



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: KENNY PERRY
Thursday, August 16, 2012

MODERATOR: We welcome to the interview room Kenny Perry at the 2012 Dick's Sporting Goods Open.

Kenny, you played in the B.C. Open three times, tied for 9th in '88, and then last time you've been in Endicott is 1990. Welcome back. Just a few opening comments about the golf course and then talk about your memories of here and how your game is right now.

KENNY PERRY: Well, I said it had been 20 -- I didn't realize it had been longer than 20 years. It's been 22 years since I've been here. Excited to be back, to tell you the truth. Always loved this venue. It was always -- to me, it was more of a family atmosphere. The style that they ran this tournament made me feel like Franklin, Kentucky. I'm from a small town and it had a great air about it. I always enjoyed coming here.

I'm excited about being back. I haven't played the course. I haven't even been out there. All the guys are raving about how great of shape it's in. John has done a wonderful job of getting a good field here, so I'm excited about kicking off my first Champions Tour event here this week.

I can't really say a lot about the golf course, I haven't been on it. I haven't been on it in 22 years, so I don't remember a lot about it. So I'm looking forward to the challenge of going out there and playing today and trying to get a feel for it.

MODERATOR: And then about your game right now.

KENNY PERRY: Well, my game's been kind of feast or famine all year. I'm either competing to win or I'm struggling to make a cut in a major out here or finishing, you know, 40th on the money that week. I really can't put a finger on it. I don't know if it's because of lack of knowledge, because a lot of these -- I still haven't really competed a full year on the Champions Tour even though I've been eligible for two years. I'm still fully exempt on the regular Tour, so I play over there some and I'm trying to split time both ways. So I'm still -- I haven't quite

figured out, you know, which direction I'm leaning towards. I've spent more time on the Champions Tour this year trying to compete for the Charles Schwab Cup a little bit than I have on the regular Tour. That's been hard for me, to try to figure out which direction to go and kind of give up my dream on the regular Tour.

But I thoroughly enjoy this Tour. All the guys out here have welcomed me out here, love hanging out with them, listening to stories. Just listening to Mike Sullivan tell a story about Andy Beah -- they're college teammates, they were in college together -- it was hilarious. You just hear so many things like that out here. So I don't know.

I finished third two weeks ago, I shot 15-under in Minnesota, which was -- I had finished second there the year before and third this year. So at least that was a golf course I've had a year under my belt. So coming into this week, I don't really know. I'll go out there today, try to get a good feel for the golf course and hopefully be ready to play come Friday afternoon.

MODERATOR: Okay. Just ask your questions, just wait for the mic. Kevin?

Q. Week off after a good tournament. How much do you play, how much do you practice? Do you put them away for a week? What's your routine?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I probably played two days, didn't practice a lot. Watched my son play a tournament on the weekend last week end he won it. My son's 26. He actually won an invitational tournament last weekend, so I spent the weekend with him.

Q. Where was that?

KENNY PERRY: It was at home, it was our home in Franklin. So that was a lot of fun. I have a lake house about an hour from my house, so we spent a little time there. Just, you know, relaxing.

I feel like I'm too old to beat myself all the time now. I don't practice like I used to, so it was good. I've got a grandson. Spent time with my grandson. He's almost two. And my daughter's getting ready to have another child here in two months, so she's going to have a daughter this time. I've just got other things going right now. Golf is still a priority, but it's not my number one priority like it used to be.

Q. Feast or famine, third GIR, 12 in putting, pretty good stuff. How does one not --

KENNY PERRY: Well, I played very poorly, just average in the majors this year. This was my first year to play all] -- I didn't go to the British Open this year, but I

played the other four majors out there this year and I think I only had one top 10 and I missed the cut in Michigan at the Senior Open. So very frustrating, just can't -- I did win early in the year in Naples. I got off to a real good start and I've just kind of treaded water from there on. That's been pretty frustrating for me.

Q. You mentioned how this is the first time you've been back to Endicott in quite some time. What was it about what John said or about this tournament that got you to come back after so much time?

KENNY PERRY: You know, he kept pestering me, which I enjoyed actually. He's done a wonderful job. I saw where I think the top 60 money winners with here, but then I heard Freddy withdrew and I think Lefty or Russ Cochran is hurt, he's physically hurt. That's pretty amazing; to get all the guys to commit, you're doing something right.

You know, Dick's is a great sponsor. You know, you come for the sponsor, too. You come to represent them. They put a lot of time, they put a lot of money into this event. Then when you come here and you first pull up and you see all the tents and the displays, it's pretty amazing. You can tell a lot of people put a lot of time and effort into this event and it's good to support it. I'm glad I'm here. It will make me want to come back next year. One thing is getting the players here, and John did good getting the players here. Then it's up to the tournament and the sponsors to keep the players coming back, give them a good time, give them a good product to play.

They say the golf course is immaculate right now, it's in great shape. When I came through the fence out of the parking lot, I was blown away just by looking at the tee boxes. The 1 and 10 tee box looks like a putting green. In the past it used to not look like that, so that was pretty exciting to see that. They're just doing a wonderful job in making us feel welcome, making us feel like they want us here, and that's why I think players come and support events like this.

Q. (Inaudible.)

KENNY PERRY: What I've heard, I think it's a little funnier than -- I was in Leesburg, Virginia, playing and I pulled my iron shot up into the gallery and I was chipping down the hill. It was Curtis Strange's Navy out there in the water on the 17th green and I'm trying to championship down the hill, I've got people lined up and I cold shanked it and I hit a lady with a beer cup and it went in her beer cup on my chip shot. The comments were just coming -- I could have done that, he's as bad as I am, he looks like an average Joe. You know, at first you're kind of shellshocked and stunned, but then once you kind of sit back and kind of draw it all in afterwards, it's pretty hilarious, it's pretty comical.

Q. With Ryder Cup coming up, just some of your experiences of trying to get on the Ryder Cup team and some of your experiences in it and what a great event it is for the guys on the PGA TOUR, how exciting of a time is it to be in an event like that.

KENNY PERRY: Well, it was the greatest experience for me. I had two experiences. I was on the worst team ever, the worst team that ever lost when Hal Sutton was captain. We had Tiger and Phil, and he was determined to put those two together and they just kept losing and we just kind of followed suit as the rest of the team.

Then I got to be on a winning team on Paul Azinger's team in Kentucky at my home state at Valhalla that year in '08 and I wasn't even on the radar scope to making the Ryder Cup team. That was kind of my goal come January 1, I was able to win three times during the summer, earned a spot on Paul's Ryder Cup team, go to Kentucky, play great, probably the best golf I ever played in 2008, to have my home folks -- I had thousands of people there from -- you know, I only grew up an hour and a half from there, so I had a lot of people needing tickets. Just to be able to wear your country's colors and then in your home state, it was a dream for me.

Then I had my dad there. We had a golf cart, the PGA allowed him to have a golf cart and he followed around kind of inside the ropes. He's now 88 years old, so that was, what, four years ago, three years ago, four years ago, so he was 84 at the time. We just had a wonderful week. Just from being with my family, with friends, being able to shake up the champagne bottles at the end up on that balcony, being able to celebrate the victory with 11 of your buddies and Zinger and Stockton and Ray Floyd, Olin Browne was an assisting captain.

Quite a party afterwards that night, I remember, with the European team coming in about midnight to 12:30 and we all just sat around and talked until late in the morning. Just an incredible event.

It's just incredible how that event has really grown. I've played on four Presidents Cup teams and I felt a little pressure on the Presidents Cup, but I never felt the pressure like I felt at the Ryder Cup. I just felt like it meant more. The guys wanted it more, we bonded incredibly, the players. It was just -- there was just so many events, things that happened that week. We went to a pep really in downtown Louisville, which was incredible. We stayed at the Brown Hotel, which is where my wife's father worked when he was a young man, he was probably 18 or 20 years old, which, you know, he is no longer with us, but that was pretty special to kind of go around there, kind of check that place out in downtown Louisville. I really never spent a lot of time there.

Just a lot of great memories, a lot of great things happened, and to be on the last winning team, you know, hopefully -- I'm anxious to see how the team does this year. You just share a lot of special memories. You have a team room, you spend a whole week together, you eat together, your wives and kids, everybody, you know, you're just there for the whole week. You play a lot of ping pong, whatever, a lot of -- in the team room, you just have a lot of camaraderie, which is pretty special.

Q. Just curious if you can elaborate a little bit on what memories you to have from when it was the B.C. Open.

KENNY PERRY: Just remember it was a premium on driving, very tree lined. I was never at that stage of my career a very good driver of the golf ball; that's probably what kept me away from here. You've got to be very accurate off the tee and I was very wild young in my career. I hit a lot of big hooks and I remember spending a lot of time punching out. I just really never got a good feel for the golf course. I was in trouble all the time. I was basically struggling and I was fighting to get the ball back in play, get it to where I could have a shot at making birdies. So that's probably what kept me away more than anything.

Then, as I drew in my career, my driving got better and I became a better ball striker, better thinker, better at course management, and probably should have come back but I didn't because I guess you get early memories of things in your head and it will hold you back a little bit. I should have gave it another shot and should have come back.

Q. Being away from the course for so long, does that put you at a little bit of a disadvantage?

KENNY PERRY: Definitely.

Q. And there's fewer trees now than you remember back then, is that correct?

KENNY PERRY: Oh, I don't know, that first hole still looks very tight to me when I walked up on that tee box today, but I'm definitely at a disadvantage. The guys that have been playing here -- I don't know how many years they've been holding the Champions Tour event here, so they've had that many years to kind of get a feel for the golf course, learn the greens, you know, learn what they want to play off the tee.

It's nice when you come into an event -- like I've won the Memorial three times, I could always walk into that place, I had the greens charted, I knew where I needed to play, I knew the pin placements even before they put the pins there, I

knew what I was going to hit off the tee. Even though the wind may change one way or another, I played in all conditions. And so here I don't have that luxury, so I'm basically learning, starting over. I need a good practice round today to really get a good feel for this place to be able to feel like I can be competitive this week. And if I'm not competitive this week, I'll look forward -- you know, I kind of use it as a building block for next year, that's kind of the way I look at it.

MODERATOR: Anything else for Kenny? Kenny, good luck this week.

KENNY PERRY: Thank you.