

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: STEVE ELKINGTON
Wednesday, June 26, 2013



DAVE SENKO: Steve, thanks for joining us. This is your first visit to this tournament, maybe just your general impressions. You had a chance to play yesterday at Fox Chapel, just your --

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, I did a tribute Tuesday to Fox Chapel. I've never seen a golf course this well designed. Seth Raynor, of course, is a great architect. He grew up in a great era. We were talking about it last week, why were all the architects so good back then, and I think they had other examples like Macdonald and Tillinghast, they all were great. Maybe they couldn't afford to build a bad one back then. Seems like we don't see golf courses built like this anymore.

This one in particular is verging on being spectacular the way they built these greens. I could sit here for an hour and talk about all the little nuances of the Redan hole and all the different features you have on this course. It's going to be a treat to play for four days. I really can't wait to see it. It's a shame it's got to rain where some of these features may not be able to work as good where they feed in like they did yesterday, but it looks like it drains pretty well so we'll see.

Q. With the conditions of the course and it's also pretty lengthy, the bunkers are pretty treacherous, do you feel this is a course you should play more aggressively or do you feel should be played for conservatively?

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, Raynor wants you to stay away really from some nasty spots, so all the good players that play this course are going to stay away from those really deep 10-foot bunkers. Like even hole No. 1, to the left of the green there, the green comes in this way but over there there's a 9-foot bunker. So if you can just play this course without getting where Raynor didn't want you to be, then I think you're probably going to be all right. He asks you to do certain things here to try to get your ball in certain spots and I think it's a perfect location to play the Champions Tour because this era golfer played more shots and they have a lot of respect for architecture. Everyone is genuinely super excited about this new routing. I didn't see the old routing, but the new routing, everyone's loving it. It's just going to be one of those weeks on Tour where these guys are just going -- I think the scoring should be good. I don't think the course is too long for this group and it's going to be great.

Q. Rocco was saying yesterday after he played for his first time -- of course he played it years ago as you know -- he was surprised as how thick the rough was.

STEVE ELKINGTON: Yeah, the rough, you know, it would be like mini U.S. Open style, we were calling it Champions Tour major; not like Merion was but half Merion,

so to speak.

Q. You and Rocco are kind of twinned together, you arrived at the same time and he got off --

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, same mother.

Q. Kind of, you know, after that, when you guys got here this year, he won right away, a lot of us expected you to win at least by now. What has gotten in the way for you?

STEVE ELKINGTON: I took last year off completely, had a sabbatical year, so my short game was pretty average when I first got back out here this year. I was kind of playing around it, starting to get into gear now a little bit. But I think there's so many good players, so much excitement on the Champions Tour. I mean, I was so excited to see Craig Stadler do what he do last week, he shot 13-under last week. You know, all these guys, once they get in contention, they don't forget what they're doing once they're in contention; it's getting in contention is the first thing.

I haven't been getting out of the gate quick enough. Guys are getting off 68, 67. I don't know whether it's just I'm not used to trying to get out of the gate that fast because Champions Tour, it seems like Champions Tour is dominated by guys that are about 53 to about 55, that's what this seems like to me. Langer, Jay Haas, Freddie Couples, David Frost, all these guys have all been out here two or three years and it seems like they've pretty much got this whole schedule down pat pretty good. I'm still kind of looking around a little bit, focused, not quite as good as it should be. But I'd like to win, it'd be great to get up and amongst everything, but right now I'm just trying to focus on, you know, learning this course and finding my game just like everyone else.

Q. You talk about Fox Chapel, of all the features, the Biarritz green and the Redan hole. Is there one of those features or concepts that appeals most to you?

STEVE ELKINGTON: I could play this course every day just because it has trick shots, you know, basically you can play into that's little tiny corners. I'm kind of an iron player, I like to -- I've never really been that excited about hitting a tee shot, but where I won all my tournaments is being a great iron player. So I like to shoot in places people don't like to shoot, like where I won the PLAYERS Championship where it's real narrow, get into those corners. So this is the kind of golf course I could play on a daily basis just because it's so interesting. I mean, you could play -- you could make a hole so different from day to day on this course, you can't even recognize it, for example, you know, from where he places the pins and what kind of shots are required. We were hitting shots yesterday that we haven't hit all year, we were running shots up along the ground just for fun, we were throwing it all the way

back and spinning it back off some of the other stuff. It was great.

Q. I didn't quite hear about the reason for your sabbatical.

STEVE ELKINGTON: I just wanted to take a year off the regular Tour. I played the Tour 28 straight years, my daughter's senior year in college and I just didn't really -- I wanted to be fresh when I came out here. I didn't want to play on the regular Tour and then come straight over here. There's no rush. I mean, I'm not going anywhere. Guys are still playing here when they're 60, so I'm in no rush to do anything, I'm just enjoying myself at the moment.