



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: GREG NORMAN

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

MARK WILLIAMS: Greg, thanks for joining us here in the media center at the Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS. It's good to have you back on the Champions Tour. It's been a while. 2009 Nature Valley First Tee Open at Pebble Beach was the last time you were with us on the Champions Tour, but I know you played a couple of PGA TOUR events this year already. If you could just give us some thoughts on your day in the pro-am and seeing the golf course again. I know you've played here in the past, but just talk us through your vision of the golf course today.

GREG NORMAN: Well, I actually didn't remember much of the golf course, to tell you the truth. The more I played it, the more it came back to me. I think it's a cute little golf course. I think it's a classic old-style. You don't see too many golf courses designed like this nowadays. The character, the terrain dictates the character of the green settings and I thought Seth Raynor for the time did an excellent job.

You've got to be careful around here. Obviously it's a golf course that you can't play too aggressively on it, but if you get the ball in play and put it underneath the hole on the putting surfaces, you should be able to putt at it pretty good.

All in all, I'm glad to be here and enjoyed the pro-am today with Constellation guys. I believe this is their 10th year they've been involved with golf in general. So I'm very, very happy to spend some time with them and they're very excited about the prospect of being here in Pittsburgh. They love the way the turnout today was in the pro-am. So as long as the sponsor's happy, we're happy. If we're happy, we'll play well.

MARK WILLIAMS: Just before we go ahead and take some questions on this event, can you give us some insight into whether we'll see you again on the Champions Tour later this year.

GREG NORMAN: I am going to play the Senior British Open and that's it. I'm going to play one more tournament in August, the latter part of August, which will be the Omega European Masters in Crans-Montana. I'll play that tournament and then I have nothing scheduled after that.

MARK WILLIAMS: Great. We'll take some questions for Greg. Just use the microphone if you would, please, as we're transcribing this. Thank you.

Q. Greg, you were saying about the design, you said when he built it at the time. Is that because some of the pitches and slopes in the greens with the speed they have now make it really difficult? And two, I'm just curious, do you feel there's a lot of birdie holes out here? Are there stretches of birdie holes out here from what you saw?

GREG NORMAN: The greens are designed for when they were putting around eight and a half, nine, okay? I think the way he benched them in some of these slopes, it's very, very difficult to do that. You can do it nowadays obviously with machinery and technology, but the way he did it and because of the severity of some of the slopes, the speed of the greens allowed him to do that, as I said.

The interesting part about this golf course is a lot of your tee shots are reverse camber. You don't normally see that a lot, where you actually have to cut the ball back into a slope or hook it into a slope. Most of the times when we design golf courses we try to fit the hole to the terrain. So at the end of the day, he makes you think about every shot you're going to hit out here actually. There seems to be a lot of area to hit the ball into, but if you hit the ball in the wrong place and the pin's in the wrong position, you're going to pay the price.

Q. Did you ever copy any of his designs?

GREG NORMAN: No, no.

Q. I'll give you another one then. You had said when you played a lot, did you need to look at a course, Greg, more than once or twice to kind of get the feel for it? I know the more you play it, the better feel you have, but how long did you need just to get a feel for a course?

GREG NORMAN: Quite honestly, in my heyday I always liked two rounds of golf. I would normally play one in the morning, one in the afternoon before -- before your morning, afternoon tee times. Golf courses change from 9:00 in the morning to 4:00 in the afternoon, so that's why I always came in for a practice round the Tuesday before.

Most of the time, if you really have a good understanding of how your game is and you can see the shots that are out there in front of you, you can get around on one round of golf, but you would have to be very lucky that the wind conditions are the -- the prevailing winds. I mean, I asked a question today, is this the prevailing wind, and nobody really knew. If I come out tomorrow and the wind's in the opposite direction, it's going to be a little bit more trickier for me to figure it out, but I'm sure this wind's been blowing the same direction for two days for the other players.

Then obviously knowing the greens, some of the shots I hit today that I thought were pretty good and they would roll off 40 feet to the right or left. So you know where the slopes are even though you have on your yardage book, you have an idea of how those slopes are. But to see the ball dramatically roll off the way it did in some of them, like I said to my son, we have to remember that next time we play here, or next time the pin's

somewhere, we have to remember not to be in that position because you're coming back with a 45-foot putt with 15 feet of break.

Q. Greg, do you feel like you can contend with you playing so sparingly nowadays, and do you have a target score in mind of what it will take to win here?

GREG NORMAN: No, I don't have a target score in mind. I really -- whatever game I brought here is the game I've got. Today I felt like okay, halfway decent. You know, you've still got to hit the shots, but today's a pro-am and it's not a Sunday. And I'm sure, because I don't play a lot of golf, I'm sure your insides are going to feel a little bit different when you get -- if you put yourself in that position. I hope I am. At the same time, you hope you get to draw on your past experiences that I've won quite a few times and hopefully you'll rely on that and rely on remembering certain things at the moment and how to calm yourself down and pace yourself a little bit. So I'll deal with that if I ever get into that position.

Q. Did you see Dr. Bradley?

GREG NORMAN: I have, actually. He teed off at 1:20. He came to the first tee before I teed off so it was good to catch up with him. I'm having dinner with him and Dr. Maroon on Friday night, so we'll swap stories about how my body is after all these years.

Q. You had a pretty nice group of -- pretty good-sized group of fans following you. Were you impressed with kind of how they came out today?

GREG NORMAN: Absolutely. You know, I always enjoy playing in front of people. It's great to see the kids out there. Are kids on school holidays up here yet? They are? So obviously the kids are out there, they love to play the game of golf. Like the chairman said today that he was very pleasantly surprised to see the number of people out there for a Wednesday. I think -- I said to him, that's a testament of Pittsburgh, great sporting city, you've got a great football team here, you've got the Pirates here. Every time I've played here, every golf tournament, whether it's Oakmont, there's always been a tremendous support of spectators out there. So it's been fantastic. I don't think this week will be anything different. Might be an interesting course getting a lot of people around here because there's a lot of criss-crossing and bottle-necking.

Q. Greg, how far do you go back with Dr. Bradley?

GREG NORMAN: Seven, eight years, nine years, something like that. He did my knee and then he did my shoulder. He's not touching any other part of my body, I can tell you that.

Q. (Inaudible.)

GREG NORMAN: I was a Steeler fan before. I used to come up here and do a lot of work for UPMC in their -- trying to understand the biomechanics of the golf swing. Now I'm going back a long time, when I was the No. 1 player in the world. I was very fascinated by the physical aspect of a golf swing and the load factor on your joints, because I produced a lot of power in my swing and I worked out a lot at the same time. I wanted to understand what little muscles you really needed to work on to be a golfer; not the big muscles. I mean, anybody can work out the big muscles, but understanding the inner core muscles. Came up and spent some time at UPMC all wired up and swinging golf clubs. We were really -- I think we were one of the starting of understanding the biomechanics of the golf swing. So I was fascinated by that and that's when I met a lot of the -- I was a Steeler fan, have been since '77, since I first came over here, and I've just stayed a Steeler fan all the way through.

Q. Greg, you have a lot of priorities now with all your business dealings and everything. Do you still have a lot of passion to go out and play golf, be a golfer, to play golf? Do the competitive juices still flow? Are they the same as they were 20 years ago when you were the No. 1 golfer in the world, that type of thing?

GREG NORMAN: I don't think your competitive juices ever go away. Do I have the passion to play? I enjoy playing. I don't enjoy practicing. There's a big difference now. When I go out to play, I don't go out to try and shoot 65 because everybody expects you to shoot 65, even in a practice round or playing with your friends. When I go out to play now, I just go out to play, to have fun and not to worry about my score.

Preparing for a golf tournament, you have to practice for a score, you have to push yourself, you have to train yourself to focus. When my practice routines -- I'll give you an example. 20, 25 years ago I would play on my own all the time but I would play two golf balls and I would always have to hit the worst shot; not your best shot, the worst shot. So if you hit a great drive, you had to hit the next drive great. You had to pick your worst out of the two. Then if you hit your second shot on the green and then the next one off the green, you had to play your worst shot.

So I always challenged myself. The best score I remember shooting around Medalist playing that way was 72 because you can't birdie -- well, you have to birdie both golf balls to birdie the hole, right? So it really makes you concentrate.

Now, screw that. I'm not worried about that anymore. You know, practice, I'll hit balls for maybe an hour and that's it, and just wrap it up and go home. I like to chip and putt a little bit, but I still don't spend much time on that either.

Q. Greg, on the biomechanical stuff, were you working with Scott Lephart? Is that the kind of thing you were doing?

GREG NORMAN: That's who I was working with, yep, yep.

MARK WILLIAMS: What's it been like for you coming back here this week seeing some of your peers? I imagine you haven't seen some of these guys for quite a while. What's that been like?

GREG NORMAN: Well, I saw Kenny Perry today and he told me he was a granddad of a two-year old kid, so that tells me how long since I've been out here. I didn't even know he had a grandchild. It's great. I've got some really good friends I've played with over the years on the PGA TOUR and it's good to see them. Great to catch up with Bobby Clampett, haven't seen him in a long, long time. And today I saw Sluie and Faxon, those guys that I always seemed to get on well with on the Tour. I'm sure it will happen again. I don't know who I'm playing with in the first two rounds, so I'm sure it will be a good pairing. But once you get to the first tee, it's all business anyway.

MARK WILLIAMS: Any further questions? Thanks, Greg, for joining us.

GREG NORMAN: Thank you.