

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: ROCCO MEDIATE**  
**Wednesday, August 21, 2013**



**DAVE SENKO:** Rocco, have you played this course before?

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yes.

**DAVE SENKO:** What were your impressions?

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I like it. It's one of Jack's courses and I like his golf courses. He did a great job on this piece of ground. I love the up and down and sideways, side hills and stuff. I like mountain courses, it's good stuff. The course is in perfect shape, everything's perfect, no complaints here.

**DAVE SENKO:** How's your year? Looking back now you've played about 15, 16 tournaments --

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I love it, I've had a great time.

**DAVE SENKO:** -- on the Champions Tour.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I've had a great time with that, too. It's as much competition as you want anywhere in the world. Anyone that thinks it isn't, c'mon out and give it a shot, see how you do because we'll run them down and step on them when we're finished. Believe me, these guys, we should be really good at what we do because we've been doing it our whole lives under extreme competition, so doesn't surprise me what goes on out here, I was completely prepared for it. It's a sprint. The only difference is the three-day thing. Obviously we have some four-day events and it's a sprint. If you're not putting good the first day, you are finished. So that's one of the cool things about it.

**Q. Is that the biggest adjustment?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Starting on Friday, absolutely, starting on Friday is the biggest adjustment. You can't make up from a bad or mediocre round. I made a comment after my first week on Tuesday in Naples, I said if you're shooting around par the first day, you're getting run over. So Davy Markham's out in the middle of the 18th fairway, my last hole, which I love that part about our Tour is we get to actually talk. It should be that way on the PGA TOUR, too. It's ridiculous that it's not. Their excuse is, well, it's more money. I'm like, that matters? That really matters? Because it doesn't matter as far as being able to talk. If you can't talk in between shots, you should find a new job, really, in my opinion. But I'm walking down the 18th fairway and David goes, so how you doing, Rocco? I'm like, well, I'm playing okay, I'm even

par coming to the last, and I said, but what did I tell you last week? He goes, well, you said, you know, if you're around even par the first day, you're going to get run over. And Bernhard was like 9-under through 14 and I'm like, there you go, it's that simple. If you're not sharp all three days, you don't get to win these tournaments or finish well at the tournaments and I love that part of it. It's as much competition as you want.

**Q. Were you a talker on the TOUR?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Completely the same person, haven't changed a thing.

**DAVE SENKO:** (Inaudible).

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** No. If they did, I didn't really give a crap. I wasn't bothering anybody. If they don't want to talk, I talked to myself, someone else, my caddie, the crowd. I never went overboard to make anybody mad. I would never, no. There was no reason to do that, but I didn't stop what I do. I like to talk and I will talk. But it's fine, no one's ever said anything to me. If they did, I told them to go screw themselves, so I'll do whatever I want however I want when I play as long as it's not bothering anybody else, and I don't. I'm very respectful of what goes on. That's just the way I play. I can't be quiet in any arena. I would never disrespect. You know, you can tell if someone doesn't want to talk, we don't talk, it's real simple, I'll go talk to somebody else. I would never disrespect anybody. Just because you don't talk or don't want to talk doesn't mean you're a bad person. Just because I do it that way doesn't mean it's the only way to do it. Tiger's the opposite, that's the way he plays. You look back, Hogan was the same way, he never said -- Faldo is the same way, nothing. But they played great. Doesn't mean they're bad or good, you know what I mean? Everyone has their own way to do it. I just like to let it rip, you know.

**Q. How often do you think about the U.S. Open?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Well, I get reminded of it every single day, which is fine. Here and there, here and there. No, I lost, it's real simple. Nothing else you can say about it.

**Q. Can you give us an idea of your professional golfing life before that tournament --**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It was exactly the same, people just noticed more about the Open. I was on TOUR 25 years before that, they knew exactly who I was and what I did.

**Q. But did perception of you change dramatically?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I don't know. I would say no, no, not sponsors.

**Q. (Inaudible)**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** No, but no, it's the same. I mean, people that didn't know about golf came into golf that day because they all turned the TV on because it was Tiger and all of a sudden he looked like he was going to lose or he was getting challenged a little more than everybody else expected but me, and I think that's why it changed everything. It was really cool. But I got stories from people in shoe stores and ladies playing in their card games, it's hilarious. "We never watch golf and we watched you guys play." I mean, it's so cool. But as far as golf goes, I was the same person, I just had almost a really good week there, close.

**Q. Can you talk about Mike Donald?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** No. What for? Tell me what for. I want to know.

**Q. He lost 19 --**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Right, but it was a whole different ballgame. This was a whole different thing in my mind.

**Q. It was in a tournament.**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yes, in a tournament, but those kind of events can ruin your career if something weird happens at certain times. If I had bogeyed the last three holes on Sunday, if I had bogeyed the last three or four holes on Monday, I'm in trouble, but I didn't. I played pretty much as good as I could, made the first mistake in the playoff, see ya. That's sudden death and that's okay with me, I'm okay with that because Sunday was the same way. I played my butt off on Sunday and what are you going to do? I mean, it's just how it works out. I look at it that way. It affected me a little bit, but the Frye's tournament, threw that all in a garbage can.

**Q. That's when you won --**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yes, got me another trophy, which I wanted to do before -- well, not finish (inaudible,) I promise. But before I finished, I didn't want to just have that be my last thing. It was a great time, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying -- I loved it, I like talking about it, I talk about it just about every single day and it's okay. You can't win them all and I got my dream match, I got my dream day with that guy. I played -- hmm?

**Q. (Inaudible)**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Fine, I guess. I don't even know. I never read it. I just read the transcripts, I never read the book. I don't like to read about it. Maybe in 10 years I'll

read it. A lot of people said they like it, I don't know, maybe they're just saying that. Yeah, it's all good, it's all good. You use those experiences in the rest of your career.

**Q. If that had been Tiger and Phil the book wouldn't have been --**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah, because I wouldn't have been in there, right, exactly. Feherty asked me a question, he goes, if you could have the U.S. Open trophy against anybody else but Tiger, what would you think? I said, well, I really don't know what it feels like to be a U.S. Open champion, but it wouldn't have been him. It's just one of those things you want to have a chance at. I had my chance and I pretty much did as well as I could I would say. There's nothing weird that happened. Like I said, that can ruin a career if you do weird things at the wrong time because of the situation. I mean, hell, I had a three-and-a-half footer in the playoff on the last hole to tie. No one talked about that. Tiger made a six, seven-footer to make birdie, so I've got this thing down the hill to stay in the playoff. I was leading by one on the 18th tee and now I'm going, really? So if I miss that, which is easy to miss on those greens, it was good this far, it wasn't like a little one of these. I had to think about it for a second. I told Matthew, my caddie, I said there's no read here, it's just in, it has to go in, and I made. But you look at those -- I felt that, no one else saw it, though, because how many times has anybody here missed a three, three-and-a-half footer? A lot. We do all the time and this one's like this, it's bumpy, it's the U.S. Open. If you miss, you're a complete moron. So those things -- that might have changed everything. Anyway, it went in, so that was good. So yeah, it was all good. I have no regrets except for I didn't win. He just did a lot of things. He beat me eight shots on the greens that day, eight.

**Q. Your attitude after winning (your first Champions Tour event,) that was like oh, this might be pretty good?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It is really good.

**Q. I could win a lot of money here?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It is really good, yeah. No, it's fun. I played really good the first five, six weeks, I putted really good, and I putted good the last couple weeks I played, but in between I kind of putted normal. Can't do that here because there's not enough time to make up for it. Hit it just as good or better the first couple weeks but you have to make them. That's the thing, it's just as much competition. One extra round saves a bad day on the PGA TOUR, but out here there are no extra rounds, it's 54 holes and that's the game. If you're not 4- or 5-under par the first day, depending on the venue, you're done. I mean, more than likely done to win because the scores are -- and we're playing golf courses that aren't 6,200 yards long, I assure you. Most of them I played are over 7,000 yards long, which is fine, I hope they're 8,000 yards. But the public doesn't understand it, at least I don't think they do because if I was a golf -- if I was a weekend player that loved to watch golf, I would want to watch my

heros, get to play with my heroes, that's really cool. Where do you get to do that when you're 50 years old? Like nowhere, nowhere. So I would want to watch them myself, I don't understand that part. Who do you want to watch? I won't mention any other names on the other TOUR obviously because I love that TOUR, too, but Tom Watson was my man my whole -- when I was a kid and when I was in high school and college. I would rather watch him, Hale Irwin, whoever, name them, pick them, than anybody else right now no matter what because that's the guy who I tried to pattern my game after and speed that I play. I got one of them right, the speed. The game, eh. So if you look at it that way, I don't get it, I don't get it, because there's so much more -- someone said is it more relaxed? Umm, no, I'm working harder than I ever worked just trying to stay in the ballpark with these guys and that's how it should be. I'm not surprised with anything that's happened out here, I was completely prepared for the insanity and we've got it out here, some good scores.

**Q. Now this tournament (inaudible.)**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It's like who?

**Q. Fred Couples (inaudible), this is his hometown.**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah, but he's not, though. Yeah, Freddy's, I think Freddy should have won about 50 golf tournaments and 10 Majors as good as he plays, as good as he hits his ball. He's one of the purest I've ever seen. Every year he plays like 10 times and plays great pretty much every time and his back destroys him. I know the feeling. His is more chronic, it just keeps coming after him obviously. I can't imagine what he would have done fairly healthy over his career, it would have been astronomical. But yeah, Freddy's from -- is he right from Seattle proper or...

**Q. Seattle proper.**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** That's what I thought, so hopefully a lot of people come out and check him out because I love watching him, too. I played with him since I was 21 years old on TOUR, so I love watching Freddy play, too. What the heck, I don't get it. It's a great place to be. We're lucky to have it and we're going to keep it. We're going to do our job to keep this whole thing going because it's really cool.

**Q. Do you feel the winners (inaudible) guys in their early 50s? I'm sure you're aware of that.**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I don't buy any of that whatsoever. Look at Hale. Hale won a bunch in the 60s. He's 67 now. He won a bunch in the 60s. It depends on how --

**Q. (Inaudible)**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It can be, depends, depends. I don't buy the three or four year

window whatsoever, no, I don't. I think it can go as long as you want to keep competitive. Look at Watson. We're talking about two of the greatest players of all time, too. A lot of us don't go in that category. But if you keep fairly limber and know what you're doing, you can still go. The ball goes far no matter how old you are. If you do the right things, it will go. You don't have to be like Mr. Olympia either, by the way. There's a lot of things that happen. If you have great fundamentals, great motion, you can play forever. I mean, Hale and Tom could win any week, depends on how they're putting. That's what's stopping those guys right now. Hale's hitting it great, so is Tom. Tom's hitting it better than he's ever hit it over the last 10 or 15 years, he's been a ridiculous striker. In his heyday, watching, he was more crooked I would say than he is now. He hits it a lot straighter. He still hits it for miles. He's 63, so he's in really good shape.

Won't buy the window. Hopefully I'm right, you never know. I don't know. I don't feel 50, I feel 25 or 30, so I don't have any issues with that, but we'll see. I know I look like 35, you can say it. It's funny, though, when you look up and go, holy crap, I'm 50. I qualified in '85, I was 21 years old. I can't believe it's been that long. It's been forever, but it felt like yesterday. It is an adjustment, though. It is an adjustment but it's great. It's run perfect. Our golf courses are always good, and it's old-school type of players. You see a lot of curve out here, a lot of playing shots; not 350, chip it out, blast a sand wedge onto the green. That's not how it works here. This is real golf I'll call it. You've got to put your ball where you're looking. Real golf, not wherever it goes and just hit it out of the rough and make birdie. It doesn't work here. I like this kind of golf better. You actually have to have knowledge of how to play more because you have to work it around things. I like it much better. I like to watch it better, too.

**Q. You started playing this course, what?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** A couple two, three years ago probably, yeah. The boys were in Bellview, I just came up here. I loved it, good practice facility, greens are always good. I mean now they're really good, but they weren't much slower than these when I played them. I love the look of the whole place. It's up and down and it's a hard walk. Obviously we're allowed to take carts but I don't like to take a cart when I play. The pro-am's fine, but not when I play. Just shuttles, I guess there's a few shuttles we have to take because it's nine miles to a couple holes, 1 to 2's pretty far. I don't like to take carts as far as when I play. If I'm injured, that would be nice.