front of the clubhouse, I kind of had a Shaughnessy flashback. Even though the trees aren't as tall and it doesn't look exactly like it, it looked like the front of the clubhouse in Shaughnessy where I won in '05. I thought to myself again, well, maybe this will be a good week for me.

Got out there in the pro-am and liked the course. It's tree lined. Had a pretty good vibe right from the start. Had a great week with my L wedge and my putter. Always a relief to win, especially after having a few chances to win early in the year and not doing it. Kind of refreshes in your memory bank that you can still get the job done. It was a great win for me, for sure.

This place I really like. I haven't heard anybody say anything bad about it. The 3rd green's pretty severe, but that's about it. I played fairly well this morning, had a good time with my am's. It will be a great tournament. The course, you know, there's five or six or seven pretty hard holes, but there's another 10 or 12 that aren't very hard. You'll see plenty of birdies out here. Of course pro-ams are pretty easy, there's some back shelves here that even though you just have a wedge in there is just -- because if you go over you're pretty much screwed and there's a hop and if you don't hit it hard enough you're going to have a 60-footer up the hill. So there's going to be a lot of difficult short iron shots even though they're just wedges.

I think you'll see some pretty good scores this week. The course is in the best shape possible. I won't say ever, but it's close to being the best ever. It's just perfect.

Q. Mark, last week did you hit a lot of hybrids and fairway metals off the tee, and is that the case here or no?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: More there than here. I hit -- I don't do hybrids, I can't figure them out. I have a 3-wood and a 5-wood and yeah, there was probably -- I'll tell you in a second how many drivers I hit there. Seven drivers there, probably three 5-woods and three 3-woods, something like that.

Here I hit one 5-wood off the 5th hole, which will probably be a 3-iron tomorrow because you actually only want to hit it about 230 and I hit it too far today. Maybe three 3 woods, so I think there's probably close to nine or 10 driver holes out here. Even the ones where you don't have to hit driver, like 1 for instance, the hole just suits my cut perfect. Even though you don't have to hit driver, probably a lot of guys won't, I will because it just fits my eye perfectly.

Q. (Inaudible.)

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: Yeah, absolutely, I think that's actually a 3-wood hole. I hit a driver today and I didn't know that hump with all that nasty grass was over there short right of the green and I hit it right in there. I actually got it up and down, made the shot, but the grass in there is pretty bad. It was quite a ways in it. It made me think if I actually hit it over the chute there, I would have been over the green. So I'll probably hit a 3-wood on that hole. Even if I can't get there because it's into the wind, it will be just short somewhere where I can try to get up and down. But yeah, I think almost everybody in the entire field will take the -- I don't see anybody hitting an iron there to tell you the truth.

Q. Mark, you mentioned that you like this place. That being said, two-part question. A lot of guys have said that. Do you guys talk about courses this way on other stops where you like the courses, so this is the one (inaudible) If a lot of folks want to come back here, does what you guys say mean anything on whether you come back next year?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: Well, I hope so. The reason we say that this week is because the course is truly unique. We don't play anything like this. It's so old style and so fun. Like I said, some of the greens, like 3, the greens are -- there's some slope to them and when these greens were originally built in 1900 or whatever it was, they were about as fast as the fairway. So you can build greens that have a slope like that. Now they're running at 13 or 14 and it gets a little hairy. Having said that, they'll probably put the pin on 3 over on the right where it's the flattest. Other than that, the greens are fine. They're in just absolutely perfect shape. Like I said, it's this uniqueness is fun, it's just something that we don't play.

When we go to Naples, we change the course there every other year, it's just like around a development where you have to ride a half a mile to get to the next tee, play a hole that looks like the hole you just played, to ride another quarter mile to the next tee

through a couple of lots. No, we don't -- you say oh, the course is okay, it's in good shape. But here, what everybody says about we mean, I think. There may be a few guys that don't like it, but I haven't heard anybody. Everybody that I talk to loves it. It's just unique.

Q. Calc, you got a big stretch coming up here that you talked about I guess this morning. Could you go through that a little bit, and how is the body going to hold up to that?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: I hope it will hold up okay. The good thing about it is up until last month, we didn't play more than two weeks in a row all year. It's kind of hard to kind of get something going because generally if we play a couple weeks and then we've got two weeks off or three weeks off, I take them off. I don't golf much at home. Then I come out and I'm kind of rusty again. The good news is if your body does hold up to play week after week after week, you can get something going and not fall into a rusty area where you kind of get stale and forget what the hell you're doing or what you've been working on. Hopefully everybody will hold up, not just me but all the other guys. There's a lot of injuries going on with Watson being out, Nick Price. O'Meara tried to play last week, came back too soon. Everybody's falling apart. I've been wearing a wrist brace, my wrist hurts, my fingers are hurt. I wake up in the morning, I can't hardly squeeze my fingers. I've had four shots of cortisone in this finger. Now this finger starts to (inaudible.) Shit, if my hand's gone, I'm completely screwed. I don't know. We'll see, take it week to week.

Q. (Inaudible.)

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: That sounds about right. I think the only one we're missing is when the PGA's being played, the regular PGA. Of course I play the regular British, that's why it's 12 out of 13 for me, I think, all the way right up through Seattle, all the way through August. Then we've got three out of four off in September. You know what? It's good. The good thing and the bad thing about only having 24 events is everybody plays almost every one of them because there's only 24, you know? I wasn't out here when they had 40, but Dana Quigley played them all of course, but you can't play 40 straight weeks, nobody could except him. A lot of tournaments didn't get the guys they wanted. When Jack played and Arnie, you can't play every week. The good news is with 24, everybody plays every week if they're physically able.

Q. Mark, do you remember playing with Michael Allen when he was on the PGA TOUR, and were you surprised at all what he's doing out here now, now he's sort of broken through on this Tour?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: No, not at all. Michael's always hit the ball great. I've known him for a long time. He was pretty lame with the putter until he went to the long one. I think he actually went back to the short one and almost won a few tournaments; now he's back to the long one and he putts great, I think. He drives it straight, hits it low so he's good in the wind. No, I'm not surprised he's having the kind of year he is at all. I

expect him to win a bunch out here on this Tour and really surprised he didn't win any on the regular Tour, but it's just not easy. He's always been a great player.

Q. Mark, this morning Fred Couples was in here today and he was talking about some of the things he likes on the Champions Tour. One of them was the fact that he was paired up with guys that he respected and admires, and he mentioned your name as one of the guys. That being said, considering all the back problems he's had over his career, just your thoughts on how he battled through that and what might have been had he been totally healthy all these years?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: Well, his game speaks for itself. You hit the nail right on the head. If he had never had a bad back and was, you know, healthy as a horse his whole career, I think he would have won a lot more, including a few more majors.

But he's truly the star of this Tour, there's no question about it. He's the one that brings the fans out. It's all about Freddy. Even when he's not playing he's on the billboard of the city. That's what kills me, you know? I drive by a billboard and I see Fred Couples, Nick Price and somebody else who's not playing. The defending champion's nowhere to be seen. That shows you, you know, everybody loves Fred. He's great for this Tour, and I'm glad he's playing as much as he is if his back holds up. I'm paired with him and Jay Haas the next two days. Like I said, every week you play with Hale Irwin or Tom Kite or Fred Couples or Jeff Sluman, the guys you've been playing with for years. You get to breakfast and look around and go oh, there's David Eger or whoever, and have breakfast with them. I was never friends with David Eger my whole life and I think he's a great guy and we get along great. So everybody gets along with everybody and that's the fun part of it. You don't have to try to figure out who the hell that is sitting over there, you know, who are those four, you know? So it's just awesome.

Q. Mark, you mentioned the possibility of a lot of birdies out here. Are there birdie stretches here on the front or the back?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: I think, you know, 1 and 2, the par 5s. There's only two par 5s and 2's a short one. The fairway slopes a lot left to right, but if you can get in the fairway, you can make a 3 or 4 there. If the wind keeps blowing this way it's reachable for pretty much everybody, so right there you're already down to a par 68 if you birdie those two holes.

You're going to see some 64 and 5s out here, I promise you, if you don't get on a bogey train on some of the harder holes, you know? 4's a tough hole, 3 can be if you get above the hole. 6 is a good par 3. Then you come back with 7 you can make a birdie on. 8's a hard hole. It's kind of like you've got a few easy ones and a few hard ones. It's got an amazing mixture of holes. There's not a bunch of super easy ones in a row and then a killer stretch. 16 and 17 are the two hardest holes, but then you've got 15, you can use driver, L wedge with a tough green, or 3-wood, L wedge 18's a reachable par 5, so you have hard, hard, easy. There's a bunch of holes that you can birdie even though they're tough holes, so it's got a whole variety of short to fairly easy holes. Some of the short holes have the green, like that 9th hole, it's a 3-wood, sand wedge.

But that back shelf up there, you one-hop it over it green, you're making five or six probably.

There's another hole on the back, I want to say 13, driver, L wedge, it will be a sand wedge to the back because it's got a little back right pin up there, if you don't hit it hard enough you're going to have a 60-footer. You're going to see some three putts going on. Even 14 is a little par 3, if you hit it over or to the sides, you're in trouble. So you have to really think about what you're doing with your short irons out here.

Q. You talked a little bit earlier about how you want to get on a roll with the bunch of tournaments coming up in the next two months or so. How important is it for you to get a good start here considering this long stretch?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: Winning last week, winning helped a lot; it always has, it always will. I wasn't where I wanted to be in the Schwab Cup, I wasn't where I wanted to be on the money list. I had a good chance to win in Boca and L.A. and I didn't do it. I was like, heck, I'm down in the middle of the pack here. All of a sudden you win and shoot up the list in a hurry.

This is our fourth week in a row, this is a four rounder, so you don't have the immediate urgency to play a good first round. Our three-round tournaments, you need to have a good first day, otherwise it's nearly impossible to win. We've got a normal four-round event here, which gives you a little more time to stay patient. You still have time to recover by the end of the week. I guess I would prefer four-round tournaments every week as opposed to three, but we've got some coming up.

Q. Mark, can you see any scenarios in which the leaders shoot only a little bit under par other than totally extreme weather?

MARK CALCAVECCHIA: No, not really. If the weather stays pretty good all week, I only played it once, it's almost impossible to figure how low we're going to go or can go, but like I said, I think you'll see a lot of, being a par 70 with, you know, the 2nd hole being so short, 18 being reasonable downwind, you'll see a lot of 65s and 66s. That's assuming you birdie the two par 5s. Of course you're going to see some 75 and 6s, too. As long as we have normal weather, I think you're going to have to get to at least double digits under par, if not more, to win with normal weather. If it gets super windy -- I know it's going to be hot and fairly breezy tomorrow, so we'll get a better idea what the scores are like after tomorrow. But it's the pin placements. Pro-ams, they're all in the middle of the green. It's an entirely different course when you get out there on some of the those holes and it's way back here in a corner and you're like, oh, shit, I didn't even know there was a green back there. That kind of happened last week because all the pins were about 10 or 12 on and there's a lot of back section]s and it's an entirely different course. I think once we figure it out better in the next few days, I think you'll get a better scoop on what's going on this morning.