

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: KENNY PERRY
Saturday, June 29, 2013



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Kenny, back-to-back 63s puts you at 13-under, 197 right now, I think one behind Fred Couples. You're 126 for consecutive rounds as a tournament record. I guess the Pirates must have spurred you on this morning, you played the last six holes in 4-under to really jump in contention and then came out and shot 63. Just a couple general thoughts about your round and then go over your birdies.

KENNY PERRY: Well, I did, I went to the Pirates game. Everybody saw me last night, I was in row 2 right behind the umpire so everybody kept calling and saying, "I see you at the game, I see you at the game." So I was inspired by the Pirates.

I got off to a great start this morning, had five holes to play and I started birdie-birdie-eagle right out of the gate, drove it on the 7th hole and made a nice putt for eagle and ended -- then I birdied the 9th hole, which was my 18th, to shoot 63 and then just continued with the roll, just played nice and steady. You know, had a great chance to make eagle on 2 on this afternoon's round and missed it, and just plodded my way around the golf course and made some nice putts, so it's been a great two rounds.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Can you sort of talk about today with all the birdies, birdie at 2?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I hit a driver and a 5-iron to about eight feet and missed it for eagle. Then I missed a little one on 5, I hit -- I bounced it off the flagstick and I had a four- or five-footer and I missed it. But then I birdied the next hole, the tough par 3 6, I hit a 6-iron to 20 feet and I rolled it in. I missed a little putt, but I made a tough putt.

Then I drove it on the green again on 7, I hit it 15 feet from the hole, had another great chance for eagle and I missed it for a two-putt birdie. And I parred 8. Then 9, I hit a driver and 9-iron to about three and a half feet, nice underneath the hole for birdie. 10, I hit a drive in the right rough, hit a pitching wedge and got it up on that top shelf, the pin was back left and made about a 15-footer curling right to left, great putt to kind of keep the momentum going and keep me going.

12, I hit a driver and I had 60 yards, flipped a little sand wedge up there to about six feet under the hole, was able to make that. 14, I hit a drive and I had 112 feet, pitched 20 feet past the hole and made a bomb coming back. Made some great putts today, long putts, putts -- I changed putters. The first round I used a putter with one degree of loft, switched to a putter the last two rounds that had three-and-a-half degrees of loft and that has really helped me. The greens being so wet, a lot of footprints, a lot of bumpiness and it seemed -- the ball seemed to roll a whole bunch better, made some great putts. Then I don't think I made anymore, did I? That was it, parred out.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Before we go to questions, just maybe talk about Fox Chapel. We had a lot of rain here.

KENNY PERRY: Amazing the shape it's in, the superintendent and the staff have done an outstanding job just being able to get us out there to play golf. There's still a lot of low areas, a lot of casual water. I had to take a casual water drop on 14. I mean there's still a lot of water in the fairway, but it's amazing we got all three rounds in up to this point as much rain as they've had. I know they've had probably six, seven inches of rain in quick bursts, so hopefully somehow we can dodge it. I know we're going from 7:30 to 9:30 tomorrow. Hopefully we can somehow get this golf tournament in and not extend over into Monday. I know there's some weather coming in tonight, that will depend on a lot of stuff, so it's just amazing we've gotten this far.

Q. Kenny, you were saying the other day that you don't always get comfortable when the numbers get low and you're posting a low number so they're out there or you obviously seem very comfortable though?

KENNY PERRY: A lot of that's due to the weather. This golf course was perfect on Tuesday, it was firm, it was fast. It would have been difficult to fit the ball around the holes like it was last year. Last year the greens were tough conditions, the weather, and now they're holding anything you throw at them and you're having to actually watch for the spin. I'm taking more club and swinging easier trying to take spin off the golf ball. Last year I was swinging harder trying to put spin on the golf ball and try to make it stop around the hole. So it's just a shame we've had all that rain, that's why the scores are so good, people are throwing a lot of darts out there.

Q. Having said that, everybody suspected there might be a lot of birdies, but did you envision anything like this, like you've had the last two days?

KENNY PERRY: No. Well, we've never played this golf course under these conditions. Obviously last year it was firm and fast, and when this golf course is firm and fast it will hold up to anything out there with all the undulations in the greens and the speed and the firmness, you know. We played ball in hand for three days. I mean, you give a pro a ball, clean it, place it, even if he misses the green, he's in the area -- it helps you with your chipping. You know, you just see -- you just see the scores go way down when you let the guys get ball in hand. To me, that's been the big difference.

Q. Kenny, you were hurting at Bellerive, your knees. How are you feeling now?

KENNY PERRY: The last two weeks I'm pain free, it's been a miracle. I had a cortisone shot. I went back, had another MRI done on my left knee, the one I had surgery on in February. He said there was one place that didn't look good. He said I

could have return it because -- he said my kneecap looks like a shattered rock, it's real rough and jagged with a lot of arthritis, and he said I could have torn the meniscus again, but he said it's kind of post surgery MRI. So he gave me a cortisone shot and that helped immediately and it hurt for about two weeks and then it just didn't last. Like last week and this week I have walked the golf course with no pain in my left knee, it's been a miracle. It's been awesome.

Q. Kenny, can you talk about what it's like to have guys, whether they're in contention or not, like Tom Watson and Nick Price on the Tour, what they mean to the Champions Tour and what it's like when you get a chance to play a round with those guys?

KENNY PERRY: Well, they are the Champions Tour. They carried the sword for us. They're icons, they're Hall of Famers, they're what people want to come see. I mean, that's who I want to come see. I'm sitting at the table eating breakfast with Tom Watson two mornings and I'm getting lectured on the economy and what the state of the world is in from Tom Watson. I'm nervous of Tom anyway, I don't say a lot around that guy. I was like, only thing I said, I'm going to vote for you Tom, you're my next president.

But they're just tremendous and outstanding people. Nick Price is just a good buddy of mine. Actually, my best friend built him a '67 -- I love old cars. He let him build him a '67 Mustang fastback. Nick came to my hometown of Franklin, Kentucky, a town of about 10,000 people, it's a farming town and here's Nick Price in the middle of nowhere, middle of USA, so that was pretty cool.

Those guys, you've got a Tom Kite, you've got a Hale Irwin, Ben Crenshaw, the list goes on. The guys are tremendous. These are guys that I looked up to when I was learning how to play, aspiring to be like, trying to beat, so I hope they all continue to come out and not retire.

Q. Was your knee an issue in the final round of the Senior PGA?

KENNY PERRY: Well, it was hurting a lot but I wouldn't call it an issue. I could hit. It doesn't hurt me to hit a golf shot. It physically hurts me to put -- the bending and putting my weight on it and just the striding process is what killed me. I had a lot of pain just to walk. I was struggling walking. I could hit the ball fine. Just getting to the ball, it was always in my head all day, oh, man I've just to just tough it out.

I'm on this drug called Voltaren, it's a pretty strong; like Advil, I guess but a lot stronger, and it helps. It kept the swelling out of my knee. I've been getting a lot of swelling, they had to draw a lot of fluid so that's been frustrating. I don't know if you ever had a needle this long stuck in your knee with a big syringe sucking all that junk out of you, that's not very pleasant. But once they do it, immediately it gives you relief. The pressure's off and you can actually bend your knee, you can actually walk.

So, you know, Fred Funk had a new knee, he's had a lot of problems with knees. I've been very lucky. For my whole career, the only problem I've ever had, I've had two knee surgeries, right and left knee. That's all I've got problems with is my knee. I don't have any back issues or wrists or hands. I'm very lucky, very fortunate.

Q. One follow-up to that, just your general thoughts on No. 18 and what do you think of this as a finishing hole?

KENNY PERRY: Well, it's a golf hole in the past where we were hitting it so far down there, it was definitely an eagle hole, it was definitely a game changer if you didn't make birdie or eagle, or, you know, you could actually leap over a few guys, so it actually put pressure on you to perform.

Now it's playing a lot longer. I don't know if anybody can even get to it today. Duffy hit a good drive and he couldn't get there and Duffy's long, so it's definitely a three-shot hole today. It's still a birdiable hole because you can get closer out of the fringe, hopefully you can get it up and down, but it doesn't have near the pop in this like it had last year. I was hitting 3-irons on that green and had a chance to make eagles.

Q. Kenny, let's be optimistic and say nothing happens overnight and the course continues to dry out a little bit. What kind of final round do you see?

KENNY PERRY: I think the scores will be really good. The greens are really soft, they're very spongy. There's not enough time to dry them out and get them firm, so you're going to see still a lot of good scores tomorrow. So the guys that are near the lead, at the lead are going to have to play a good round of golf. Somebody's going to shoot a good round tomorrow.

Q. Kenny, you talked about your putting, how good it was, how many putts you made. What about your ball striking, how would you rate that this week?

KENNY PERRY: Driving it outstanding and that's always been the strength of my game. I've only hit it in the rough two or three times that I know of all week and been hitting lots of fairways. Iron game's okay. There's a lot of short holes out here where you've got a lot of wedges and stuff where you can actually attack and make birdies.

So the key to this golf course is to drive it in the fairway. The rough is terrible, it's a lot worse this year than it was last year. If you hit it in the rough, you're chipping out. I mean, I hit it in the left rough, I hit a tree, I'm in the left rough still, and then I couldn't even get it over the creek on 18 so I had to lay it short of the creek and I still had 160 or 50 yards to the hole for my fourth shot coming in just a minute ago. So it's definitely, you've got to get it in the fairway if you're going to shoot a good round of golf out here.

Q. So with all your good shots and everything that you've done so far it set you up pretty well. Are you looking to change your strategy at all or are you just going off more of today?

KENNY PERRY: No, I'm not. Yeah, you've just got to go guns ablaze, make birdies, put the pressure on them. Freddy's going to shoot a great round. I don't know if he birdied the last hole.

There he is. Did you birdie the last hole?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah.

KENNY PERRY: So I'm 2 behind. He's so cool it's amazing. If he shoots a crazy round of golf, I can't catch him, so kind of ball's in his court and I'm going to have to shoot a phenomenal round again, which three good low rounds in a row is tough to do.

Q. Kenny, you talked about switching putters. I'm just curious, the one that you used for the last couple rounds, when was the last time you used that one?

KENNY PERRY: I carry three putters with me always, it's in my three putter rotation and they've all got different lofts on them. They're always with me, always in the golf bag. When I get to poa annua, I always go to the one with more loft. I thought my old putter, the one I played the most with, would be great, but with all this rain and the footprints and everything, that's why I went with the other one, it's doing great.

Q. (Inaudible)

KENNY PERRY: The first one's a Yes, but they're both mallet heads, they're all pretty close.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Thanks, Kenny.

Q. (Inaudible)

KENNY PERRY: You slam it and it hops. With loft, it shoots it up and it gets on top and it rolls.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Good luck tomorrow.