

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BART BRYANT
Sunday, August 18, 2013



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bart Bryant, 2013 Dick's Sporting Goods Open, final round 72, a hard fought day, Bart. You have your first Champions Tour title. You earn 270 Charles Schwab cup points and move on (inaudible) so you're firmly entrenched in the Top 30 now for the Schwab Cup Championship at the end, two years in Hualalai starting in the 2014 season. Has to be pretty sweet for you. Just talk about becoming the Champions Tour's 1,000th winner.

BART BRYANT: Well, it's pretty special. Whether you're 1,001 or 999 it's pretty special, but this is even more special. I say that because you have Don January handing you the trophy, he's here to celebrate that. That's like a dream come true. My family and I got to take a picture with Don. It's just a really cool moment, something that I'll always treasure. Because it was the 1,000th event, I was really afforded that opportunity.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Can I just ask if you know Don very well? You know him obviously from being a Texan.

BART BRYANT: Well, (inaudible). He claims it is, but it's not that I know Mr. January real well, I met him before, but I know about him and it's really cool that he came to do this.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: If you could, just talk about today, talk about the round today if you could.

BART BRYANT: Yeah, today obviously I don't know if any of you were out there, it was a struggle for me right off the bat on the 1st hole, made a great long two-putt to get my par. I just never felt settled today. Luckily I was able to kind of hang on there and make some good four, five, even six footers. A lot of those were due to poor first putts unfortunately, but that was kind of the key to me winning today playing kind of poorly, but I was very solid on those putts up until the last hole. But I think the course played tougher out there today. I don't think guys went nearly as low. I haven't seen the scores yet, but I know playing with Duffy and Corey, it just looked tougher. I don't know if it was just our group in particular, but it just seemed like the pin placements were really good today. It was really hard to go low, I think. And if you were a little bit off, you struggled. I was a little bit off and I struggled, but I was lucky to get it done and I'll take it.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: If you could, just take us through the round.

BART BRYANT: Let's see, I made a really good par, as I said, on the 1st hole.

No. 4, again I was just -- for some reason I was just a little bit off but I had 175 to the pin or something, which is almost a 6-iron for me, and I hit a 7-iron over the green down almost by the 16th hole or 15th hole, so I was lucky to make a bogey there so I was just kind of rattled from the beginning. Then I came back, I figure if I can just kind of hang in there and weather the storm I might be okay. I missed a really good birdie opportunity on 7 but then I hit real close on 8, made the putt on 9. That got me to 1-under par and I started feeling better about it. I felt like if I could birdie 10, 11 or 12 or maybe a combination of two of the three, that would put me in good position, and I just couldn't get it done and I just fought it all the way in with the putter, trying to get the ball close. I did hit it close on 17 and I just didn't hit a great putt. Like I said, I just kind of hung in there, I did what it took to win, and fortunately this is one of those days where nobody really went crazy low on a Sunday.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Can you give me a little details at 8 and 9 and then tell me what did you hit into 17?

BART BRYANT: I laid up on 8, which is a par 5. I hit probably my best shot of the day, I hit a sand wedge in from about 93 yards to probably about two and a half, three feet, made bird there. Then I hit a great drive on 9 pretty close to the (inaudible), hit it in there to about 10, 11 feet, made the putt. And then No. 17, I was hitting third and Duffy hit it out to the right, but Corey hit a pretty good shot and he didn't get any claps, so we kind of knew his ball must have trickled over the green long, which is usually what happens there. I backed up one club and went in hard and I landed right on the top tier and rolled down there. I actually could have got a little closer rolling down the hill, had about an eight footer, a putt that I really should have made and I didn't make it. But I guess in the meantime Russ Cochran was bogeying the last hole to give me a little breathing room.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We'll just go to questions.

Q. If someone says to you last night or this morning, Bart, you're going to go out and shoot 72, what place are you preparing to finish?

BART BRYANT: Probably 3rd or 4th, to be honest with you. Like I said, the course played much tougher today, there was no doubt about it. I don't know exactly why other than I think the pins were much tougher. You know, with 16, the par 4, they moved the tee up and so I think that felt like a hole where everybody would take advantage of it. I thought I hit a great drive there and ended up over in the, I don't know, 6th fairway or something, I don't know. That tree's a little bigger than I thought it was. But I don't know exactly why, it just played tougher today other than I think the pins were very, very tough.

Q. How difficult is it to stay mellow, stay patient when things are wobbly, so to speak, as they were on the front?

BART BRYANT: Yeah, luckily I had that birdie on 8 and 9 and that calmed me down a little bit and gave me just a tad of breathing room, but that's really all I could do was stay patient because I just really didn't have much of a game, and I hate to say that because I had so much game on Saturday. I don't know if it was the nerves or what, but I just felt like that was my only chance was to stay patient, not force the issue and make some good two putts for pars and hopefully do something at the end that would separate myself. Luckily, nobody topped it, that's what it came down to.

Q. To expand a little bit, your birdies on 8 and 9, you really didn't do much the front nine and yet you walked off at the turn with a four-shot lead. How much does that put you a little bit at ease there?

BART BRYANT: Yeah, I never felt at ease because I was struggling with my game so much, but to come off -- to be teeing off on No. 10 with still a 4-shot lead playing the way I did gave me some confidence that maybe I could pull this thing off in spite of what was going on.

Q. Just a few years ago you couldn't even swing a club and now here you're a champion. Obviously you worked for this point, but did you ever envision this situation back two years ago?

BART BRYANT: Well, I dreamed about it, I envisioned it. I don't know if I believed it would happen especially after I did the first surgery, it just failed, it didn't work, so we had to repeat basically the same surgery, take screws out, put an extra one in. So at that point I'm thinking this doesn't look good. Actually the surgery worked, the wrist fused and all of a sudden I was able to start hitting some short shots and by the end of last year I played a couple TOUR events. I probably shouldn't have been playing because I was terrible, I couldn't hit a 3-wood in the air, I couldn't swing hard enough, but at least I was out getting some competition under my belt. But I tell you as time's gone by I've gotten much stronger, I'm hitting better quality shots. I can even hit a flop shot now. I had no chance of getting it in the air, hitting a flop shot, I just couldn't, my wrist wouldn't do it, so I have more shots in my arsenal now to work with. I probably have to get a little bit stronger mentally in the future. That may be the last thing that's going to jump on board, but hopefully this is going to propel me into some more consistent golf.

Q. Talk a little about the presence of your family here and also congratulations from your brother.

BART BRYANT: Yes, it's great having my family here. I never thought I would have so many family living in New York because we're all Southerners, but my daughter Michelle and her new husband Justin, he's up here going to school over at Cornell, where all the smart people go. My brother-in-law plays at (inaudible) over on Broadway, he married my sister, so it's great to have them here. Of course my good buddy Greg, who quit his job to caddie for me this year, took a leap of faith, it's great

to have him out here. To have everybody here is really special. And they all know the process that it's been and what I've gone through and basically what a miracle it is that I'm sitting here right now, so it's really good to have them.

Q. You haven't really played too much the last few years anywhere compared to what you've done this year. Going into the year, would you talk about what your expectations were and how they've compared so far to what you envisioned?

BART BRYANT: Like I said, I envisioned these great things. My expectations were not there, but I did try to envision it. I tried to see myself winning golf tournaments, being successful. I don't know that I really bought into the belief that it actually could happen this quick, although I'll tell you, last couple three months, like I said, I just started being able to hit some shots like I used to, and when that started happening, I just (inaudible.) We tried it again, took the screws out, put two extra screws in, fused it again and the second time it worked. Why, I don't know, but like I said, it's just a real blessing that it did and I'm playing. So no, my expectations were probably not this high, but I did envision it.

Q. When you got to 16 did you say "holy cow" and then get overaggressive?

BART BRYANT: No, 16, of course I never played, you know -- I only played I think two or three times here on the PGA TOUR and it was a long time ago. I just didn't put this tournament in my schedule. I probably should have. But I don't know that I ever played from that tee. Honestly, I saw Duffy hit it a little left and I said just hit high over that tree, hit it out to the right, right edge of the green so that tree's not even in play. The last thing you want to do is hit it left. Honestly, we didn't even know where the ball went. We thought it was up on the front edge of the green or somewhere. I heard the clapping, I thought it was pretty good. I didn't realize that tree is that big or that high, I just haven't played from that tee before, but I guarantee I won't make that mistake next year. I won't be anywhere near the tree.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Anything else? Congratulations, Bart, well done.

BART BRYANT: Thank you.