



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BRAD FAXON
Wednesday, August 15, 2012

MODERATOR: We welcome Brad Faxon into the interview room this afternoon. Brad, coming back for the first time to a very familiar place having won the old B.C. Open in '99 and 2000 here at En-Joie.

BRAD FAXON: Right.

MODERATOR: Just some opening thoughts about when you came through the gates for the first time as a Champions Tour player, your memories of winning here at En-Joie and playing here for the first time at the Dick's Sporting Goods Open.

BRAD FAXON: I'm very excited to come back here as you can imagine, but my history here goes way back before '99 and 2000. In 1983 I turned professional and Alex Alexander had already given away his four sponsors exemption spots, so he promised me -- this was a big promise -- that he would give me a spot for the 1984 BC Open and he said, Come qualify and you can stay at my house. He never met me before, you know.

So I came to qualify, I made it, he let me stay at his house and fast forward to I don't know how many B.C. Opens later, but in 1999 we had a playoff -- was it a playoff in '99 with Fred Funk?

MODERATOR: Right.

BRAD FAXON: We had to stay over until Monday because of the weather and I was just starting -- I was with my fiancée at the time and when we had to stay over, Alex invited us to stay at his house again that night and we slept in his room. He got out of the house and let us sleep in it. So I'm pretty close to this tournament. I don't think you can say many guys have done that in many tournaments.

But I played with Ed Stack earlier this year in the pro-am at the Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS and couldn't be more thrilled that we have a great title

sponsor here. Played the golf course today for the first time since 2001 or 2002. I can't remember the last time I was here. After the weather last year and seeing these greens, it's unbelievable. It's fantastic.

Q. Did your memories of the course all come right back to you?

BRAD FAXON: Absolutely. You know, there are probably a few changes that I haven't seen. 15 and 16 have a couple changes, but it's the same shaped shots off the holes. Some of the trees have grown over a little bit. The first tee looks a lot more narrow than it used to. The little tree on 11 looks like it's creeping out over the fairway. But no, it has great looks. It immediately tells you what shot to hit off the tee or into a green. I just think it's a really fun, fun course to play.

Q. Considering your past history, not just playing wise but with Alex here, maybe aside from the majors, was this one when you looked at the schedule this year that you were really looking forward to?

BRAD FAXON: Right, and I was disappointed last year that I turned 50 after the tournament, because I think this was in June or July.

Q. June.

BRAD FAXON: June, yeah, so I had to wait over a year to come play here. You know, it's close to home. I drove last night to get here. Just kind of driving back down all the different roads, it's amazing, it's fantastic. I'm very excited to come back.

Q. You obviously had great success here, but it has been a few years since you've been here. There's guys that are playing out there against you this week end that were here last year and the year before, that have been here more recently than you have. Does that make a difference to you? Is it a little more difficult coming back here after so long playing against guys who are a little more familiar with it being they've been here a little more recently than you have?

BRAD FAXON: It all comes down to who's playing better, doesn't it? One of the great caddies of the Tour, Gypsy Joe Grillo, he always had a great saying, execution always wins over course knowledge. I would like to think that's true probably most of the time, but there's always certain courses that guys like to play that they play well on that fit their eye, and this is a course that I've always kind of thought that fit my eye. And I played -- I had a couple good finishes here or than the two years in a row that I won the tournament. I remember playing with Fred Couples in the last group one year when he won.

It's easy to love a course where you've had success and you get up on certain holes and you can picture shots you've hit in the past. A drive on No. 3 that you might want to fade around the bunker, or hit a draw on No. 11 around a bunker, those shots come back to you in your memory and that helps for sure.

Q. How would you largely describe your play on the Champions Tour?

BRAD FAXON: Well, it's been a funny year really. I played exactly a year now I had my first anniversary last week at 3-M. I won a tournament, which was great. I was hoping I could win a tournament my first year and I haven't had a very consistent year, I've had a lot of mediocre finishes, I've had inconsistent play, but I always thought the first year would be tough for a few reasons. Number one, you haven't seen any of the courses before, so that's why coming back to a place you've played is always fun. And I know I'm going to keep playing better and better. So it's -- I'm not discouraged by anything at all. I got my feet wet. I feel like this last year I got a lot of stuff behind me that's going to help going forward.

Q. This week I think it's 57 now after a couple dropouts of the top 60 players on the money list are here. What's the competition like in a week like this compared to maybe some of the other weeks on Tour?

BRAD FAXON: You know, I think the biggest surprise I've had playing the Champions Tour is how low the scores are -- the winning scores, excuse me, the winning scores are. There might not be the depth out here that there is on the PGA TOUR obviously, but I would be hard pressed to think that the winning score that is shot out here isn't -- it's not a whole lot different than the PGA TOUR players would shoot. We've seen guys like Freddie Couples and Calcavecchia compete. Pernice and Michael Allen compete well on both tours. It's impressive how good guys play out here. A lot of guys play well that you might not think would have.

Q. Is there one thing in this first year on the Champions Tour that surprises you?

BRAD FAXON: That surprised me. Well, you know, how many of the veteran players out here, the Irwins, Neilsens, guys I played with, Bob Gilder, Brad Bryant that still play pretty good golf and have a chance to win tournaments. It's hard to play competitive for 50 years of your life, you know, if you think about it. 40 years, that's really inspiring. I saw Hale Irwin -- is he playing today in the pro-am?

MODERATOR: Um-hmm.

BRAD FAXON: I'm like here's Hale Irwin, 67 years old, playing in Endicott, New York, and he's got his one 45 of these tournaments won three U.S. Opens, and he's out here playing in a Wednesday pro-am. It's pretty impressive.

Q. So how do you avoid complacency? You were just saying they're playing for 50 years. How do you stay focused.

BRAD FAXON: You're obviously not talking about me playing for 50 years, I hope. That's a great question. I think a lot of players would answer that differently, but most players out here just love the game of golf, love to play, love to compete. And there's some guys that do it very well and consistently well every time. There are some guys that kind of go out here and have fun and kind of go through the motions and hope that they play well. I watch some of the guys that I think are out here like Bernhard Langer or John Cook and Michael Allen that play well every single week and this is a job to them and they want to be the best Champions Tour player there is.

Tom Lehman. These guys are trying to get better. I like Lehman's attitude. He says, I'm just trying to do something that gets me a little better every day. I think that would be a great approach for a lot of people in all aspects of their lives. What can I do a little bit better every single day to grow as a person, as a human being, as a player, as a husband and father. We would all be better off.

Q. Brad, good luck this week.

BRAD FAXON: Thank you so much.