

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: FRED COUPLES

Saturday, June 29, 2013

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Fred, you come out this morning and birdie the last hole to polish off a 62 and then shoot 67 in the afternoon with three birdies in the last five holes. Just some general thoughts on the day and then go through, I guess, whatever you did in the morning and then the afternoon.

FRED COUPLES: Well, it seems like I did it all on the last five holes to push ahead again. I played okay. I went out this morning and hit the ball solid. It was early and I did birdie the last hole, I hit two good shots. And then came out and played today, you know, got off to good start, birdied No. 2 with a pretty makeable eagle putt. Then the 3rd hole I misplayed a shot. I don't really know where you're supposed to hit it on that, but I tried to hit a 6 after John Huston hit 7 and I pushed it and I knew I was in trouble when I got up there, and I putted it down left off the green and made a good two-putt for bogey.

After that I just kind of felt like maybe the greens were faster than they were and it dried out a little bit and I just didn't really have much pace, but I didn't hit the ball close, either. It's not like I was missing birdie putts. I had some of the speed of the greens down, but I didn't make one until --

PHIL STAMBAUGH: You drove 7.

FRED COUPLES: I did, I drove 7 and birdied, yeah. John drove it first on the green and I thought, you know, I've got to try to do something. I think at that time that put him 4-under and he was making it look easy. And I did, I drove the green, two-putted for birdie. Then hit a great drive on 10 and I got it up top but I hit way to the right, maybe 35 feet, and putted it five feet by and three-putted for bogey. Then I made a nice putt at 14 from probably 25 feet and I made a 20-footer on 15, and then got it up and down on 18 from short and left of the bunker, hit a good pitch. And that's it.

Q. Fred, did you feel like given the conditions and everything before 14 that you were kind of not taking advantage of what was out there?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, I don't know what Kenny shot, I don't even know what he started at, but he was making a lot of birdies. At the same time, there were a couple people semi-struggling. But you don't pay much attention, you just figure, hey, played the course the first two rounds under the same conditions. I was making a lot of birdies and I just kind of stopped making them, but I hit a lot of fairways so I wasn't really panicking. I kept it out of big trouble except I just didn't putt real well. I mean, if you take away maybe the three-putt on 10, there's no way I was ever going to make par on No. 3, but three-putt on No. 10 and it's actually a really good round from a score wise. But I didn't hit the ball great, I got it around pretty well.

Q. At that point after 13 holes, nothing's really happening, I think you were still even par after 13, Kenny's making birdies, John's making some. What were your thoughts and emotions? Were you ticked off, were you annoyed?

FRED COUPLES: I like to watch people play and check it out. I was watching John. He bogeyed the last two holes but he played really, really well, he outplayed me all day long. But I feel like I've been maybe playing better than him lately and I was just able to do a couple things at the finish that he didn't do to get ahead of him.

Now, Kenny Perry on the other hand, you know, kept flying where John I think was 4- or 5-under at one time and Kenny kept making birdies. So I wasn't mad at myself. A couple strokes were a little shaky. I had one on No. 12 where I was maybe eight or 10 feet and I misread it and hit it soft and I missed the 10-footer by about a foot to the right of the hole, but I've done that before. What I didn't want to do is start to panic and maybe play out of the rough and I kept it in play, which is key. The rough's very thick.

Q. Fred, on 18, your thoughts on that hole when it's not wet, and today it was obviously a lot of rain the last couple days, how did the weather change that hole today?

FRED COUPLES: 18 was -- John Huston's very long. I just swung off the tee as hard as I could and I hit a good drive and so did John. I mean, we maybe, if we hit them dead straight, could have got on that front part where we could have putted. But I don't think we could have gotten it into the front part of the green, so I tried to make sure I didn't miss it to the right (inaudible) short side and I hit it to the left. I drew a pretty good lie in the rough, but from my angle I still had maybe a 40-yard shot but it was just going across. I hit mine good and he was unlucky, standing kind of funny and hit his in the bunker. I make birdie and he makes bogey and we both hit the same tee shots and the same second shots, I just was a little luckier.

Q. You've been doing this forever, you've had so many near misses this year. When you're in this position, are you just able to put out of your mind what's happened in the past, those near misses?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, I mean, if I was -- there's a couple shots that you kind of pay attention to. At Chicago (inaudible) a very good one and then I guess David Frost was on the 17th hole, which was a pretty easy 3-iron shot, and so I've worked on that a little bit. Now tomorrow I have to go out and probably battle with, I don't know, maybe -- if I play well, there's maybe six or seven guys. If someone shoots 8-under and they're 9-under, they can get to 17-under. But if I go out and play well, I have a great shot at winning. I'm certainly not going to be thinking about second place tomorrow when I play, I'm well past that.

Q. Fred, when you have Kenny Perry behind, you does it make a difference

knowing somebody like that's right behind you, especially a guy who just went back-to-back 63s?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, well, he's long. Is that what he shot the last two rounds, 63-63? Yeah, I didn't know that, now I do. That's nice.

Yeah, you know, I think we kind of play the same kind of game, same length, so that will help, but he is extremely long and I could see where if he starts driving it well, you know, I think par is in the 60s for him and 7-under, 7-under proves that pretty well. He's a great player and truly fun to play with. I've played a lot of rounds with him. I guess our third will be Duffy the way the board looked.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Yeah.

FRED COUPLES: And we're playing early? Right, so we'll get it over it before 3:00.

Q. Fred, Kenny Perry was talking about how he's had a real turnaround and how his knees have felt lately, they were really bothering him at Bellerive. You obviously seem to be feeling pretty good this week, swinging freely.

FRED COUPLES: Well, I didn't play a ton of holes today, but I played 25 holes. I'm tired. I'm going to go back, kick my feet up. We already have food ordered and then stay up as late as I can. But yeah, he's had some knee problems. I can only appreciate people who have back problems, I don't know what a knee would feel like if you're trying to (inaudible) but hopefully I'll feel good in the morning and come out strong.