

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: FRED FUNK
Thursday, June 27, 2013

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Fred, last year first round at Fox Chapel you shoot 65 and today 66 in much different conditions.

FRED FUNK: I can't remember.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Talk about your round. Obviously very wet out there.

FRED FUNK: Yeah, it's really wet. It's just that it's sad because every week we've been having golf courses in perfect shape and Mother Nature comes in and throws a deluge on it and we can't get the firm, fast and tough conditions that the course was designed for or set up, made for; for us anyway, for the majors. Last week and then Shoal Creek and this week again, Houston, we just had so many really perfect conditions messed up by Mother Nature throwing a wrench in it. This course could be fabulous if it was firm and fast and it's so great, just so frustrating. The maintenance crew's done an unbelievable job to get it in the condition it is so we can go play it. Hopefully we can dodge some more rain. Golf courses like this when they're set up like this, you can't get any separation in the field. Everybody's kind of hitting it -- you hit it where you hit it and it lands there. If you land in the fairway, it's going to stay; on the greens, it's going to plug, and that's when the scores are low. So everybody's just a matter of who's making a couple more putts here or there or maybe hitting it a little bit better. You've got to play pretty poorly to shoot a really bad round. I haven't seen the scores but I'm sure they're really bunched up.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Do you want to just take us through your day? Did you have to warm up a bunch of times?

FRED FUNK: No, no, no, I stayed in the house, I didn't even come out until 12:00 something. I got the early call, I actually called Brian early and found out the 15-minute delay and then I knew it was going to be longer than that. I just stayed in my pajamas until noon. I birdied 2 and a great birdie on 8, I birdied 7 by laying up. And birdieing 8's a big bonus, I had to hit a 4-wood, hybrid, whatever it is I hit in there, I was like 210 yards uphill, kind of cut the thing in there about 12 feet from the hole and made it. For me, just trying to make par on that hole. I three-putted 10 and then I birdied 11 and 12, and that's it.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Birdies 11 and 12, what did you do?

FRED FUNK: I made a 30-footer at least on 11, par 3. If it didn't hit the hole, it would still be going. Then I made about another 25-footer on the next hole. Those were two really nice birdies after making a bogey. I'm really pleased because I've been really fighting my back the last couple weeks and I shouldn't have played last week. I (inaudible) on Sunday after I played in Chicago to see whether I have a disk problem

and I don't, it's just a muscle spasm that won't release. It's just hard for me to swing at it. I was surprised I actually -- I was actually counting shots. I said I've got to hit about 36 full shots today, so try to commit to just 36 full shots no matter how much it hurts and I just kept counting them down. And I drove it in the rough on 18 way left and had to lay up, swing hard to lay up, and it added another full shot, 37 full shots. But anyway, it was -- I was pleased I was able to play. I didn't play Monday or Tuesday, I played nine holes yesterday, and it's still really sore, but I'm happy I was able to go out there. I've just been dying to get back into contention and my body hasn't been able to cooperate this year, so I'm just waiting for that to happen.

Q. I was going to ask you something about hitting in the fairway until you told me you hit it in the rough.

FRED FUNK: I hit it way left on 18, I just came right over the top, and then I hit 7-iron out and then a 5-iron 50 feet short of the pin and made a good two-putt.

Q. Let me ask you anyway, when you come to a course set up like this, everybody's talking about the rough for two days and how difficult it's going to be if you hit in the rough and you hit it so straight, do you get a good feeling that, hey, I like this place, it's my kind of golf course?

FRED FUNK: The fairways, other than a couple holes, are really wide. They're not narrow fairways. If you do hit it in the rough, yeah, you're in trouble. But if you hit it in the rough, you deserved it, you hit a pretty bad shot. 10's the only hole I can think of that's really kind of tight, kind of tilts a little bit. If it was firm, it would be tougher on a couple holes to keep them in the fairway, but as soft as they are, they're not going to roll away from you. I would think if you looked at the driving stats, this would be a really high percentage week for the whole field because of the soft conditions and pretty wide fairways. No. 1's another kind of narrow fairway, but most of them are pretty wide, real generous. I don't think that's an issue. But you don't want to be in the rough. I mean, it's a major, it should be some high rough and they need to penalize the guy that hits it in the rough, so I don't have a problem with it.

Q. What are you doing for your back? Do you take anything, do you do anything for it?

FRED FUNK: I've been getting so much treatment on it the last few weeks that I feel like a piece of meat that's been tenderized. I've been hammered on and stem and ice -- not even ice, but I sort of iced it last night because some guys said don't ice it and I don't know who to believe. I'm on a dose pack and a muscle relaxer right now trying to get this knot to release and they're not really having an effect. I have three more days on that dose pack and we'll just see how that goes.

Q. Fred, how concerned are you for the next three days, and you mentioned counting shots and how does the soft conditions here affect you?

FRED FUNK: It's not helping much as far as walking, but I'm fine. I'm really pleased that I was able to play. I was pretty close to -- I should have withdrawn last week and I was close to withdrawing yesterday in the middle of the pro-am, it was hurting so bad. I went in and had some stem and ice on the truck yesterday, last night and iced it last night really good and froze it last night and this morning it was better. But as I got into the round, it got really sore again. I started hitting really sloppy shots, especially with the driver the last five or six holes and I just couldn't get any turn and I can't finish the swing.

Everybody has aches and pains, I don't want to make an issue of it, but it is an issue with me. I hate the fact it seems like I work really hard to stay in decent shape and then I always am hurt here all this year. I haven't figured it out. Last year at the Schwab Cup and probably the last month of the year I felt as good as I've felt in 10 years and I couldn't wait until the season started, and this year it's been a lot of issues, vertigo and the back and it's been a pretty bad deal.

Q. Fred, you said that it's tough to get any kind of separation with conditions like this.

FRED FUNK: Yeah.

Q. Does that negate any kind of advantage that longer hitters would have or the real accurate shotmakers, does it pretty much wipe all that out?

FRED FUNK: I think the long hitter has a huge advantage on this course the way it's playing because they can keep it in the fairway pretty easy and hit a lot less shots into the green.

Then you look at the flip side of that, the greens are holding, so if I'm hitting longer shots in there, it doesn't really matter what you're hitting into the green, they're still stopping with a 3-iron or a 4-iron and it doesn't matter at this point. I think unfortunately we're getting some more rain at least tonight and tomorrow and I think the weekend looks better, I hope. I don't know if you guys know anything I don't. No, you don't know or no, it isn't getting better?

The golf course is fantastic. I know to a man we love the golf course, and I think last year the members loved hosting it and we loved being a part of it here and everybody loves it. It just is really a great home for this event right now and we're all excited to be here and play here, it's a great place.

Q. Fred, when it's this bunched up, do you find yourself wanting to take a chance to separate yourself or do you just have to play your game?

FRED FUNK: You've got to minimize your mistakes but you've got to have a hot

putter, you've just got to make some putts that somebody else is not making and try to eliminate any stupid mistakes.

There's still some tough spots out there, tough greens that you've got to be careful with on 3 and the usual suspects out there that are tough greens. That pin on No. 10 today, it's just so hard with the greens so soft to try to keep it from coming down the tier. Our whole group hit it up top and it spun back and I three-putted going up the hill. That's just the way it's going to be.

Kenny Perry made a couple mistakes in there where he spins the ball a lot and on that little dinky hole, No. 12, he almost has to fly it on the back fringe to keep it from spinning to the hole and then he flew it over and then he's dead, he makes bogey. That's where you make your mistakes because you try to get close. I think it's tougher conditions for a guy that spins the ball a lot, really a guy like Duffy, a guy like Kenny, where you've got to figure out how to control that spin. Right now playing the ball in hand, we almost have to because we're picking up a lot of water. The funny thing with greens or when the golf course gets like that, when it starts drying out, the mud actually gets sticky and that's when it really sticks to the ball. Right now it's not really sticking to it, it's just kind of sloppy and wet, and I think that's what we've got to be afraid of later in the weekend. If we play it down, I don't think the course -- as much as I hate playing the ball up, every time I see it, that's when the mud sticks to it and then we lose total control over our game. Nobody can control a mud ball, so that's unfortunate we've got to do that.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Fred, thank you very much. Good luck tomorrow.