



PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:

DUFFY WALDORF & GENE SAUERS

Thursday, August 23, 2012

MODERATOR: We welcome two PGA TOUR veterans to the Champions Tour this week; Duffy Waldorf and Gene Sauers join our Tour. Welcome to you both. Maybe a comment from each of you about coming here to the Boeing Classic to start your Champions Tour career. Gene, do you want to lead us off?

GENE SAUERS: Sure. My birthday was Wednesday, I made it by one day, I think, in order to play this week, so I'm looking forward to that. It's great to be here. I've heard a lot about this place. It's everything that I dreamed it would be. As you all know, I had some illnesses early in my career and was in the hospital for seven or eight weeks, and I'm just glad to be here and glad to be able to play golf again, especially to be out here on the Senior Tour and to be out here with all my friends.

DUFFY WALDORF: Well, obviously it's great to be out on the Champions Tour. It's kind of a -- you feel like it's almost a reward for having put in all those years on the regular Tour. I've been here a few times playing in some major tournaments in Seattle. It's a great town. In fact, one of my earliest sponsors was a company called Cutter & Buck, and I was known for wearing the pizza man delivery shirts back in the day when we had vertical stripes back in the early '90s. So came up here quite a bit to Seattle. Great town. I'm glad to come here in August when we have some good weather, that's always the main issue up here.

But this course here is dramatic, beautiful. It's great to be playing on such a beautiful course to start with. I've been playing a lot on the [Web.com](#) Tour and we've been playing, it seems like, the hot weather tour in the midwest. There's nothing wrong with that, but it's nice to come to some nice weather and beautiful scenery, so looking forward to making my debut here.

MODERATOR: You mentioned [Web.com](#) Tour. You both have been on that Tour and then an occasional PGA TOUR every now and then. When did the

countdown start for both of you, and did you talk at all during your time on the [Web.com](#) about finally joining the Champions Tour?

GENE SAUERS: I think we did it almost every week. Well, Duffy, we've got six weeks to go, we've got three weeks to go. Everybody out there kept saying, When's your birthday? When's your birthday?

DUFFY WALDORF: When's your birthday?

GENE SAUERS: It's finally here and it's a blessing in disguise. I can't wait to play.

DUFFY WALDORF: I saw Gene last year, last October, and it was his first event. It was in Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Open, and it seemed a long ways off then. It seemed like it was -- it did seem like a long ways off.

GENE SAUERS: Yeah.

DUFFY WALDORF: This year I think it's been good. I played a lot of tournaments, I played a lot of tournaments because it did take my mind off it. In fact, if it wasn't for the other golfers, I probably would have forgotten that I was coming out on the Champions Tour soon. Aren't you turning 50 soon, like every week. Well, I guess so. How long? Well, I haven't been counting, but now that you make me think about it, I've --

GENE SAUERS: You need to get out here and go play out there, leave these guys alone, that's what they were saying.

MODERATOR: Maybe a brief comment from each of you maybe about your game coming into this week.

GENE SAUERS: I didn't play that well today, but other than that, like I say, I've had some illnesses the last couple years. I've only been playing golf now for about a year now. Tell you what, I'm hitting the ball really good, hitting the ball almost as good as I hit it on the regular Tour but putting's a little off right now. When you take five years off, your short game kind of almost disappears. But still, the other part is like riding a bike. I got out of the hospital in June and played my first round one year ago in August, and shot 71, birdied the last three holes, and I said, Well, if I can shoot -- be in the hospital for seven weeks, not playing golf for five years, come out and shoot 71, I think I need to give it another try. So I'm hitting the ball pretty good, just have to get more confidence on my putting. Other than that, it's all falling into place.

DUFFY WALDORF: I've been playing, I played a lot this year, I played almost I think 19 or 20 tournaments, half and half on the [Web.com](#) and the regular Tour.

I'm pretty happy. It seemed like last year I came back from my medical and my first probably six, seven months I really struggled. A lot of it's competition, a lot of it's being rusty, but also a lot of it's adjusting to where your body's at. Last October I started playing better and this year I've just played very well. I'm very happy with how I'm playing. I made eight out of 10 cuts on the regular Tour, a couple Top 25s. [Web.com](#) I've done very well. I'm tempted to play a few [Web.coms](#) because I think I'm currently 38th on the list, I've had a couple Top 10s and quite a few Top 25s. I'm very happy with where my game's at. I've been hitting a ball a lot better, and lately just in the last few weeks, my putting's been getting better. Obviously when your putting's good, it really sets it up for the rest of your game. I had a good week last week, I putted really well in Kansas City. I'm on the -- I'm already on the Champions Tour, I forgot the name of it. What was it called? It was in Overland Park, Kansas. I finished 11th there. Midwest Classic presented by Cadillac. Anyway, it was a great tournament on a Nicklaus course and I think it got me ready for this one, so I'm looking forward to hopefully keeping it going this week.

GENE SAUERS: You need to help me with the putting then.

DUFFY WALDORF: I'll help you with the putting, no problem. There's lots of time out here, they don't start until Friday. There's lots of time to do stuff. We can go hiking, too.

MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Can you talk about how difficult what Gene is doing is, not playing for five years and to come back?

DUFFY WALDORF: Yeah, I had a few years off, which was hard enough, but he had a serious illness. I mean, I think he's very happy to be here. I think that probably helps him that -- I think the worry goes away. Golf becomes kind of that less worrisome.

Just as far as the mechanics of it, physicality of it, there's no easy way to get back. It takes time to get back into it and I'm glad that I've been playing for almost two years now just competitively to be ready for this because getting back into competition, you can not prepare for a competition practicing, you have to play competitions. You're just not used to lies in the rough, wind and different situations, pin placements. I think all that takes a lot of practice. When you're doing it for a long time, it's second nature. But five years off, I mean, that's a long time. There's a lot of learning. Even though you're an expert at it, you still have to get used to being in those situations.

Q. Was there ever a time where you said I'll never play golf again, let alone play on a Tour?

GENE SAUERS: Pretty much so. When I was in that hospital for those seven weeks, I said, Man, I'm getting close to 50 and I know I'm going to have two years out there and I don't know if I'm going to be able to play, and it was just a depressing thing. Of course I was already depressed on all that medication. It was awful. I can't even begin to explain how bad it was.

Q. Can you tell us what happened?

DUFFY WALDORF: Well, I had arthritis kind of going on with me, but they thought I might have had rheumatoid arthritis so I was being treated for that. I was on prednisone and methotrexate and all these kinds of drugs. Next thing you know, I finally got into Duke probably six, seven months after they thought I had rheumatoid arthritis. I go up there and they said, No, you don't have rheumatoid arthritis, I don't know what you have, you don't have rheumatoid.

So they changed up my medicine a bit. Next thing you know, a few months down the road, I get burned from the inside out, both arms and both legs. It was pretty painful. I can't even begin to explain. Kind of like riding a motorcycle down the highway naked falling off, getting all burned up and skinned up. Burned all 15 layers of my skin on both my arms and legs. I have skin grafts on this arm here and both my legs.

Q. What was the uncertainty like? For a long time you didn't know what was going on, right?

GENE SAUERS: For about a year. It was just awful. I didn't know what was happening. Nobody knew. Doctors didn't even know. Come to find out they ended up calling it [Stevens-Johnson Syndrome](#) where you get burned from the inside out, so okay.

Q. Do you know anybody else that has it?

DUFFY WALDORF: I think there's a few people in the country, but it's pretty rare.

Q. What did they do for it?

GENE SAUERS: Well, my vessels that carried all the blood and oxygen in my arms and legs, they got clogged up and they died. It all turned black so they had to go in and debride me probably three or four times, I think the plastic surgeon did. After six weeks or so they had to wait on my body, my skin to bud up in order to put skin on top of it. If you just put skin on top of it, it'll die because it's not ready to take it yet. So the sixth week I was in there they did skin grafts and I was out a week later after that. They were putting the skin on there, and of

course they've got to staple you. I don't know how many staples I had in my legs. It was brutal.

Q. Where did they get the skin from?

DUFFY WALDORF: From my upper thighs, one down here on my shin down here, all around my thighs, yeah.

Q. (Inaudible.)

DUFFY WALDORF: I heard it once before, I heard it last October and it was shocking. I'm glad it was on the golf course; it's harder even inside.

Well, it kind of made me a little mad that I think they made him worse before he got better. It's unfortunate. I'm glad that he got through it. I could see the relief on his face that he had gotten through it, but I knew it was a harrowing time and I'm sure that's -- all those days when you slam your club and are unhappy with your golf don't seem so bad anymore.

GENE SAUERS: Doesn't mean that much to me anymore, as long as I'm living and walking and trying to have fun.

Q. Did they say whether it'll come back?

GENE SAUERS: They said they don't think it would. But the arthritis is gone, they cured me of that.

Q. But you're still a competitor. You've been grinding your whole life.

GENE SAUERS: Exactly.

Q. That's still there. I guess maybe you don't slam your putter. You probably do once in a while?

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, I do, but like I say, I can't begin to explain how bad I was, but it doesn't matter, you know. I'm going to go out here and be a competitor, that's the instinct in me. I'm going to go out here and try to beat Duffy and he's going to try to whip my butt and all that. All kidding aside, I'm just glad to be here, happy to be here living and breathing. I came that close.

Q. Who talked you through all this like in the darkest hours?

GENE SAUERS: Well, you know, my wife was always there for me, she kept my spirits up. I remember being in the hospital about the fourth week and I said,

Tammy, I don't think I'm coming out of here. She jumped right back, Yeah, you are, you have to fight, blah blah, all that. It was pretty bad.

The plastic surgeon, he was a good guy, Thomas Horn, went to school at Florida. I'm a Gator fan, so I said, I'm going to be all right, he's a Gator, I'm going to be okay. Everything worked out, thank goodness.

MODERATOR: Anything else? Welcome to you both and good luck this week.